

Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine

FREE* Newsletter

*(Faculty Resources for Educational Excellence)

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Dan Harrington, MD
Senior Dean, Academic Affairs

Bruce Johnson, MD
Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs

David Musick, PhD
Assistant Dean, Faculty
Development
Director, OCPD

Shari Whicker, EdD, MEd
Associate Director, OCPD
Director, TEACH

Phone: (540) 581-0317

Web:
[http://medicine.vtc.vt.edu/faculty
_affairs/professional_develope
nt/](http://medicine.vtc.vt.edu/faculty_affairs/professional_development/)

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Quote of the Month

*It always seems impossible until
it's done.*

Nelson Mandela

Education Research & Scholarship – How and Where to Begin

In the early '90s, Ernest Boyer challenged us to expand our definition of scholarship and move beyond the idea of “teaching versus research.”¹ Traditionally viewed as a result of scientific research only, education research is now an acceptable approach for engaging in scholarship. As education research has grown in popularity it has become a well-respected tool that utilizes several methods to evaluate the numerous pieces of teaching and education. Additionally, academic medical centers are more broadly accepting engagement in education research as a means to meet faculty requirements.²

Education research includes a wide range of topics including student learning, teaching methods, curriculum issues, individual characteristics of learners, evaluation of students and residents, teacher training, classroom dynamics and more. It is a powerful instrument for improving ourselves as educators and for learning to effectively evaluate how we are teaching. In healthcare this area of research is critically important as we work to help understand how to assess and improve the competence of future and practicing health professionals.

Many individuals may have a wealth of great education research project ideas but they may struggle because they don't know where to start or are not well versed in this research area. To ease your fears of engaging in quality education research, we have put together some tips to support your efforts.^{3,4}

1. **Take the time to learn about adult education principles.** The core concepts, terminology and principles will be very useful as you begin to formulate your project.
2. **Identify a mentor** who can support your education research and foster your academic career.
3. **Identify and refine the scholarly question** you want to ask. You will want to search the literature to ensure you are asking a question that will contribute to the field.
4. **Start with a small but meaningful project.** Set clear goals and take things one step at a time.
5. **Identify appropriate designs and methods.** Review student designs and methods that are common to the field.
6. **Select outcomes** before you begin your study. Look for assessment methods and instruments that are already validated.
7. **Take note of any ethical considerations.** Remember, learners are a vulnerable population.
8. **Set aside the time and locate resources.** The Office of Continuing Professional Development is here to help so don't be afraid to ask questions!
9. **Network with fellow education researchers.** Collaboration with individuals from other disciplines can contribute greatly to education research.

Endeavoring on an education research project for the first time may seem overwhelming but is a rewarding and stimulating experience. Using the tips outlined above, challenge yourself to take the steps necessary to engage in education research. Once you completed your study and collected quality outcomes, remember that it is equally important to disseminate your findings so that others can apply your research to their educational practice. To learn more about engaging in education scholarship join us **October 13th** for this year's **TEACH Education Day**. Dr. Rebecca Blanchard (Director Medical Education and Research, University of Massachusetts Medical School – Baystate Health) will be giving an in-depth discussion of strategies to successfully share your work. In addition, several break-out sessions have been developed to help promote your education scholarship skills! Additional details can be found on the [TEACH Webpage](#).

Mariah Rudd



Dean's Corner

Cynda Johnson, MD, MBA
September 2016

Dr. Mike Friedlander and I are pleased to announce the appointment of two new faculty members in biomedical sciences to the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. They will begin in April 2017.

Andrew Binks, PhD, is coming to us from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine, where he serves as associate research professor, M2 cardiopulmonary module director, co-director of the student research program, and director of M3-M4 research elective. He earned his undergraduate and doctorate degrees in physiological sciences from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK; master's degree in human and applied physiology from King's College at the University of London; and completed a visiting fellowship in fMRI at Harvard University. His research focuses primarily on dyspnea and cardiopulmonary physiology.

Renee LeClair, PhD, also joins us from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine where she serves as clinical associate professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences. She also serves as instructor of medical biochemistry for the University of New England Online Learning and adjunct faculty for the University of Maine's Graduate School of Biomedical Science and Engineering. LeClair earned her undergraduate degree in biology from the University of Maine at Farmington and her doctorate in biochemistry and cellular biology from Rice University. Her research focuses on fibrotic remodeling and vascular biology.

Both Dr. Binks and Dr. LeClair have extensive experience in the design and delivery of medical curricula. We look forward to deploying their expertise in working with our students.