




BLOG

"We're Not Too Busy": Teaching With Time Constraints on Rounds

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Rounds are busy. When patient care becomes overwhelming, teaching often gets cut short. If clinical instructors do not teach with a deliberate focus on the time available, workflow is interrupted and learners lose attention.^{1,2} As a result, articles have focused on redesigning rounds to incorporate more teaching.^{3,4} However, knowing how to best use free moments on rounds through explanations and demonstrations allows teachers to maximize teaching opportunities while minimizing the effect on rounding time.

Here, we propose two strategies for teaching in 30-second (*focused*), 2-minute (*expanded*), and 5-minute (*conceptual*) segments. Strategy 1 is based on selecting question words followed by an **explanation**, while Strategy 2 uses **demonstrations**, **role modeling**, and **patient interactions**. Given the time available, pick the strategy that works best for the lesson you want to convey.

Strategy 1: Teach through <i>explanation</i> by selecting introductory question words	Time available	Strategy 2: Teach through <i>demonstration</i> by role modeling
<p>30 seconds (<i>focused</i>): Ask what/which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What</i> are Charcot's triad and Reynold's pentad? • <i>What</i> are the layers of the abdominal wall? • <i>Which</i> aspirin dose is given in myocardial infarction? • <i>Which</i> antibiotic is inactivated by lung surfactant? 		<p>30 seconds (<i>focused</i>): Demonstrate physical exam features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation • Pupil reactivity • Skin blanching • Friction rub • Lung percussion • Asterixis • Peripheral edema • Babinski reflex
<p>2 minutes (<i>expanded</i>): Ask why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why</i> does the heart look bigger in an anteroposterior film? • <i>Why</i> would you do a diagnostic paracentesis first? • <i>Why</i> is calcium low in tumor lysis syndrome? • <i>Why</i> would you give thiamine to an alcoholic? 		<p>2 minutes (<i>expanded</i>): Role model conversations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining how a surgical procedure is done • Reviewing discharge medication changes • Preparing a patient for how a stress test is performed • Helping a pediatric patient feel calm during an exam
<p>5 minutes (<i>conceptual</i>): Ask how</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How</i> do you work up a fever in a newborn? • <i>How</i> does liver disease cause thrombocytopenia? • <i>How</i> do you decide which hypertension medication to give? • <i>How</i> does malignancy cause hypercalcemia? 		<p>5 minutes (<i>conceptual</i>): Set up frameworks for discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a framework for summarizing the plan of care • Using the SPIKES mnemonic⁵ for delivering bad news • Explaining the risks/benefits/alternatives for a procedure consent • Appropriately incorporating a live translator

Remember, for both strategies:

- ✓ Keep track of time while you teach: Teaching takes longer than it feels.
- ✓ Be specific rather than all-inclusive: Others will teach, too.
- ✓ Watch body language: Are the learners still paying attention?
- ✓ "Signpost" teaching: Make it obvious that you are teaching.

References:

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