

## **B. Laboratory**

### **V. Lab Instruction**

Lab instruction is a vital component of surgical technology education.

Lab instruction is also a challenge for several reasons. First, students have for the most part never been in an actual operating room. Second, this part of the course is like no other in its intensity and scope and third, not all students are adept at hands on skills and must be able to perform a set of skills that is foreign to their life experiences.

It's hard for a student to imagine an actual operating room if they have never been in one. For the most part they have either the image that everything in the room is sterile and quiet or it's hectic and chaotic like on television. They are scared to touch anything and have a hard time understanding the equipment and furniture out of context.

Before you can instill the idea of surgical conscious and sterile technique the student must have a clear understanding of the principles of microbiology and asepsis.

When teaching students about the surgical scrub it is not unusual to see several who hold the brush still and move their arms. This incorrect movement must be stopped immediately and corrected. If a student gets into a habit of doing something incorrectly it's hard to correct the action. I can't just glance at students at the sink area and assume that they are using correct technique. I also try to teach them to make conscious effort to pay attention to what they are doing at all times. I have a little clicker and when I see something incorrect or that doesn't make sense I click the clicker. They know to freeze at that point and I can correct the error. Usually each one thinks they have made the error!

I have seen students who memorize operating room equipment and furniture in place in the operating room and then can't describe it or identify a picture or description of the same piece of equipment on a test. The more a student is exposed the better they become. I also do some fun things every now and then to help them out. I have them identify items by feel or description while blindfolded. Each of the other lab mates gives them a hint. It helps to ease the tension.