OCPD FREE*

August 2020

**Faculty Resources for Educational Excellence*

Upcoming Events

Click here for an at-a-glance view of our upcoming events for the next 3 months

Educational Technology Uncertainty – Integrating Technology Meaningfully Into our Teaching

The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it the need to pivot educational content online, leaving many scratching their heads about which online learning spaces to use, resources to try, and where to turn. Educational technology tools can be used to move content online, supplement in-person teaching, replace didactics, increase engagement, and more. However, it is imperative that we ensure our changes and new technological additions align with learner needs, content, and our overall program (1). It is up to educators to identify best practices for the integration of education technology and the creation of online learning experiences. Rethinking instruction processes and design can help to aid during the transition. Utilizing online learning and other education technology resources can help to enhance the learning experiences during the pandemic as long as we continue to follow a student-centered approach (2). Below are some tips to remember as we integrate technology and shift our focus to quality (instead of necessary speed) for moving our teaching online.

- **Align instruction difficulty and techniques with learners' developmental level:** Content can quickly be overshadowed with an overly complex or overcomplicated educational technology enhancement. We want our learners to be challenged to help drive learning but not confused. Strategically choose your resources for learning and utilize tools to pace your learning.
- **Gather learner input and engagement in design:** Learner engagement and motivation can be increased by improving your understanding about how they learn best. Take the time to learn their issues with any new technology tools or online platforms.
- **Minimize unnecessary technology changes:** Extraneous features that don't add to the learning may in fact end up inhibiting it. Distracting additions, unnecessary information, and extraneous materials can create unnecessary burden on cognitive load. By minimizing any extraneous features, you can ensure better retention and engagement..
- **Personalize your online teaching presence:** Utilizing personalized video and audio to create a unique online presence can help to engage learners and add credibility to online activities.
- **Create opportunities for interactivity and engagement:** Today's learners have short attention spans and will likely check-out without some interaction. Group work, collaborative activities, and interactive modules are ways to keep learners engaged. However, you want to ensure you find the right balance of interactivity, too much can overload working memory and inhibit learning (esp. when learner is fatigued)
- **Revise assessments to align with learning:** New technologies like virtual, augmented, and mixed reality offer great ways to enhance and assess learning. There are also several online platforms for creating and hosting assessments. Educators need to ensure that any, even new technologically-enhanced, assessments remain authentic and strategic. Aligning all assessments with content helps to increase motivation and enhance learning.
- **Provide learner feedback:** Timely feedback is critical no matter the format or venue of your teaching. Providing learners with verbal feedback helps to reduce discrepancies between understanding, performance and desired outcomes. There are several online tools that allow for automatic feedback (see below for a great resource!).
- **Support learners through the change:** Adjusting to new learning methods and new technology can be challenging even on the learners. They may require assistance developing needed motivation and self-regulation skills if some content has moved online. Online videos, blogs, and readings can help encourage self-regulation in learners. The provision of support materials necessary to learn any new technology integrated into teaching can help to improve learner self-efficacy.
- **Continuously re-evaluate new technology and methods:** Every new learning design requires evaluation and feedback to improve the intervention. Perception, presentation, and discussions can change the effectiveness of a change to teaching. Educators and learners should be involved in regular review and quality improvement of online teaching methods and technological enhancement.

The tips above can be used to rethink health professions education in the post-pandemic era. In addition to these tips, a comprehensive resource for educational technology tools allows for meaningful decision making when considering changes and enhancements. If you are looking to integrate some teaching technology tools into your recently evolved virtual learning environment, check out this **Online Tech Tools for Educators**, a living document regularly updated by tech higher education experts. Check it out!

Mariah Rudd

References:
Reyna, J. (2020). Twelve Tips for COVID-19 friendly learning design in medical education. MedEdPublish, 9.

Yavner, S. D., Pusic, M. V., Kalet, A. L., Song, H. S., Hopkins, M. A., Nick, M. W., & Ellaway, R. H. (2015). Twelve tips for improving the effectiveness of web-based multimedia instruction for clinical learners. Medical teacher, 37(3), 239-244.

Dean's Corner

At VTCSOM, preparing future leaders in medicine requires us to teach the fundamentals of how health care is delivered and how systems can work to optimize the health of patients and communities. Health Systems Science (HSS) comprises 12 different content domains that are relevant for physicians to understand. Each month this year the Dean's Corner will highlight one of the 12 domains of HSS.

The COVID-19 pandemic, its economic impact, and restrictions placed on access to affordable care under the current administration underscore the importance of **health policy and economics**. Policy and funding decisions explain, in large measure, why some nations' health systems generate better outcomes for the population than experienced in other nations. They also explain why different subgroups of a single nation's population experience different outcomes.

The Medicaid program was established in 1965 to give medical insurance to people receiving cash assistance and now covers 66.8 million Americans including low-income families, pregnant women, people of all ages with disabilities, and people who need long-term care. Medicaid is administered by state governments, according to requirements of the federal government, and is funded jointly by the two. There is wide variation in the services offered by Medicaid, because states can tailor their Medicaid programs to best serve the people in their states.

The current pandemic has produced high rates of unemployment, disproportionally affecting the most economically vulnerable communities, including communities of color. Regrettably, Medicaid expansion has become politicized instead of being viewed as the natural health policy response to the increasing number of low-income Americans.

In a recent article published in **The Hill** three physician health policy experts from George Washington University explain the advantages for Medicaid expansion. "The Affordable Care Act (ACA) allows states to expand Medicaid to all adults earning less than 138 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) or just under $30,000/year for a family of three. While 38 states and DC have expanded Medicaid, the remaining 12 states that have not done so. . . . [have] a 'coverage gap.' Residents may earn too much to qualify for Medicaid (in some places, 'too much' can be as little as $4,000 a year for a family of three), but below the threshold to qualify for subsidies within state health insurance marketplaces (100 percent FPL). Worse yet, in these same states, childless adults cannot get Medicaid at all, regardless of salary. With COVID-19 shuttering American businesses, 27 million Americans have lost their employer-based health insurance, leaving them vulnerable to this coverage gap."

The authors go on to emphasize how Medicaid expansion improves health disparities and steadies state budgets, citing losses of billions of federal dollars by states that choose not to expand Medicaid. They conclude by recommending that we use the pandemic as an opportunity to reconsider health care policy in the United States.

Through our curriculum in Health Systems Science and Interprofessional Practice (HSSIP) we want all graduates of VTCSOM to understand the interplay of health policy and economics, under usual circumstances and during a crisis. At a minimum. this requires that our students learn to: 1) define the core principles of the formation and implementation of health policy in the U.S.; 2) explore the economic aspects of the U.S. health care system; 3) look at how health care professionals, health plans, and patients affect health care spending; and 4) identify central themes of health care reform in the U.S. over the last century (**American Medical Association**).

By becoming scientist physicians and systems citizens, our graduates can participate more fully in designing and supporting policy solutions that are essential for the communities they serve.

Lee A. Learman, MD, PhD

Dean and Professor

Office of Continuing Professional Development (OCPD)
Shari Whicker, EdD, MEd
Senior Director, Office of Continuing Professional Development
Assistant Dean, Faculty Development
Director, TEACH (Teaching Excellence Academy for Collaborative Healthcare)
Associate Professor, Departments of Pediatrics and Interprofessionalism
Carilion Clinic
Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

Professional Development
Mariah Rudd, BS, Manager
Sandra DeHart, Curriculum and Media Coordinator
Deborah Ferron, Secretary

Continuing Medical Education
Paul Dallas, MD, Medical Director
Linda Wells, CHCP, Manager
Paula Robertson, CHCP, Senior CME Program Specialist
Carol Gibson, CME Program Specialist
Susan Curtiss, Secretary

"Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting people working together & motivating them, the teacher is the most important" – Bill Gates

Send us an email | *Give us a call @ 540-588-3103*

OCPD Website | TEACH Website