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Original Research

Clinical Instructors' and Athletic Training Students' Perceptions of Teachable Moments in an Athletic Training Clinical Education Setting

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Abstract

Context: For some time, educators have advised clinical instructors (CIs) to capture the elusive teachable moment in clinical education. However, a universal definition of a teachable moment does not exist. Without a clear understanding of this concept, CIs and athletic training students (ATs) may have difficulty facilitating the teachable moment.

Objective: To recognize and define a teachable moment as it relates to the athletic training clinical education setting and to identify potential barriers to creating the teachable moment.

Design: Mixed-methods design employing grounded theory and quantitative analysis.

Setting: Collegiate sports medicine clinic affiliated with a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs–accredited athletic training education program.

Patients or Other Participants: 11 CIs (6 men, 5 women) and 11 ATs (3 men, 8 women).

Data Collection and Analysis: Participants completed a teachable moment questionnaire to define and identify teachable moments. Follow-up semistructured interviews were conducted after data collection. A qualitative analysis was conducted on responses using open, axial, and selective coding. Member checking was conducted to establish trustworthiness. Qualitative data were quantified to descriptively report the findings.

Results: Engaged clinical experiences were the overarching theme. Three major themes that defined a *teachable moment* emerged: (1) professional discourse about skills, techniques, research, and special cases; (2) authentic experience or actual hands-on experience; and (3) skill development or time for skill instruction, practice, role playing, and simulations. Participants reported 158 teachable moments (CIs = 75, ATs = 83). Lack of time and other duties were examples of

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barriers hindering the teachable moment.

Conclusions: The teachable moment occurs when a CI and an ATS actively participate and interact with each other to enhance learning and foster intellectual curiosity in the clinical education environment. An underlying barrier to the teachable moment is perceived to be the CI's day-to-day responsibilities.

Keywords: [athletic training education](#), [instructional strategies](#)

Valerie J. Rich, PhD, ATC, CSCS, WEMT-B, contributed to conception and design; acquisition and analysis and interpretation of the data; and drafting, critical revision, and final approval of the article.

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