

# The Effective Use of Questioning in Clinical Teaching

## *Why do we ask our students questions?*

- To find out what they know
- To understand how they think
- To assess their level of performance

## **The Three Levels of Questions**

- Informational (asks for specific pieces of information)
- Applications (asks student to apply their knowledge to a specific situation)
- Problem-solving (asks for principles and creative answers to new ideas)

## *What are some examples of the three types of questions?*

## *Teachers spend most of their time asking informational questions. Why do you think this is?*

- Teachers need clinical information to deal with the clinical situation
- Teachers believe that a basic level of knowledge is required in clinical situations
- Informational questions get shorter answers – time is short!
- Teachers may not possess the skills to formulate higher level questioning

## *What sort of pitfalls can a teacher fall into?*

- Creating an unpleasant (and therefore avoided) learning environment
- Providing information and ideas too readily to the learners
- Not leaving enough “wait-time” for student response
- Attending to the talker and forgetting the silent student

## **Effective strategies**

- Plan key questions ahead of time
- Phrase questions clearly and specifically
- Adapt questions to learner’s needs and level
- Ask questions at a variety of levels in a group
- Avoid the “guess what I’m thinking” game
- Avoid answering your own question
- Direct questions to a group of learners – don’t stop with the first response
- Use questions to evaluate the learning experience
- Allow learners to question you

## **Dealing with learner responses**

- Positive reinforcement – nod, smile, comment
- Probing question (when initial response isn’t enough or is incorrect)
- Justification question (e.g. why?)
- Clarification question
- Extension (request elaboration)
- Redirection (ask the same question of another learner)

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