

## **Orienting Learners**

**Learning objective:** At the end of this session, participating residents will be able to orient a medical student or intern to a new rotation.

### **The “ORIENT” Approach to Orienting a Learner to a New Rotation**

#### **Orientation**

- Clarify mutual goals for this orientation session: what are the learner’s expectations today?
- Discuss mutual goals and expectations for the rotation.
- Start with the learner: What does s/he hope to get out of this rotation? Explore learner’s concerns and interests in detail.
- What are his/her learning goals?

#### **Responsibilities**

- Explain learner’s role in patient care and other teamwork:
  - Format for supervision and teaching;

- Expectations regarding charting;
- Where and when learner will receive feedback;
- Call arrangements;
- Anything else s/he should know about your particular institution.

### **Interchange**

- How can the learner best balance service vs. learning goals during the rotation?

### **Education**

- Model *self-directed learning*: ask learner to define his or her own learning goals and how s/he can best achieve them.
- Offer suggestions for reading and learning during the rotation (books, articles, online resources, consultants).

### **Needs**

- What questions does the learner have?
- Is there anything else going on that you might help with (e.g., any special needs or concerns)?

### **Timing of follow-up session**

- Any final questions or comments?
- When would learner prefer to meet again to follow up on mutual goals for the rotation?

### **Introduction to Learning Theory**

#### **Concept:**

Adult learners (and probably any other learners) learn best through **interactive, learner-centered** teaching focused on their **self-defined learning goals**.

#### **1970s: Behavioral Learning Theories**

- Learning defined as a change in observable behavior
- Behavioral learning objectives
- Student ratings of teachers became more popular.

### **1980s: Cognitive Learning Theories**

- Learning defined as the active construction of meaning
- Teaching strategies focus on helping learners “encode” new knowledge within existing conceptual frameworks.

### **1990s: Social Learning Theories**

- Learning defined as socialization into a new community of knowledge
- Teachers seek to promote a “learning culture” among students.
- Role modeling becomes particularly important in professional training.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century: New Learning Theories?**

Resident teachers and medical faculty can combine and expand learning theories from past decades

to create new approaches to teaching and learning.

**Reference:**

Wilkerson LA, Irby DM. Strategies for improving teaching practices: a comprehensive approach to faculty development. *Academic Medicine* 1998; 73: 387-396.