

MODULE 10

Supporting a Student in Difficulty



© 2016 The University of British Columbia

The Student in Difficulty



Students do not always successfully complete a placement—for many reasons. This module is designed to help you identify, remediate and progress a student appropriately.

Some Clinical Educators hope that a student will improve with more experience. Without clear identification of issues, that may not be the case. Early intervention in areas of difficulty can facilitate the student's learning within that placement and future placements.

It is important to recognize that the ACP (Canadian Physiotherapy Assessment of Clinical Performance) evaluation lists competencies to give the Clinical Educator an idea of how a student should be performing within the program **at that time**. With this in mind, it may be easier to identify a student who is at risk of failing a placement.




Graphic: i.warosu.org

Factors that May Contribute to Poor Performance



A "Student in Difficulty" might be struggling for a variety of reasons—some may be visible and some not.

Examples of why a student might be experiencing difficulty include:

1. Learning difficulties
 - Application of academic learning in the clinical setting
2. Skill level 
 - Limited theoretical background
 - Limited previous experience or opportunity to practice relevant clinical skills
3. Fear of failure
 - Weak clinical skills
 - Difficulty with clinical reasoning
4. Professionalism/Communication performance
5. Difficulty adjusting to the area of placement
 - Environment can be overwhelming (physically or emotionally)
6. Lack of motivation
 - Not an area of personal/future professional interest
7. Health or mental health issues

Accommodation for Access/Diversity



UBC's Access and Diversity



"Access and Diversity provides leadership on issues of accessibility for people with disabilities at UBC Vancouver, working in partnership with faculties to foster inclusive learning, living and working environments for students, faculty and staff. Access and Diversity provides support and programming initiatives designed to remove barriers for students with disabilities and facilitates disability related accommodations for members of the UBC Vancouver community."



All students requesting accommodations during placements must provide a letter from Access and Diversity. Your student may come to your placement site with this letter (or include in his/her introductory letter).

If you feel you cannot provide the accommodation(s) please discuss immediately with the Associate Head, Clinical Education.

Graphic: calgary.ca

Lack of Motivation



Desire

- The willingness to change

Ability

- Appropriate knowledge, skill, opportunity

Reasoning

- Understanding the reason why change will be helpful/beneficial

Need

- Understanding the reason why change is important

Cartoon source: goocomics.com/VPS

Strategies to avoid problems

- Familiarize yourself with where the student is at within the program
 - Review the document "UBC MPT student academic-clinical training per placement." It lists curriculum and placement timing as well as students' acquired skills per placement level
- Familiarize yourself with the ACP evaluation ?
- Establish clear and mutually agreed on objectives
- Facilitate clear communication
- Provide regular and timely feedback to and FROM student (not just when there is a problem)
- Offer a positive and supportive learning environment



The best way of dealing with problems?
Avoid them!

Is There a Problem?

How do you know WHEN there is a problem?

- Multiple small examples of poor performance
- One major "critical incident"
- Intuition or "gut feeling"

WHAT is the problem? What are you seeing that is of concern?

EXAMPLES:

- Poor knowledge base?
- Poor personal or professional judgment?
- Poor communication?
 - With whom? Peers, patient, health care team, supervisor?
- Poor time management?
- Unethical/unprofessional behaviour?
- Is there a safety issue demonstrated?

**A PROBLEM
WELL STATED IS
A PROBLEM
HALF SOLVED.**

Charles Kottoring

If you are not sure what
the problem is, try
writing it down
(to yourself)
to "tell the story"

Addressing a Performance Issue

- Provide a supportive environment ?
- Ask student to reflect on what happened and acknowledge the problem
- Look for a cause—hear your student's side of the story
- Clarify the appropriate course of action
- Revise the learning plan, in conjunction with the student
- If a repeat/serious incident, be clear about potential consequences (i.e., failing placement)
- **DOCUMENT IT!** %

Contact the Associate Head, Clinical Education if potentially serious or repeat behaviour occurs

How the Department Can Help You



Click on the video to hear Nadine explain how the department can help a Clinical Educator with resources and support when dealing with a struggling student



Exploring Your Student's Clinical Reasoning



Here are some examples of questions that will allow you to dig deeper into how your student is synthesizing information

- What are the subjective findings?
- What are the objective findings?
- What is your differential diagnosis list?
- Are there any safety issues/flags?
- Are there any other relevant factors which need to be considered when planning treatment? (e.g.: socioeconomic status, family situation)
- List/describe the problems relevant to physiotherapy.
- What is the planned physiotherapy management?
- What are the expected outcomes of this management plan (short/long term)?
- What is the patient's prognosis?
- Tell me how you have determined the answers to some of the above sample questions.

Adapted from St. George's University of London Clinical Reasoning Form

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions



Click on a word to reveal a helper question



Icon made by Freepik from www.flaticon.com

Depth (Slide Layer)

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions 

Click on a word to reveal a helper question




What makes this situation more complex?


Accuracy Precision Relevance Clarity Faimess Significance Logic Breadth Depth

Icon made by Freepic from www.flaticon.com

Breadth (Slide Layer)

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions 

Click on a word to reveal a helper question




How could we look at this differently?

Accuracy Precision Relevance Clarity Faimess Significance Logic Breadth Depth

Icon made by Freepic from www.flaticon.com

Logic (Slide Layer)

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions 

Click on a word to reveal a helper question




How does this fit with what the evidence says?

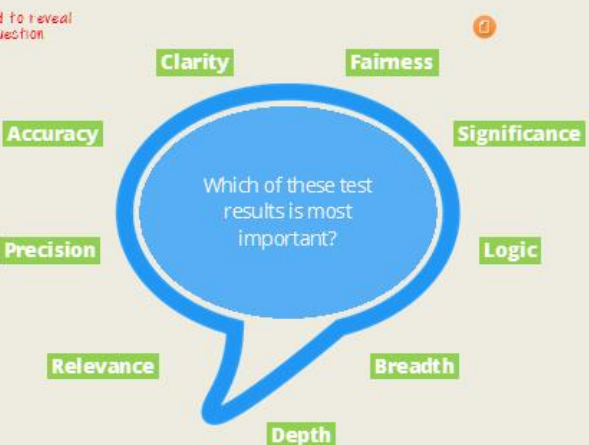
Accuracy Precision Relevance Clarity Faimess Significance Logic Breadth Depth

Icon made by Freepic from www.flaticon.com

Significance (Slide Layer)

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions 

Click on a word to reveal a helper question



Which of these test results is most important?


Accuracy Precision Relevance Clarity Faimess Significance Logic Breadth Depth

Icon made by Freepic from www.flaticon.com

Fairness (Slide Layer)

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions 

Click on a word to reveal a helper question




Are we listening to the client's wishes as well as to our own?


Accuracy
Precision
Relevance
Clarity
Fairness
Significance
Logic
Breadth
Depth

Icon made by Freepic from www.flaticon.com

Clarity (Slide Layer)

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions 

Click on a word to reveal a helper question



Could you give me an example?

Accuracy
Precision
Relevance
Clarity
Fairness
Significance
Logic
Breadth
Depth

Icon made by Freepic from www.flaticon.com

Accuracy (Slide Layer)

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions 

Click on a word to reveal a helper question



How do you know this is true?

Accuracy

Precision

Relevance

Clarity

Faimess

Significance


Logic

Breadth


Depth

Icon made by Freepic from www.flaticon.com

Precision (Slide Layer)

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions 

Click on a word to reveal a helper question



Could you be more specific?

Accuracy

Precision

Relevance

Clarity

Faimess

Significance


Logic

Breadth


Depth

Icon made by Freepic from www.flaticon.com

Relevance (Slide Layer)

Difficulty with Clinical Reasoning: Using Questions 

Click on a word to reveal a helper question



How do these findings relate to the diagnosis?

Clarity Fairness Significance
Accuracy Logic
Precision Breadth
Relevance Depth

Icon made by Pheagic from www.flaticon.com


If You Think Your Student is in Danger of Failing 

COMMUNICATION IS KEY!!

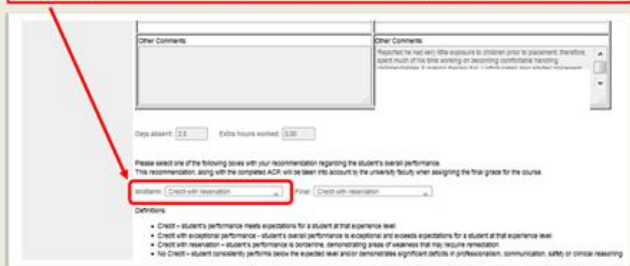
Do not wait until the end of a placement to contact the department



- Document
- Feedback
- Review learning plan
- Reset goals
- Reality check re: your expectation of the student's performance and skill level 
- Check in with the student
 - How do you think you are doing?
 - What do you see as your strengths?
 - Have you identified areas that you need help with?

Choosing "Credit with reservation." What's That? 

"Credit with reservation"
Student's performance is borderline, demonstrating areas of weakness that may require remediation.



The last page of the ACPe online evaluation includes an area for your recommendation of the student's overall performance while on placement. The "Credit with reservation" grade should only be chosen if you feel the student's performance at midterm or final warrants it **and** you have discussed your concerns regarding the student's performance with the Associate Head, Clinical Education.

Please keep in mind that your recommendation is taken into consideration by the department when assigning a final grade for the course.



- The Clinical Educator and student need to communicate and work together to facilitate student's future success, both within the program and professionally.
- "Passing a student along" does not help the student or his/her next Clinical Educator.
- Failing a student does not mean you failed in your role as Clinical Educator. There are many factors at play.
- Sometimes failing a student is supporting the student...

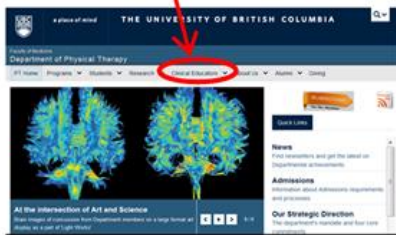
Remember-the department is always here to support you and the student!

Graphic: houseoffitness.com

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

This module is intended as a quick reference. For the most current and information about program specifics please see our [UBC PT Clinical Education Manual](#).

Visit www.pt.med.ubc.ca.
Our website has a Clin Ed tab on the front page!



Resources we recommend:

- [APTA APTA Anecdotal Record Form and APTA Critical Incident Report Form](#)
- [E-Tips for Practice Education website](#)
- [Preceptor Education Program \(PEP\) website](#)
- [Facilitating Learning in the Workplace](#)

For a multitude of other great resources, please visit our [Clin Ed Placement Resources page](#) on the UBC PT website.

MODULES IN THE EXCEL SERIES

- Module 1: Introduction to the UBC Master of Physical Therapy (MPT) Program
- Module 2: The Role and Importance of Clinical Education
- Module 3: Developing Learning Objectives
- Module 4: Planning and Facilitating the Learning Experience
- Module 5: Adult Learning Styles
- Module 6: Your Student's First Day: Orientation
- Module 7: Providing Feedback
- Module 8: The Evaluation Process
- Module 9: The "Perfect Preceptor"
- Module 10: Supporting a Student in Difficulty
- Module 11: Providing Challenge for an Exceptional Student
- Module 12: Placement and Supervision Models
- Module 13: The Hidden Curriculum
- Module 14: T-Res Overview: The Students' Clinical Log



Click on the EXCEL logo above to go to the EXCEL Modules homepage, where you will find links to all of the modules in our series.

Questions?? Suggestions?

If you have any questions about this module or suggestions for future modules [please contact us!](#)

You are welcome to use and share these modules. If you would like to link to them, [please email your request](#), as we would appreciate knowing what purpose they will be used for. This will help us in future module development.

These modules were conceived and produced by **Carolyn Andersson** (Clinical Education Officer), with the assistance of **Sue Murphy** (Associate Head, Clinical Education) and Anne Rankin (Acting Associate Head, Clinical Education).

Invaluable professional services and assistance provided by the MedIT team (Faculty of Medicine) at UBC.



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

© 2016

Department of Physical Therapy
Faculty of Medicine



Feedback?

Do you have a few minutes to complete a short (we promise!) survey about this module?

Your feedback is VERY important to us!

[Go to survey](#)

With thanks...

- Judit Spence
- Nadine Nembhard

[Click to exit module](#)

March 2016