



Writing Clinical Teaching Scripts

Background - Clinical teachers are faced with the challenging of providing patient care, teaching learners, and being time efficient in doing so. While experience often helps in the process, clinical teachers with less teaching experience may benefit from developing “clinical teaching scripts” in advance of their clinical teaching roles. Scripts are outlines develop by the clinician and used later in clinical teaching moments. The time spent reviewing and preparing for clinical teaching enable a clinician to: reinforce her understanding of a topic, identify key issues that a learner should grasp, and synthesize/organize the content in a readily recalled and presented format.

Key concepts - Effective clinical teaching scripts 1) emphasize key points over developing expertise, 2) introduce concepts instead of noting details or statistics, and 3) offer practical information over theory.

Steps to consider in developing a teaching script

1. Select a topic that is common to your specialty (e.g., Pediatrics – developmental milestones; Emergency Medicine – intubation; General Surgery – suturing; Psychiatry – altered mental status).
 - a. Consider targeting a topic listed in your clerkship’s objectives
2. Review most recent guidelines, current literature, and best practices on the topic.
3. Draft an outline including:
 - a. Description - in 3-4 sentences describe the topic as you might to a patient
 - b. Definitions – note any essential terms (e.g., conditions, tests, intervention) which may need explaining
 - c. Typical presentation
 - d. Draft two to three brief, clinical vignettes (traditional presenting symptoms, no zebras)
 - e. Major concepts (3-4)
 - f. Essential assessment (H&P, labs)
 - g. Additional aspects to consider (e.g., co-morbidities, complicating factors, rule-outs)
 - h. Key take-home points (3-4)
 - i. Optional – indicate how content may be relevant to preparing for shelf or board exams
4. Prepare a set of questions from basic to more complex on the topic (emphasizing conceptual understanding rather than recalling details)
5. Practice diagramming a process (e.g., Immediate general assessment of stroke → Neuro exam and CT → fibrinolytic therapy if indicated) or drawing a condition (e.g., blood clot in an artery)
6. Prepare resources that learner can access before or after a clinical teaching encounter
 - a. “one-pager” on the topic
 - b. Links to online videos, images, narrated PowerPoint slides

c. Direct learners to content that you have pre-screen and are good examples of what you want them to know.

7. Pilot script with a set of learners and elicit feedback; tweak as necessary

Resources

Teach scripts https://www.uwmedicine.org/education/Documents/wwami/faculty-development-workshop/MOOKHERJEE_Tips-for-Creating-Teaching-Scripts-for-Efficient-Teaching_Boise-2017.pdf

Charlin B, Boshuizen HPA, Custers EJ, Feltovich PJ. Scripts and clinical reasoning. *Med Educ* 2007;41:1178-84.

