

How to guide and support an assistant?

... in order to make her/him a good instructor

The following considerations shall summarize the tools and criteria, which we already have to accompany our assistants and to judge on their assistantships.

- a) Competency criteria
 - b) teaching units
 - c) preparatory / reviewing discussions and practical rehearsal after/before each course day
 - d) special tasks in preparation to an upcoming course (mostly by mail)
 - e) lecturing, exercise demonstration , treatment demonstration during the course and its direct feedback and interaction between instructor and assistant
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to a) **competency criteria**

Here we have beside the basics and PNF-related items some items that deal with teaching- and social-competencies as listed below. I consider “teaching and social competencies” as hard to differentiate in some items.

Parts of the Form: Competency Criteria for Assistants (version 10/2008):

- structured presentations
- an appropriate amount of information according to the level of the Group
- maintenance of group's interest
- ability to express her/himself precisely and understandable
- ability to deal with conflicts and solve problems that may occur in the group in a timely manner
- ability to lead a discussion, maintenance of self assurance, also in difficult Situations
- ability to keep control of discussions (time, able to stop when it is deviating from topic or making no progress)
- ability to answer questions correctly and appropriately
- ability to keep a teaching pace adequate to the level of the group and to the teaching goals
- ability to create a pleasant, constructive, non-threatening learning atmosphere
- use of rhetoric skills
- ability to reflect her/his own teaching critically
- ability to use his body language

- re-asses during and after treatment
- work using the PNF philosophy
- involve the group into the process of clinical reasoning and treatment Planning
- maintain contact with the group and the patient during demonstration
- lead a discussion with the group after the demonstration
- answer questions correctly and appropriately
- reach the goal of the demonstration in a set time
- recognize mistakes of participants
- distinguish between major, relevant and minor, non-relevant mistakes
- correct participants understandable and adequately.
- show patience during corrections
- respect the participants and to maintain politeness in all teaching situations
- share the correction/supervision time in a fair way with all participants
- show positive approach in correcting participants
- covers all assigned teaching units in PNF1 and PNF2 with his own and adequate teaching material / media (folios, slides, videos, hand-outs etc.)
- uses teaching material (board, AV-media etc.) adequately
- maintains contact to the supervising instructor
- provides the instructor with required teaching material in a time set by the instructor before the course
- is able to discuss constructively teaching procedures or PNF matters with the supervising instructor
- accepts reasoned constructive criticism and incorporates it into his future Teaching
- is competent in anatomy, physiology, functional understanding, biomechanics, motor learning
- knows about latest trends, scientific findings and other physiotherapy treatment approaches and is able to discuss them in relation to PNF (parallels and differences)
- knows the IPNFA bylaws, rules and regulations
- shows ethical correctness and professional behaviour at all times

additional for recommendation for ICC:

The assistant has an complete PNF1 and 2 course script and all teaching material required to teach a basic course	
The assistant is demonstrating readiness to hold lectures about any topic relevant to PNF basic courses: for example: PNF-philosophy, PNF-history, basic principles and procedures, techniques, gait analysis, motor learning, neurophysiological bases, irradiation etc.	

The definitions how to grade a performed unit or a lecture, is clear in words. However, obviously it is much trickier to apply it honestly and by this helpful for the assistant. Following I **marked** those parts in the text, which draw the border lines between the grades. Perhaps we must recommend our instructors to re-check these definitions and hence to feel more safe when grading a weak performance appropriate low (guidance) than too lax (low guidance).

I am not really clear about the wording of “Acceptable (1 point)” or I even doubt if this is clear. Mustn’t it be “Lower level” instead of “Lower limit”

Good (3 points): in majority good teaching performance, few minor but less important corrections necessary, good support of supervising instructor. Course objectives of course participants could be achieved.

Average/satisfactory (2 points): shows partially good teaching performance, but needs to be corrected in some points, but the “flow” of the course is not disturbed. Course objectives of course participants could be mainly achieved.

Acceptable (1point): Lower limit, for the group just tolerable, obvious deficits in teaching qualities. Course objectives of course participants could be just achieved

Not acceptable (0 points): not tolerable for the group, obvious interference of the course flow. Objective of the participants could not be achieved, not up to standard, this assistantship does not count

Recommendation “Ready for instructor course”: good teaching performance throughout the course, only occasional and minor corrections necessary, course objectives of course participants could be achieved. Earliest recommendation in 4th assisted basic course

to b) **teaching units**

For the “teaching units” we open the form with the commission:
“Please put your initials and date when the course assistant instructs each section SUCCESSFULLY.”

Yet, what means successfully. Again the grading as listed above is helpful enough in my opinion (could be achieved – could be just achieved – could not be achieved).

to c) **preparatory / reviewing discussions**

This possibly differs strongly depending on the level of the assistant, which day of the course has to be reviewed/prepared and for how long the mentor (instructor) knows the mentee (assistant). But both, the assistant and the instructor should expect a minimum amount of time they have to spend together each day after the course. Or vice versa, an assistant must doubt the quality of the mentorship, if it falls below this amount of time.

to d) **special tasks**

Again, if it would be the introductory course of mentee and mentor together, more details have to be clarified and tasks have to be given ahead of the course. Especially this item is relevant during the ICC. But perhaps we must utilize this tool in other assistantships as well in order to enhance the quality of our mentorship.

to e) **direct feedback and interaction between instructor and assistant**

This point, in my opinion, is very tricky and challenges us (the mentors) a lot. It has big potential as to support but also to distract the assistant. Here I can imagine a lot of weaknesses by ourselves. E.g. we can disturb the flow of the assistants performance by (a well meant) criticism or advice. The course members as well should get an idea of the teachers-setting, which they can expect. Who is answering which questions when? Who is responsible for what...?!

Also for this point I expect some good ideas and recommendations during our mentoring-workshop.