

Introductory Teaching Skills Course
University of Arkansas College of Medicine
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

The Teaching Skills Course is a four-hour workshop as a component of housestaff orientation for all incoming residents. In a large group setting residents participate in an interactive discussion of positive and negative teaching experiences during medical school, and these are related to principles of adult learning. A module comparing the process of instructional design to the process of patient care is presented; participants are introduced to concepts of formative evaluation and given actual examples of both good and bad feedback taken from student evaluations.

Next, the development of feedback skills is facilitated during role-play sessions by faculty preceptors who are recognized as outstanding teachers. While the large group session with residents is in progress, faculty preceptors are given a thirty-minute orientation to the small group activities. Then, residents divide into smaller groups of 10-12. One or two faculty facilitators conduct the small group sessions, providing several clinical feedback scenarios: resident to student, resident to resident, and resident to faculty. Residents role-play scenarios for several minutes, followed by discussion within the groups.

The groups are then reassembled into the single large group for instruction in effective methods for summative evaluation. Actual good and bad examples of written evaluations are presented and ways to improve the evaluation comments are discussed. Participants are then shown three 3-4 minute videotapes of staged clinical encounters designed to represent third year medical students at the beginning of their third year clinical rotations. Residents and faculty preceptors complete standard evaluation forms for each of the videotaped encounters.

After completion of the evaluation forms, residents return to the small groups again with preceptors. Facilitators discuss resident evaluation comments and ratings of each scenario and offer suggestions to improve the usefulness of the evaluations.