

## Time-Efficient Teaching Strategies



The key to teaching a student  
in the ambulatory setting is  
effective management of time!

Launch the [interactive](#) that corresponds to this lesson..

Here are some strategies that have worked for others.

### Strategies at orientation

- Tell the student clearly **when to arrive**
- Plan for review and **feedback about time-efficiency.**
- Have the student identify the **purpose and duration** of each patient encounter before entering the room.
- Walk the student through the **flow of patients** during the clinic session, including when you want the intern to report to you, what to do while a patient is dilating, and what items should be completed before the patient is ready to leave.

### Strategies during the day

- A student often does not yet know how and when to focus his/her histories or exams. The ability to appropriately focus is key to managing time in the clinical setting.
- Tell the student exactly **how to focus.**
- Give the student **explicit time limits.**



*"Mr. W is here with a red eye. You have ten minutes to obtain a detailed history of his complaint. Make certain you cover the cause of the injury and associated symptoms. Focus on FODLARS and any related systemic history. We will do the exam together."*

- Knock on the door if a student is taking too long.

### Creating time for the student to think

The student often needs time to think...but you do not need to slow to his/her pace, or extend the patient exam time unnecessarily. Consider these activities as assignments for the student:

- **Pick two or three patients** each patient session from which the student can best learn.
- Have student complete specific tasks related to the patients.



"Use a blank sheet to write a note summarizing the visit."



"I want you to read about common side effects of beta-blockers and tell me how you would counsel patients starting this medication."



"The patient asked about prevention of macular degeneration. I want you to look over the patient education material that we gave her and tell me what key points you would emphasize."



"For a patient with this type of presenting complaint, I want you to identify the most important tests to do and how you would utilize the results in the management of this patient."

### Rewarding efficiency and growth

- As you gain confidence in the student's abilities, **give him more independence**.
- Once you are confident in the student's ability to present and communicate with patients, have him/her **present the patient's focused history in the exam room**. This can save you time and help you avoid repeating things to assure the patient that you have all the information.
- **Give the student feedback** on how well he/she was able to efficiently see patients. Time efficiency is a tough skill that takes practice, practice, practice.