

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

FREE* Newsletter

*(Faculty Resources for Educational Excellence)

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Dan Harrington, MD
Sr. Associate Dean, Academic
Affairs

Bruce Johnson, MD
Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs

David Musick, PhD
Assistant Dean, Faculty
Development

Phone: (540) 853-0131

E-mail:
dwmusick@carilionclinic.org

Web:
[http://www.vtc.vt.edu/education/
faculty_affairs/](http://www.vtc.vt.edu/education/faculty_affairs/)

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Quote of the Month

"Is education merely the transfer of information?...it is now the responsibility of the students to gather information....class time can be devoted to discussions, peer interactions & time to assimilate & think....instead of teaching by telling, I am teaching by questioning" (Eric Mazur, PhD, Harvard University).



*"Is It Time to Flip My
Classroom?"*

What is the "Flipped Classroom"?

In follow up to last month's article on the role of lecturing in health professions education, we should consider a relatively recent alternative to the lecture, i.e., the "flipped classroom". This method involves a more active form of learning, whereby students are expected to either review printed materials and/or online modules prior to coming to the large classroom setting. Then, class time previously devoted to lectures or other methods of information transfer are used for discussion, question-and-answer sessions, small group learning, clinical correlation sessions with patient cases or other more "hands on" activities. What are the arguments in favor of this new approach? There are at least three:

1. **Knowledge Retention:** students are more likely to retain important information by the use of this type of active learning, as compared to lectures (which are considered more passive learning activities). And, students are likely to find this approach to be more enjoyable, too!
2. **Life-Long Learning:** we now live during a time when medical knowledge has reached the point whereby educators cannot possibly hope to cover "everything" in the formal curriculum. Therefore, it becomes much more important for educators to give students the tools they need to practice life-long learning, i.e., knowing where to find & manage information as well as how to discern its accuracy & applicability to clinical care.
3. **Control of Learning:** it is proposed that today's students are markedly different in terms of how they learn most effectively ("learning styles"). Specifically, many if not most students prefer to obtain basic information online or in electronically-based delivery systems.

There doesn't appear to be much, if any, educational research that has demonstrated the superiority of this approach (unless I missed it). However, there is evidence that learning something in the context in which it will eventually be put into practice or applied does increase knowledge retention.

What do you think? Is this simply another "trend of the decade", or is the flipped classroom here to stay?

David Musick, PhD

P.S. Our own Dr. Mike Nolan will do a presentation on this topic on **Tuesday, May 27, 2014 from 12:00noon to 1:00pm**. This session will be held in Med Ed Classroom 2 at Roanoke Memorial Hospital. If you are interested, please call us at (540) 853-0131 or visit our web site: <http://www.carilionclinic.org/education/continuing-professional-development-open-curriculum>