**How to Challenge the Outstanding Student**

*Having a student who exceeds your expectations can be a mixed blessing. It’s always nice to have a student who requires little direction, is disciplined, and demonstrates motivation and a high level of knowledge. However, it can sometimes be difficult to challenge that student to prevent boredom and encourage continued learning.*

Below are some suggestions for working with the Outstanding Student.

* Ask them about topics or diagnoses they are interested in learning more about, and ask them to perform research on those topics, reporting findings back to you and / or your staff.
* Have the student research information on a piece of equipment that few people use within your department, a new piece of equipment you just acquired or are thinking of acquiring, or a treatment technique that your team knows little about. Then, ask the student to provide an inservice to educate the staff about what they learned.
* Have the student spend time with other disciplines, observing them performing assessments and treatments on patients. If the student is able to observe treatment of patients that the student shares with those disciplines, that’s ideal, but not necessary.
* Schedule for the student to observe surgery or other procedures within your setting or in “sister” settings.
* Ask your student to create interesting and unique treatment strategies that have not yet been tried on a particular patient.
* Do you have a project related to patient care or clinical practice that you have been meaning to work on? Assign appropriate components of the project to your student.
* Involve the student in administrative-type meetings to allow the student to understand the “inner workings” of your clinic and of the health care profession.
* Tap into some of your student’s additional talents. For example: Is your student a good artist? Ask them to develop PR material for your clinic or new exercise handouts for the patients. Is your student an effective writer? Ask the student to create information sheets for patients, explaining various diagnoses are physical therapy treatments.
* Schedule a time for your student to meet with the clinic supervisor or manager to learn more about managing a PT clinic.
* If there are additional students at your facility (PT, PTA, or other professions), let your student work with the other student, whether it be on a project, patient care ideas, or simply learning about the other profession.
* Provide the student opportunities to delegate or lead others, as appropriate.