

ICS2 Introduction to the Medical Interview and Physical Examination

Reflection, Self-Assessment, Setting Learning Goals Eliciting, Giving and Receiving Feedback

A Guide for Medical Students

Reflection and self-assessment

Before each teaching session or medical interview/physical examination:

Reflect and self-assess – ask yourself, what do I know well and where do I need to make improvements? Be specific.

Setting specific learning goals:

- - “I want to get better at the medical interview” – is too general – we all want to get better. Be more specific
- - “I want to practice making empathic statements” – “and this is what I plan to do” – listen for opportunities to express empathy – and practice using phrases like I’m sorry” or “how was that for you? or “I can see this is difficult” and pausing – silence, sitting with patients in silence can be quite powerful.
- - “I want to improve my skills in examining the shoulder. This is what I plan to do. I will practice shoulder examination on every patient and remind myself of the function of the rotator cuff muscles.”

After a teaching session or medical encounter:

Reflect and self-assess – ask yourself or your faculty member will ask you – what went well and what would I like to try differently next time (an opportunity for improvement.)

Then your colleagues and faculty member will give you feedback.

Eliciting Feedback:

Ask your mentor or faculty member to give you feedback

“Dr. Fatma – I’ve been working with you for 2-weeks, can you give me feedback on how I’m doing? What am I doing well and where can I improve?”

Receiving Feedback:

Listen to the feedback carefully for specific ways in which you can improve. We might not always agree with the feedback we receive but look for a kernel of truth in every feedback that’s given.

Feedback on what we are doing well – is intended to reinforce these behaviors and feedback on how we can improve is intended to guide our professional development. Thank the faculty member or student giving you feedback.

If the feedback is too general “you’re doing great” try to get more specific information. Some faculty members might not be used to giving specific feedback. That’s OK – help them be more specific.

Examples:

“Do you think I ask enough open-ended questions?”

“Can you observe me doing the lung exam and correct any mistakes I’m making?”

“I need help with the knee exam, can you watch me and give me feedback?”

“I find it challenging to ask sexual history questions in the geriatric population because they are my grandparents’ age, can you give me some tips on how to improve?”

Giving Feedback

You will also be asked to give your colleagues feedback. Listen carefully as you observe your colleague do a medical interview or physical exam. Identify and share one aspect (behavior) of their performance you thought they did well and an opportunity for improvement. Be specific.

Examples:

“Muge, I really enjoyed watching you interview your patient. I appreciated how you made her feel comfortable by explaining to her what you were going to do. Her body seemed to relax after that. I noticed you asked her most of the questions about her pain and she described her pain as bad. One thing you may try next time is to have her grade her pain on a scale of 1-10.

“Hasan, I learned from observing your interview. I really liked how you asked about her drinking history without being judgemental by saying you ask these questions of all your patients in order to help them. I’m going to try that next time. One thing I would have included is to also ask about recreational drug use.”

“Celen, you had a very complicated patient and you asked all the detailed questions about diabetic complications, that was impressive. One suggestion I had is to remember to auscultate the abdomen before palpating which would be the correct sequencing for the abdominal exam.”