

Fourth Edition

Assessing Essential Skills of Veterinary Technology Students

Edited by **Lisa E. Schenkel**
Amanda Colón • Sandra Lynn Bertholf
Sabrina Timperman • Laurie J. Buell



WILEY Blackwell

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To all of our veterinary patients, past, present, and future, and to those who choose to rise to the challenge to give them a voice.

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Preface

The importance of a qualified, skilled, and critically thinking veterinary technician/technologist on the veterinary team cannot be overstated. In today's modern society where medicine is becoming more advanced and complex, a team of health care providers who work collaboratively, each contributing their expertise to provide the best possible care for their patients, is the ideal in any veterinary facility. As part of the journey of becoming a veterinary technician/technologist, the development of solid technical skills, critical thinking, and problem solving is essential. Everyone agrees how important it is to know how to complete a task, but that knowledge alone is not enough. Understanding how to work through a problem, analyze important data, come to appropriate conclusions, and determine the most appropriate response are skills all veterinary professionals must strive to attain. As veterinary technology educators, the goal is to guide our students, teaching them the required veterinary knowledge while at the same time providing the education that supports the development of their ability to think through problems, reason out correct interpretations, and determine the most beneficial course of action. As educators, the job of teaching these skills is crucial, but of equal importance is the role of assessing skills acquisition in a manner that is commiserate with current standards of care. Veterinary technology programs across the nation strive to meet both these objectives. The current landscape of veterinary technology

education has changed over the years. Currently, there are 222 veterinary technology programs accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities (AVMA CVTEA®). Of these, 28 are four-year programs, 10 are online programs, and the remaining are two-year programs. Regardless of what type of program a student attends, the goals and objectives are the same. All programs strive to teach their students the skills they will need to be successful members of the veterinary team. While differences in programs are inevitable, the goal is steadfast: Prepare each student to be the best technician/technologist possible so they can provide exemplary care.

Attaining this goal is of the utmost importance for veterinary technology educators, their students, and the profession. Variability exists in how different programs tackle the challenges of educating veterinary technology students, as it should. Each program is unique and needs to navigate how best to teach their population of students. What is consistent across programs is the decision-making skills and tasks that each veterinary technology student must attain to graduate from an AVMA CVTEA accredited program. The evaluation of any student's competency in completing these skills successfully, however, can inherently be subjective. It is important, therefore, to create a way to objectively evaluate students, ensuring that any student who graduates from an AVMA CVTEA accredited program has attained the level of