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Original Research

Questioning Skills Demonstrated by Approved Clinical Instructors During Clinical Field Experiences

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Abstract

Context: The current trend in athletic training clinical education places greater emphasis on the quality of interactions occurring between Approved Clinical Instructors (ACIs) and athletic training students (ATSS). Among other attributes, the ability of ACIs to facilitate and direct quality clinical learning experiences may be influenced by the skill with which the ACI is able to use selected teaching strategies.

Objective: To gain insight into ACIs' use of questioning as a specific teaching strategy during the clinical education experiences of undergraduate ATSS.

Design: Qualitative case study design involving initial and stimulated-recall interviews, prolonged field observations, and audio recording of ACI-ATS interactions.

Setting: The primary athletic training facility at one athletic training education program accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education.

Patients or Other Participants: The 8 ACI participants included 3 full-time athletic training education program faculty members and 5 graduate-level assistants. The 24 ATS participants included 1 senior, 17 juniors, and 6 sophomores.

Data Collection and Analysis: Transcribed data collected from 8 initial interviews, 23 field observations, 23 audio-recorded ACI-ATS interactions and 54 stimulated-recall interviews were analyzed through microscopic, open, and axial coding, as well as coding for process. The cognition level of questions posed by ACIs was analyzed according to Sellappah and colleagues' Question Classification Framework.

Results: The ACI participants posed 712 questions during the 23 observation periods. Of the total questions, 70.37% were classified as low-level cognitive questions and 17.00% as high-level cognitive questions. The remaining 12.64% were classified as other.

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Conclusions: Although all ACIs used questioning during clinical instruction, 2 distinct questioning patterns were identified: strategic questioning and nonstrategic questioning. The way ACIs sequenced questions (their questioning pattern) appeared to be more important than the number of specific cognitive-level questions posed. Nonstrategic questioning appears to support knowledge and comprehension, whereas strategic questioning appears to support critical thinking.

Keywords: [athletic training education](#), [clinical education](#), [pedagogy](#), [critical thinking](#)

Mary G. Barnum, EdD, LAT, ATC, provided 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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