

How to manage the challenging student

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Learning Objectives

- To consider what might constitute a challenging student
- Small group work regarding previous challenging students and generate ideas for management
- To review theory for management tips

What is a challenging student?

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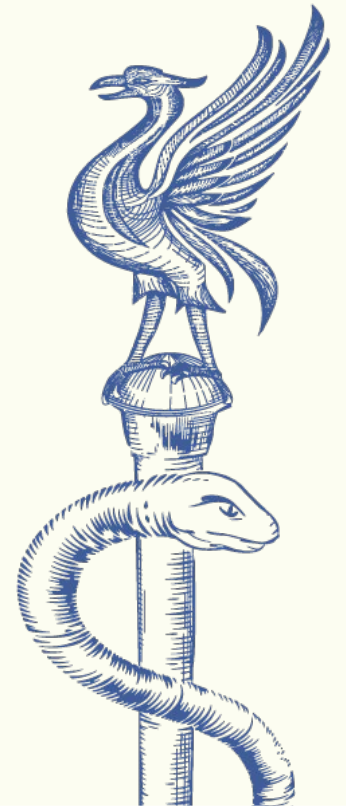
- Overconfident
- Underconfident/ shy
- Never stops talking
- Unprofessional attitude
- Disruptive to other students
- Disinterested
- Closed to feedback
- Plagiarism/ missing deadlines
- Punctuality issues
- ...And many more!

What is a challenging student?

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Group Work

- On your tables, have a think about students you may have found more challenging to tutor
- What were the main challenges?
- What approaches did you try to improve the situation and how did it go?
- Ideas from the group about any additional strategies which may help?
- Scenarios on table if any groups struggling to think of a challenging student!



Feedback



Tips for managing challenging behaviour

- Feedback early to student (timely following encounter) but consider environment
- Be open, start as a wellbeing chat, allow opportunity for disclosures
- Invite the student to assess their own performance first (what went well, less well, Pendleton): reflection
- Focus on specific behaviours not interpretation or possible character traits
 - eg “I noticed you were looking at your phone screen repeatedly during the consultation” rather than “you did not appear to be interested in the consultation”
- Ask to brainstorm alternatives, plan changes, when will you review?
- Be prepared for emotion

Tips for any concerns

- Consider wellbeing issues
- [Primary Care - School of Medicine - University of Liverpool](#)
- Wellbeing team school of medicine
 - wellbeing.mbchb@liverpool.ac.uk 0151 794 8756
- University support services (counselling etc)
- External support (signpost own GP for support etc)

Persistent concerns

- [Sharing Concerns - School of Medicine - University of Liverpool](#)
- [Measuring Professionalism Concerns Form \(office.com\)](#)
- If completed, mention in final ES

Inappropriate attitude or behaviour	Minor / Moderate	
Lack of engagement with training, programme of study or clinical placements	1	
Lack of cleanliness and inappropriate dress	1-2	
Neglect of administrative tasks	1	
Failing to answer or respond to communications	1	No point allocated for first occurrence. Points may be allocated for further failures to respond to University communications
Challenging behaviour towards clinical teachers and colleagues	2 – 3	
Unwillingness to learn from constructive feedback given by others and includes failure to accept and follow educational advice	1	
Being rude to patients or others	3 – 4	
Poor time management skills including punctuality	1	

Overconfident student

- Bias: tendency to overestimate knowledge
- Borracci et al (2018): medical students: actual MCQ score compared to confidence in their score
- 12% students showed overconfidence (8.3% underconfident)
- Better students less overconfidence than those with poorer performance (link Dunning et al. but note statistical artefact)
- Overall **small** number of students

Overconfident student

- Ehrlinger et al (2016) Preferential attention towards simpler tasks (confirming confidence): fixed mindset
- Confirmation bias and information gathering
- Previous healthcare experience (appropriate role?)
- Clinical implications: oversimplify reasoning, fewer differentials, fewer investigations or referrals, “premature diagnostic closure” (Lam et al., 2020)

Overconfident student: tips

- Give oral feedback early in placement
- Structure feedback: self assess first, then provide constructive feedback (eg Pendleton) including unknown unknowns you pick up on
- Push depth of learning: Ehrlinger et al. suggest encouraging a “growth mindset” (Dweck, 2007), explore challenging aspects of cases
- Encourage critical thinking, reflection on bias, consideration of uncertainty and complexity (Croskerry and Norman, 2008)
- Bolster any less confident colleague

Disinterested Student

- Again, consider wellbeing issues
- Consider neurodiversity (attentional issues?)
- Consider burnout (Song, 2020)
- Learning skills?
- Not interested in GP as a job

Disinterested Student: tips

- Song (2020): To help with burnout: connection and reduce isolation, emphasise values, BUT aware of pressures of service provision as well as teaching
- Not all future GPs: emphasise transferable learning to possible future roles
- If tipping into professionalism issues, discuss early, support and report as needed
- Discuss structure for joint sessions to allow practical engagement
- Follow up!

References

- Borracci, R.A. and Arribalzaga, E.B. (2018). The incidence of overconfidence and underconfidence effects in medical student examinations. *Journal of Surgical Education*, 75 (5), 1223- 1229.
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- Erhlinger, J., Mitchum, A.L. and Dweck, C.S. (2016). Understanding overconfidence: Theories of intelligence, preferential attention and distorted self-assessment. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 63, 94-100.
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Thank you.

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