Empowering Excellence in Clinical Education

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Identify clinical instructors' role as influential educators bridging classroom learning and clinical practice, shaping student development, professional identity, and patient care

2



Recognize educators' responsibility to lead educational excellence through intentional collaboration with clinical instructors, fostering consistent, high-quality educational environments

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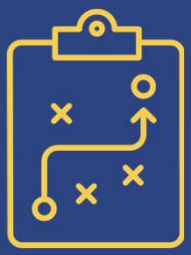

Establish practical strategies to support clinical instructors in embracing their role as educators, including structured initiatives, feedback systems, and a case-based workshop model

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Who is a Clinical Instructor?

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As defined in the *CAAHEP Standards & Guidelines for the Accreditation of Educational Programs in Diagnostic Medical Sonography*:

Clinical Instructor

- A clinical instructor must be identified for each clinical affiliate.
  - **Responsibilities**
    - A clinical instructor must be available to students whenever a student is assigned to a clinical setting, provide appropriate clinical supervision, and be responsible for student clinical evaluation.
  - **Qualifications**
    - Clinical instructors must have the appropriate credential in the concentration(s) for which they evaluate student performance and document required clinical competencies.[1]

CAAHEP

JOINT REVIEW COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION IN JRC·DMS DIAGNOSTIC MEDICAL SONOGRAPHY

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As defined by *my students*, a clinical instructor is someone who…

"…is **invested in the future of sonography**, who **sees your potential**, **challenges you to improve**, and **supports you** as you become a capable, compassionate future sonographer."

- **El**, Class of 2026

"…**loves what they do and instills their passion and love for sonography into the students they work with**. They are patient, **turn any exam into a learning opportunity**, and **take the time to give constructive feedback** on how to improve in all categories."

- **Lilly**, Class of 2026

"…**encourages, but also critiques** to ensure daily growth as a sonographer—someone that reminds students learning the field of sonography is a growing curve, and **everything will come with time**!"

- **Zakira**, Class of 2026



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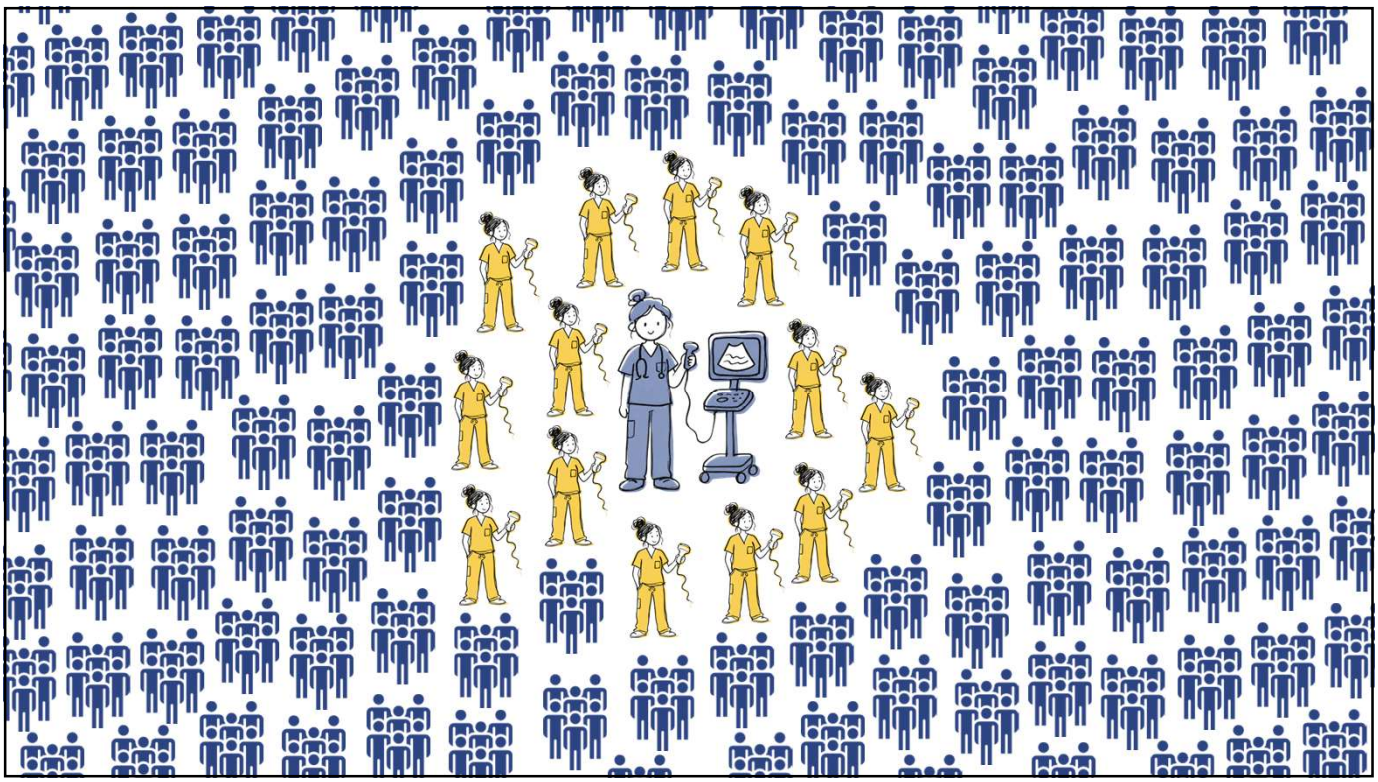

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Quantifying the Immeasurable

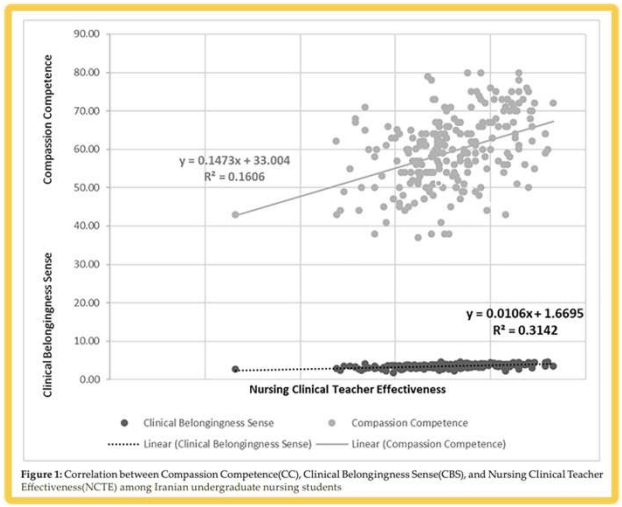

Figure 1: Correlation between Compassion Competence(CC), Clinical Belongingness Sense(CBS), and Nursing Clinical Teacher Effectiveness(NCTE) among Iranian undergraduate nursing students

Source: Pourteimour & Hosseini, 2025

- In a study of 237 nursing students published in the Journal of Advances in Medical Education & Professionalism, **clinical teacher effectiveness explained 31.4% of the variance in students' sense of clinical belonging**, and positively correlated with **compassionate competence and self-esteem**.[2]

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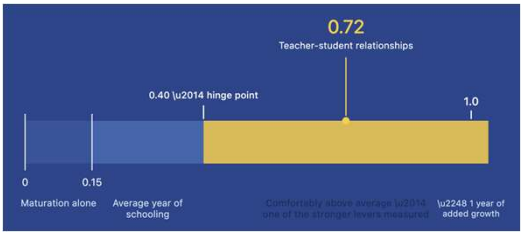
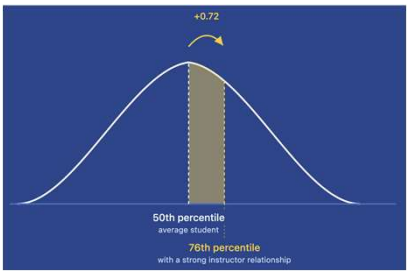
Quantifying the Immeasurable (Cont.)

- In John Hattie's *Visual Learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*, Hattie found that **learners with strong relationships with their instructor performed, on average, 0.72 standard deviations better than comparable students without that relationship**.[3]
- **The relationship between a student and their instructor is nearly twice as powerful as the average educational intervention**.[3]





Adapted From: Hattie, 2009

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Classroom-to-Clinical Handoff

- The moment a student leaves didactic/Scan Lab instruction and enters the clinical classroom, the **CI becomes the primary teacher**.
- **This often occurs without:**
  - Formal handoff
  - Set instruction/feedback expectations



- Instruction Framework Expectations
- Continuity/Quality of Feedback
- Who Our Students Are
- What Our Students Goals Are
- **Our Students' Confidence**

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Recognize educators' responsibility to lead educational excellence through intentional collaboration with clinical instructors, fostering consistent, high-quality educational environments

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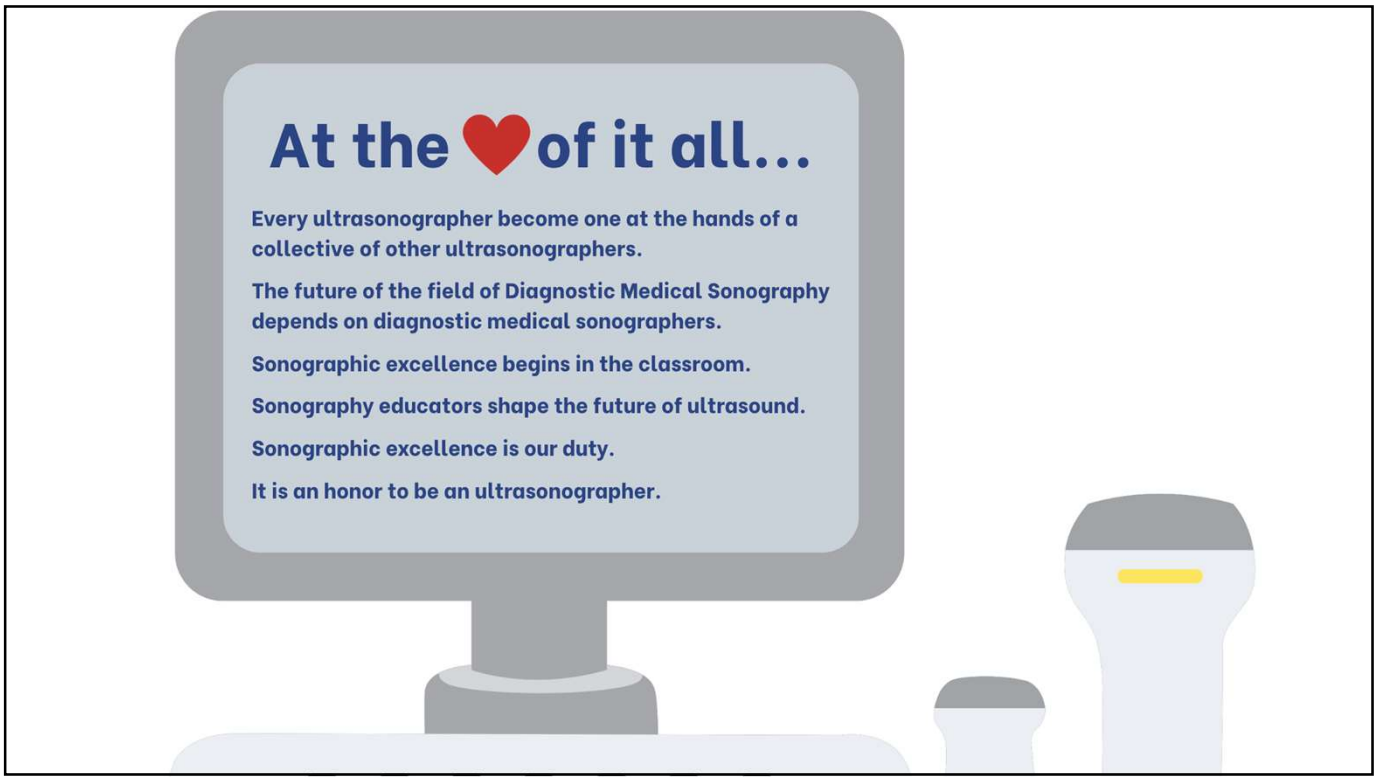
2026 SDMS Annual Conference



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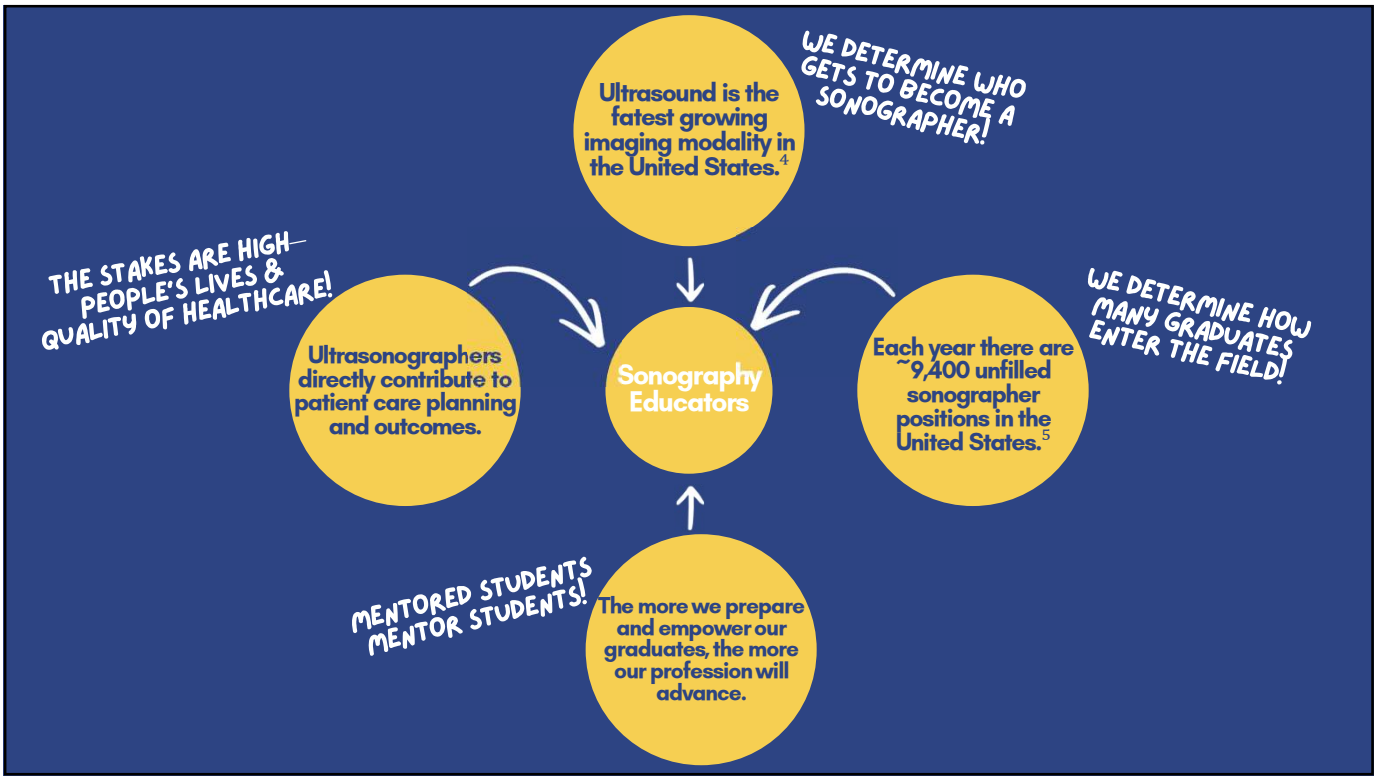

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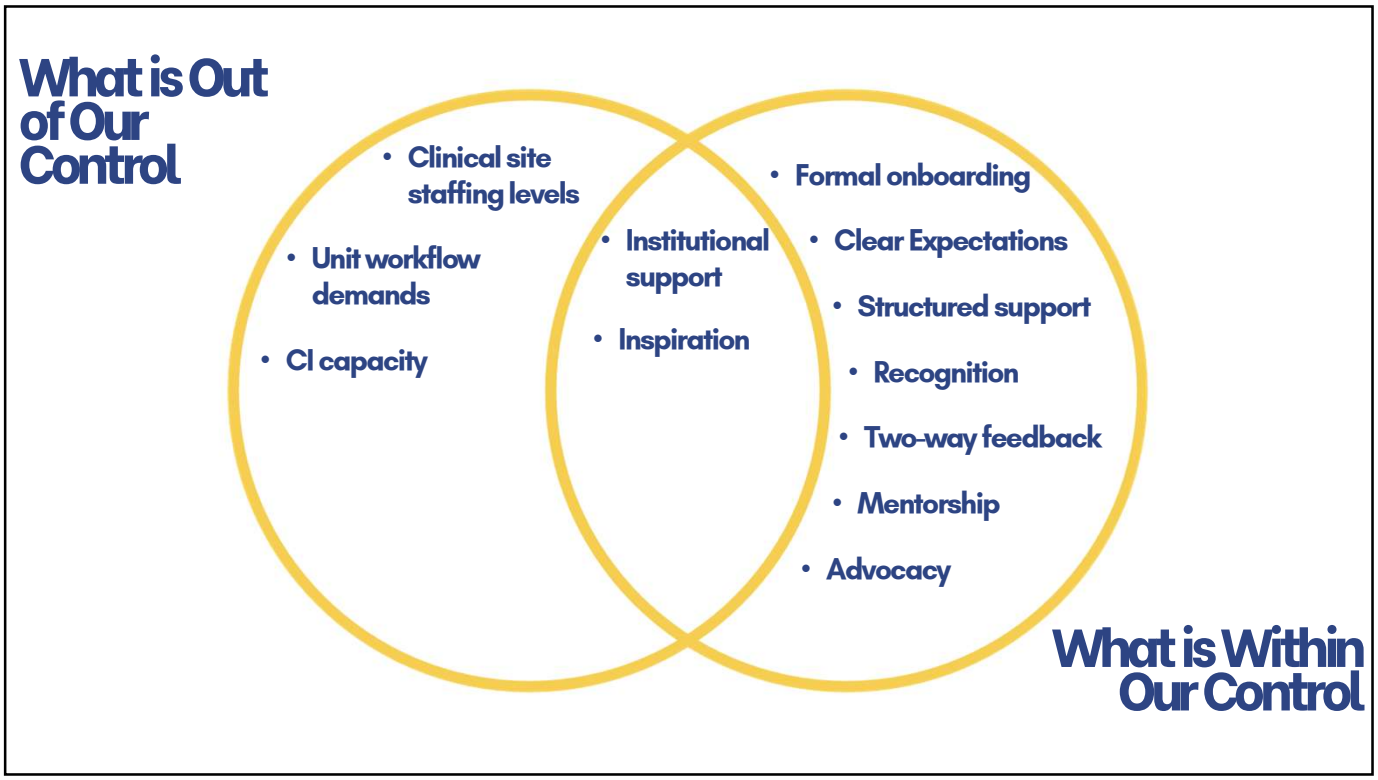

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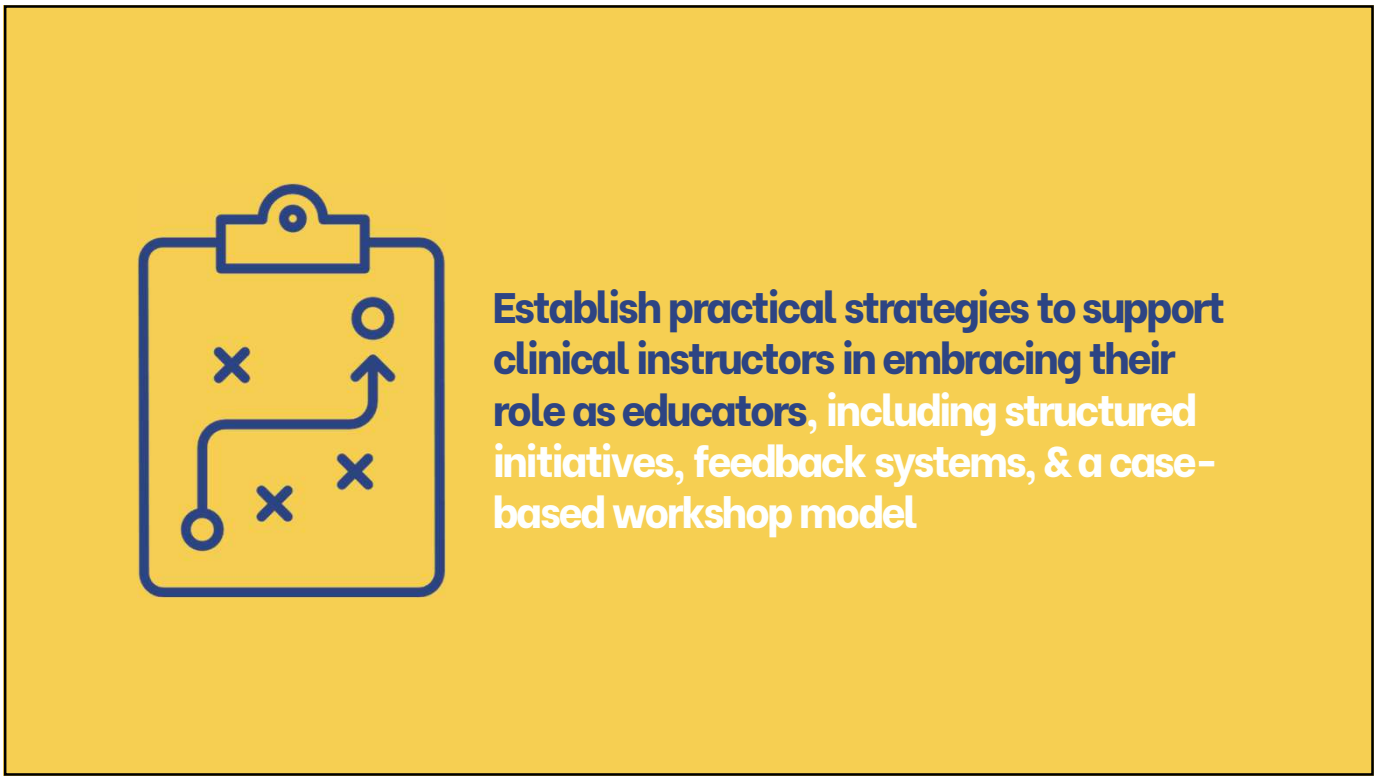

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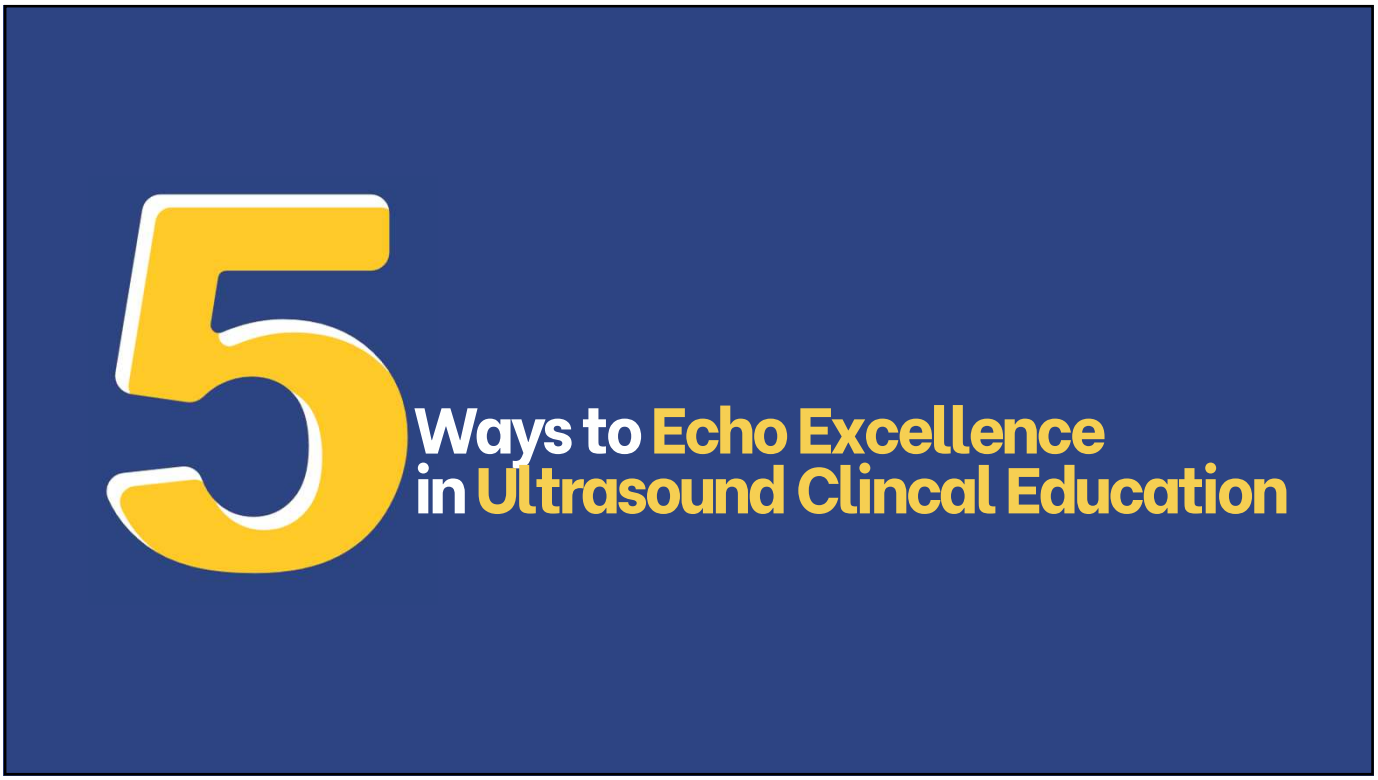

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1 Collaborate in the Structure of the Role

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Role Structure Matters

- **The relationship you have with your clinical affiliates is** up to faculty to foster.
- **Role Structure Matters**
  - Being the education-point-of-contact is a **resume-building responsibility**—regardless of a formalized title.
    - **Make an effort to collaborate with leadership in role structure design within clinical affiliate settings.**
    - **Your advocacy may help to:**
      - Designate Point of Contact/Education Lead
        - Lead to a formal title
      - Identify interested CIs
      - Standardize Clinical Evaluation Completion Process



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2 Practice, Promote, & Build-in Mentorship

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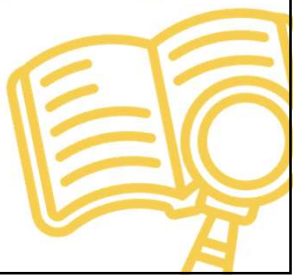
A Mentorship Culture

- **Mentorship isn't just given to students—it is witnessed by them.**
- **Students should regularly witness mentorship in the system around them.**
- This can look like:
  - Inviting interested/specialized Clinical Instructors for guest lecturing opportunities
  - Connecting colleagues with one another
  - **Formalized Mentorship Program**
    - Know your CIs interests and strengths, and leverage that information to support professional relationships with those aligned.
    - Digital **Mentor Compact** to be completed by a Clinical Instructor or Student interested in formalizing a mentor-mentee relationship.
- **Mentored students mentor students!**

Mentorship (noun)
"A professional, working alliance in which individuals work together over time to support the personal and professional growth, development, and success of the relational partners through the provision of career and psychosocial support"[6]



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Mentoring Compact

- Roles & Responsibilities
- Goals & Objectives
- Meeting Schedule
- Confidentiality
- Duration
- Evaluation & Feedback
- Boundaries

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3 Provide a Framework

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Psychological Safety: A Non-Negotiable

- **Research clearly indicates that fostering psychological safety in the medical education setting:**
  - **Alleviates** learners of feeling a **constant sense of self-consciousness** regarding how they are being perceived or how competent they are[7]
  - **Encourages** and **enables learners** to be **present** in the learning moment
  - **Decreases the fear** of asking questions[7]



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Feedback (Dun, Dunn, Dunnn)

- In their study exploring Australian sonographer educators' and trainees' perceptions regarding the teaching of sonography skills, Burnley & Kumar found that

100%

of respondents

reported that the addition of more consistent and frequent feedback was of the utmost importance for sonography skills acquisition (72/72).[8]



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Ramani & Krackov's 12 TIPS for Effective Feedback in the Clinical Enviroment[9]

1. Establish a **respectful learning environment**
2. **Communicate goals & objectives** for feedback
3. Base feedback on **direct observation**
4. Make feedback a **timely & regular occurrence**
5. **Begin** the session with the **learner's self-assessment**
6. **Reinforce** and **correct** observed behaviors
7. Use **specific**, **neutral language** to **focus on performance**
8. **Confirm** the learner's **understanding** & **facilitate acceptance**
9. **Conclude** with an **action plan**
10. **Reflect on your feedback skills**
11. Create **staff-development opportunities**
12. Make feedback **part of institutional culture**

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4 HOB'S Sono Steps for Ultrasound CIs

1 Greet & Goal-Set
- Set the tone of a safe space for clinical learning
- Establish individualized expectations
- Identify **Singular Student Goal**

2 Make a Scan Plan
- Establish a plan for student scanning opportunities
  - Communicate what the learner can do to maximize their scanning opportunities

3 Set a Feedback Chat
- Identify/guestimate a good time for image review

4 Vibe Check
- **Ask the Learner:**
  - What are you feeling good about?
  - What do you think you could work on?
- Tell your learner what you think
- Revisit **Singular Student Goal**

3 Daily Goals
- ☐ **Direct Observation Event** x1
- ☐ **Hand-Over Hand Instruction** x1
- ☐ **Diagnostic Discussion** x1

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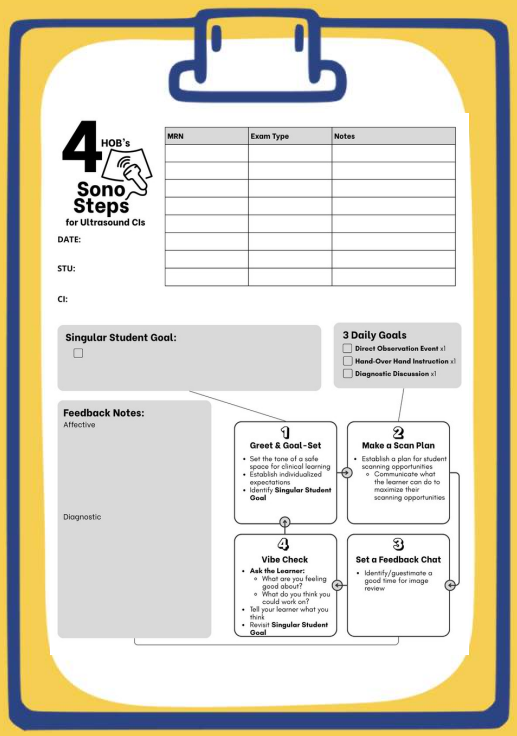
4 HOB's Sono Steps for Ultrasound CIs



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4 Support & Implement Education-Skill Professional Development

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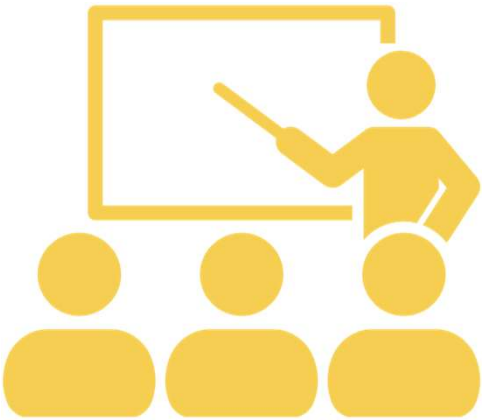
Faculty-CI Connection Opportunities

- **Annual Comittee Meeting**
  - You have your CIs attention—utilize it!
- **Clinical Affiliate Department Staff Meetings**
  - Connect with leadership to see if they may be interested in a Lunch & Learn on clinical instruction
    - Opportunity to provide CIs with more CMEs
- **Clinical Instructor Workshop**
  - **Bring your CIs to you!**



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5 Recognize & Celebrate!

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Program CI Workshop Model

- What better way to inspire, empower, and thank clinical instructors than by inviting them to the very place where it all started—school?!
- **Pros**
  - Bridges the gap between program and clinical affiliate
  - In-person (or virtual) connection bringing the ultrasound community together across sties
  - Front-facing instruction opportunity
  - Endless opportunities for feedback, ideas, and gratitute
- **Cons**
  - I got nothing!



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Welcome
Program Updates & Overview

Talk I: *Becoming a Courageous Mentor*

Networking & Story Sharing
Yap and share pandemic lore with peers over light refreshments

Talk II: *Sonographic Excellence Starts at the Bedside*

Talk III: *4 Sono Steps for Ultrasound CIs: A Clinical Instruction Framework*

Reiki Recovery
A sonographer-guided restorative session closing the day by taking care of the people who spend their days taking care of everyone else

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Include, Recognize, & Celebrate!

- **Every earned credential, every award, every graduation—include, recognize, & celebrate your clinical instructors!**
  - They are an integral part of the team—none of us would be here if not for CIs!
- **Include Clinical Instructors as extended faculty members**
  - Quarterly Newsletter
  - Clinical Instructor Spotlights
  - Alumni Updates

Celebrate & inspire the above and beyond!

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Thank you!
Discussion & Questions?



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Scan to Connect!

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