

Lab Instruction

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Lab Instruction

Lab instruction is an integral part of any surgical technology program. It is the place where the student will learn the “DO” or “HOW” part of surgical technology. The students learn how to scrub, gown, glove, set up a mayo, backtable and the other pieces that involve the hands-on aspect. They will learn the “WHY” in the didactic portion of their schooling. It is important that the lab instruction follows some basic rules.

Consistency

When you are teaching the lab, make sure that the instruction is consistent. There are many ways to teach the hand scrub, but stick with something every time. The textbook *Surgical Technology for the Surgical Technologist* recommends either the counted-brush stroke method or timed method. Choose one of two methods for teaching purposes and teach it the same way each time. It is also important that if there is more than one instructor, each instructor know how each subject/skill will be taught.

Plan

A plan for each lab is a must; knowing what will be taught during that time will facilitate the learning process for the student. When the student knows what to expect, they tend to be better prepared for that aspect of learning. Even a simple outline is better than nothing at all. As long as you are prepared, the chances of problems occurring are lessened.

Materials

Have the teaching material ready before the actual lab. It can take up precious time to gather supplies at the start. 15 minutes lost is still 15 minutes lost.

Utilize your assets

Utilize your assets, which may be the faster learners. The students that are able to catch on quickly can then help the slower learners. Peer teaching is a great asset and many students readily learn with this style.

Class size

The smaller the number of students in the lab class, the better the instructor can place emphasis towards one-on-one instruction. The CAAHEP *Standards and Guidelines for an Accredited Educational Program in Surgical Technology* states “Adequate student supervisions is defined as12:1 student to instructor in the lab.” It is too difficult and takes too much time to supervise and instructor 13 or more students. Individual attention may be needed by some students and the slower students would suffer with a class size that large.

Know your own abilities

Know what you are comfortable doing and what you need practice on. It should be noted that if you have too many students and do not know the material, lab will go poorly. Practice what you are going to teach and stick with it. Do not say things such as, “I will teach you this way, but you will see this” and proceed to do something different than what was just taught. Let the students know that what is being taught are the right things and do not show them shortcuts that go against what is being taught. An example of this could be placing a knife blade on a scalpel handle using the fingers. We know that this is wrong and should never be taught, but it may be seen. Let them know the expectations and policies of the program from the start.