No one wants to fail a student and there are proactive measures that fieldwork settings can take to minimize the risk of failure and maximize success. Some suggestions for doing this are:

1. Have clearly defined goals and objectives;
2. Have written, clear standards that describe competent and incompetent skills/behaviors;
3. Have a system for addressing the failing student;
4. Present feedback in a consistent, open, documented manner;
5. Keep the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator informed and aware of issues.

Having written guidelines such as the above in place will make it easier to evaluate the student and provide objective feedback and strategies to improve behaviors. However, even the best situation can result in problems.

Process for Dealing with Problematic Behaviors

1. Identify the specific behaviors that are problematic.
   a. Obtaining feedback from your peers may be helpful to validate your observations and provide additional information; for example, how often and in what situations is the behavior observed? A behavior that has only been observed once may not be fair to mention; the student may correct this on his/her own.
2. Give thought to the impact of these behaviors on clinical and professional success.
3. In clear terms, define, discuss and document with the student:
   a. The expected behavior;
   b. The behaviors that are being demonstrated;
   c. What behavior needs to be seen? Be careful to specifically define what will be considered acceptable or competent.
   d. Provide strategies to improve the behavior.
   e. Take into account difficulties and strategies provided by the student.
   f. Insure that the student understands what needs to be done.
   g. Set a time line for improvement.
4. Evaluation
   a. Objectively consider the progress the student is making.
   b. Provide feedback on those areas in which improvement is shown and in those areas that continue to be problematic.
5. Maintain contact with the school
   a. Please feel free to contact the school at any point in this process, but especially if problematic behaviors continue or you have any concerns about a student’s performance. The Penn College clinical director can be reached at: (570) 320-2400, ext. 7571 or by e-mail: jmk1@pct.edu.
6. Evaluation and final disposition of the situation is to be made by the Pennsylvania College of Technology Occupational Therapy Assistant Program.
Resources
