Objective: To gain insight into ACIs’ use of questioning as a specific teaching strategy for assisting students in transferring information from theory to application to clinical proficiency.  

Design and Setting: I utilized a qualitative exemplar case study to examine ACIs’ questioning skills when interacting with ATS in clinical experiences during pre/post practice/competition. All ACI/ATS interactions took place within the primary athletic training facility at 1 Athletic Training Education Program (ATEP) accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP). Subjects: The 8 ACI participants consisted of 3 full time ATEP faculty members and 5 graduate level assistants. The 24 ATS participants consisted of 1 senior level, 17 junior level, and 6 sophomore-level ATS. Measurements: Transcribed data collected from 8 initial interviews, 23 field observations, and 54 stimulated recall interviews were analyzed through microscopic, open and axial coding and coding for process. Cognition level of questions posed by ACIs was analyzed according to Sellapagh et al Question Classification Framework. Results: ACI participants posed a total of 712 questions during the 23 observation periods. 70% of questions were classified as low cognition level questions, with 17% classified as high cognition level questions. The remaining 13% of questions were classified as other. While all ACIs utilized questioning during clinical instruction, the data analysis process identified two distinct questioning patterns: strategic questioning and non-strategic questioning. Conclusions: Athletic training students need to develop both athletic training technical knowledge and clinical reasoning skills in order to develop clinical proficiency as defined by the Athletic Training Educational Competencies. Data collected in my study serves to highlight that ACIs who use non-strategic questioning target primarily low-level cognitive skills associated with the technical aspect of the formula and do not build upon base knowledge as a catalyst for tackling complex concepts. Strategic questioning is fundamental in assisting students with the development of critical thinking skills, which are the basis for problem-solving and clinical reasoning. ACIs who are skilled in strategic questioning are able assist students in developing both technical and clinical reasoning skills.