The Value of Teaching Observations

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 benefit of the personal development that 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. 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:

I am always delighted to see faculty at our graduations. Our students, I am certain, are more than delighted. They are thrilled to see their teachers and mentors all around them during this memorable time in their lives. This year, 56 faculty members attended graduation— the same number as last year but more than in several other years past. Seeing the ribbon of color from 56 gowns process into the auditorium at the Jefferson Center was a highlight of the event. Below is a list of faculty who processed during graduation. To each of you, I thank you for your commitment to our students.

In case you missed the festivities, more about Graduation 2017, including links to a photo gallery, a video of the pre-graduation dinner program, a video of the ceremony itself, and an eloquent and moving “Toast to Roanoke” by Class President Chris McLaughlin, may be found here…


Thank you to these faculty members for your attendance at Graduation 2017:

Dr. Alice Ackerman  
Dr. Sarah Barrett  
Dr. Andrew Binks  
Dr. N.L. Bishop  
Dr. John Burton  
Dr. Thomas Caceci  
Dr. Helena Carvalho  
Dr. Bryan Collier  
Dr. Tracey Criss  
Dr. Francis Dane  
Dr. Ludeman Eng  
Dr. Michael Friedlander  
Dr. Evelyn Garcia  
Dr. Mark Greenawald  
Dr. Joanne Greenawald  
Dr. Daniel Harrington  
Dr. Michael Jeremiah  
Dr. Bruce Johnson  
Dr. Cynda Johnson  

Dr. Anita Kablinger  
Dr. Daniel Karolyi  
Dr. Donald Kees  
Dr. Eileen Kenny  
Dr. Kye Kim  
Dr. Unnoh Kim  
Dr. Aubrey Knight  
Dr. Leslie LaConte  
Dr. Renee LeClair  
Dr. Bruce Long  
Dr. Thomas Milam  
Dr. Thomas Miller  
Dr. Andre Muelenaer  
Dr. David Musick  
Dr. Brock Mutcheson  
Dr. Michael Nolan  
Dr. Michael Nussbaum  
Dr. John Perkins  

Ms. Elizabeth Pline  
Dr. Melanie Prusakowski  
Dr. Craig Ramey  
Dr. Sharon Ramey  
Dr. Jayasimha Rao  
Dr. Randall Rhea  
Dr. Charles Schleupner  
Dr. Tarin Schmidt-Dalton  
Dr. Paul Skolnik  
Dr. Mark Swope  
Dr. Sarah Thomas  
Dr. Robert Trestman  
Dr. David Trinkle  
Dr. Richard Vari  
Dr. Ralph Whatley  
Dr. Shari Whicker  
Dr. Kathleen Williams  
Dr. Janet Young