

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

FREE* Newsletter

*(Faculty Resources for Educational Excellence)

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Quote of the Month

“Without continual growth and
progress, such words as
improvement, achievement and
success have no meaning.”

— [Benjamin Franklin](#)

The Value of Peer Teaching Observation

Having others observe your teaching sessions can often evoke stress and anxiety for faculty. However, peer observation can serve as a meaningful form of personal and professional development that can improve teaching practice.

While there are several methods to help improve teaching, peer observation has been cited in the literature as a valuable tool to help highlight what teachers may be going well and pinpoint areas for enhancement (1). Teaching observations can provide specific, constructive feedback from a peer focused on specific or general areas of teaching. Observed teaching encounters are not exclusive to classroom teaching. These observations can be done during large group, small group, bedside, PBL, and other teaching moments.

Aside from the natural element of personal development peer observation offers, the VTCSOM faculty handbook encourages observation as evidence of successful teaching within the faculty promotion process.

While there are several models of peer observation, TEACH has developed an exciting opportunity for faculty to take advantage of in order to gain peer teaching feedback faculty. The **TEACH Teaching Observership and Consultation** program allows experienced educators to provide objective and confidential feedback on current teaching practices, offer educational resources for improving skills, and assist faculty in measuring their impact on learners. A bonus benefit of this opportunity is that this exercise counts toward faculty members' annual requirement for faculty development related to teaching.

The **Teaching Observership and Consultation** process is confidential and non-evaluative in nature. It begins with a brief pre-observation meeting where faculty members' can identify areas of focus and share any specific areas on which the faculty member would like to focus. During the observation, the observer assumes a passive and discreet role within the teaching opportunity while they compile detailed and descriptive feedback. A post observation meeting is then scheduled to provide the constructive feedback, set goals, and reflect on the process.

Peer observation is an important developmental process for health professionals who also hold the responsibility of teaching. We invite you to take advantage of the Teaching Observership process to facilitate thoughtful change and growth within your teaching practice. To initiate a request and see our list of observers, visit the TEACH webpage (<http://info.vtc.vt.edu/teach/educator-development/teaching-observership/>).

Mariah Rudd

References:

1. Sullivan, P. B., Buckle, A., Nicky, G., & Atkinson, S. H. (2012). Peer observation of teaching as a faculty development tool. *BMC medical education*, 12(1), 26.



Dean's Corner

Cynda Johnson, MD, MBA

You may have heard of TTR1 and TTR2, our newest acronyms at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and the innovative program associated with them. I'm pleased to report initial success with this new two-part program and tell you more about it.

We have expanded the Dean's Colloquium, now called Transition to Residency or TTR. In the past, the two weeks prior to graduation was called the Dean's Colloquium and was an opportunity to explore topics of interest to soon-to-be graduates, including debt repayment and financial aid, legal issues, and topics pertinent to residency.

Fourth-year students will still go through that two-week session ahead of graduation, but an additional two-week period surrounding Match Day and the Medical Student Research Symposium has been added. Both sessions are now known as Transition to Residency (The first two-week session is TTR1. The second session, TTR2).

The change in the schedule was made to allow more curricular time to cover what the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) calls Core Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) for Entering Residency, which are 13 skills they believe students should attain in medical school ahead of residency programs. The AAMC has encouraged medical schools to reinforce the skills with upcoming graduates. . [You will find a complete list of EPAs and their related competencies here.](#)

Using an existing two-week elective in March that was always interrupted by Match Day, we developed and implemented a short curriculum that included simulation and other meaningful learning activities to test the skills of our upcoming graduates.

In addition to reinforcing skills, the extra two-week period allows more flexibility for students who are part of the scramble during Match Week and the research symposium, without conflicting with a clerkship rotation schedule. We think we are the first medical school to implement such as comprehensive two-part Transition to Residency Program. Informal feedback has been positive.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge Dr. Tracey Criss, who took the lead in developing the curriculum and the 40+ faculty members who helped with developing and carrying it out.

--Cynda