

The ESP Student Blog

“Mindful Learning – Developing Entrustable Skills”

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have the power to eliminate any doubts about your entrustability and that special power lies in understanding *beyond* the EPA as an activity – you need to understand “entrustable *thinking!*”

What is entrustable thinking?

Entrustable thinking is a consistent, well-defined, integrative approach to each of the 13 EPAs, as described in the [AAMC Learners Guide](#). To fully appreciate what entrustable thinking involves, it needs to be compared to pre-entrustable thinking. A pre-entrustable student is a beginner – a novice at a beginning point where thinking is very robotic. They attempt to think from memorized knowledge and to apply rules equally to all circumstances, seemingly unaware of integrative knowledge. The danger in this thinking is that it gives a false sense of security and, thus, may be habit forming. However, as the student becomes entrustable, their thinking becomes more skilled in anticipation of contingencies, i.e. choosing between options. This extends, for example, from gathering when necessary a more focused history, to providing a rationale for recommending diagnostic tests, and to documenting a clinical encounter in the patient record. To summarize, the entrustable student is always aware of the rationale for the choices they make.

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First, understand clearly that medical school is not about making you change who you are. Instead, it is an opportunity to *develop* who you are. This is a different battle for each individual student, but the most common starting assumption is based on the erroneous belief that success in getting in equals success in getting out. If you can set that belief aside, you are ready to begin. Second, follow the principles taught in the prematriculation block materials. This program is designed to be self-administered without reliance on a teacher. In fact, the ESP helps you understand how to best use your teachers in your education.

Important advice for a successful transition to entrustability: Avoid relying on memorization and recognition in place of developing and organizing your own integrated knowledge base.

How do you demonstrate entrustable thinking to a program director?

You have two opportunities to personally demonstrate entrustable thinking.

1. In a personal statement
2. In an interview

Both of these will be covered next in a sequel blog post with explanation and examples.