

# Teaching Tips

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## Department of Family & Social Medicine Faculty Development E-Newsletter



### Tips for Using Direct Observation

Direct observation of trainees with patients followed by appropriate feedback is a critical component of the medical education curriculum. Below are some tips to help preceptors implement direct observation of trainees during clinical encounters. For more detailed information, see Hauer et al (2011).

#### 1. Create a culture that values observation

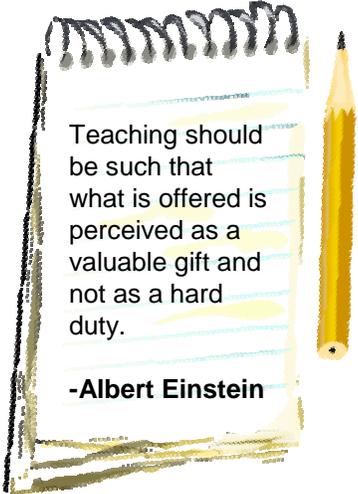
- Communicate the importance of direct observation to students and the entire healthcare team.
- Explain how direct observation and feedback help learners develop clinical skills. It may also help decrease anxiety about being observed.
- Incorporate direct observation into your daily routine. For example, integrate into patient care responsibilities or use web and/or PDA-based assessments to easily access and complete observation forms.

#### 2. Plan for direct observation

- Review the competencies and objectives of the program to guide your observation and feedback. Be aware of the specific clinical and communication skills that are expected of learners at each training interval.
- Participate in faculty development to learn how to use specific assessment tools and rate learners' performances reliably.

#### 3. View Direct Observation as a Process

- Set goals with the student prior to the observation.
- Be available for short multiple observations. For instance, observe one part of several exams rather than one complete examination.
- Provide specific, behaviorally-based feedback after direct observation.
- Plan action steps based on the feedback.



Teaching should be such that what is offered is perceived as a valuable gift and not as a hard duty.

-Albert Einstein

#### References / Resources:

Hauer, K, Holmboe, E., Kogan J. (2011). Twelve tips for implementing tools for direct observation of medical trainees' clinical skills during patient encounters. *Medical Teacher*, 33, 27-33.

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*Teaching Tips* is a monthly e-newsletter for Faculty, Residents, and Community Preceptors sponsored by the DFSM Faculty Development Fellowship at Montefiore Medical Center. *Teaching Tips* will include practical teaching techniques for busy physicians who want to enhance teaching and learning at their clinical practices. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for future topics for *Teaching Tips* please contact Ellen Tattelman at [etattelm@montefiore.org](mailto:etattelm@montefiore.org), Jennifer Purcell at [jennifer.purcell@einstein.yu.edu](mailto:jennifer.purcell@einstein.yu.edu) or Stacia Maher at [smaher@montefiore.org](mailto:smaher@montefiore.org).