Student Success: Preparing Students to be Successful Graduates

What is success? Is success relative? Should we be open to many ideas of success? Am I willing to be open to others’ ideas of success?

Four Basic Components of Student Success

Responsible Mentors
- Instructors are the models for “say-show-do”, especially behavior.
- The instructor, preceptors and other personnel are the first massage therapy professionals that students are observing. The communication styles, attention to detail, adherence to time management, and acceptance of responsibility used by the instructor will cement the student’s idea of what is acceptable behavior for a massage therapy professional.
- Supportive Learning Environments include environments the student feels safe to learn. This does not exclude the growth pains of learning. Getting students to ADD to their own classroom rules is a creative way to identify boundaries for students.
- Using the suggested terms, clear expectations, communication methods and demonstrating the soft skills you expect students to adhere. (Especially acceptance, respect and unconditional positive regard.)
- Know your material – seek help as an instructor for material and new ideas.

Resourceful & Motivated
- Strong ELAP foundation
- Consumer Minded
- Imaginative
- Has the ability to locate sources for answers
- Strong Work Ethic

Real Life Scenarios
- Authentic Learning and Assessments
- Challenged and allowed to examine failure
- Workforce equivalent tasks

Dynamic
- Open to Alternatives
- Investigates possibility of change
- Understands research elements

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• Make sure the material is covered in learning activities.
• Embed constructivist activities in the student activities. For example, have clients that report rare diseases or dab fake blood on a client’s arm for surprise in a clinical scenario.
• Investigate the social and economic obstacles for your geographical location. What would happen if the students did succeed? In lower economic settings, it may change their dynamics.
• Seek professional development for your department to equip faculty with changing theories and processes.
• Establish a student support and learning center within your facility or department (as part of the tuition).
• Follow protocols for students questioning other instructor’s methods or courses. Establish a support and trust system for a cohesive faculty. This starts at you. Students like to bait the instructors, a better response may be:
  o “I would ask Mr./Ms. __________ first to clarify the statement or approach. If you are uncomfortable, would you mind if we talk together with Mr./Ms. _________? I was not in her class so there maybe something I am missing.”
• Establish journaling or concept mapping to describe the thought process so the instructor gets a peak at thought processes of why the made the treatment plan or made an ethics choice.
• Have students not only describe what their dreams or aspirations are, but have them detail exactly how they would accomplish their one or five year plans.
• Development of sealed midterms and finals. Keeps a checks and balances system for administrators, faculty and students.
• Refer out to other resources.
• See Open Education Resources (OER) below

Resourceful and Motivated Students

Resourcefulness:
• Thinking like a consumer, but valuing business policies
• Understanding the importance of preparation and resources

Resources:
• American Massage Therapy Association https://www.amtamassage.org/research/index.html
• Department of Health and Human Services https://www.hhs.gov/
• Directory of Open Access Journals https://doaj.org/search
• International Journal of Therapeutic Massage & Bodywork Archives: http://www.iitmb.org/index.php/iitmb/issue/archive
• Massage Therapy Foundation http://massagetherapyfoundation.org/resources
• Sixteen OERs Every Educator Should Know: (OER) https://campustechnology.com/articles/2014/07/02/16-oer-sites-every-educator-should-know.aspx
• Textbooks: (OER) https://www.oerconsortium.org/discipline-specific/

Motivation:
• How is this applicable to the student? Is it useful? Does it stay on syllabus/curriculum direction? Is it fun and challenging?
• Get them to see the value.
• Find their learning preferences and how to adapt to obstacles. “I can do this!”
• Share what good work ethic is and what skills and abilities comprise good work ethic (Predmore, 2005)
• Social-emotional learning (what is appropriate for the student?)
  o Have students define “a facility conducive to learning means…”
• Optimism from the instructor and class
• Achievement of short term goals! “Kaizen: a reoccurring concept emphasizing small, continuous, never-ending improvements. Little by little, bit by bit, I’m improving everyday”. Relates to grading criteria. Clinical and performance based learning should be scaled for improvement. Your final performance evaluation should not be your evaluation for day one of clinical experience or student labs.
• Holding other students accountable*** Must be a balance between empathy and consequences
• Clear communication and follow through
• Mapping of goals and exactly how to get there
• Explain to students you are gauging their behaviors and reactions even for the unexpected

Dynamic Students
• Expect that change is a natural phenomenon
• Teaching students to investigate what could change
  o Research and understanding
  o Laws and guidelines
  o New pathologies
  o New environments
  o Labor trends
• Coming up with alternatives
  o Have students come up with two treatment plans for the same client/scenario
  o Instills the possibility of options which decreases stress and arguments
• Peer reviewing and peer mentoring

Real Life Scenarios with observable consequences
• Authentic Learning and Authentic Assessments
  • Expect the unexpected: Spot of artificial blood, psychiatric role-play, paraplegic client, computers/technology mishap, unethical clients, disgruntled clients, rare pathological conditions, medications, colostomy bags
  • Blood Recipe
    • ½ cup light corn syrup, nestle quick liquid cocoa, red food coloring and corn starch if needed.
  • Colostomy Bag: quart zip lock bag, medical/bandaging tape, baby food: green peas and mixed vegetables OR green algae mud with liquid tea.
• Challenged and allowed to examine failure
  • Failure is a natural phase in learning during practice. Allow ample time for remediation and for self-assessment and self-critiquing.
• Workforce equivalent tasks
  • It is important that students are equipped with the actual tasks of the workforce they enter.
• Business applications
  • Instructors should refrain from overly biased assumptions
  • Assimilate market research and accounting basics with consumer thinking
  • Refer students to business courses at community colleges or continuing education
References


