

How to Improve your TES

By now, all surgeons should have received Teaching Effectiveness Scores (TES) for the past academic year based on the ratings of clerks and residents. Based on their comments and my informal interactions with students and residents in a variety of contexts, I continue to be impressed by the dedication and effort provided by faculty surgeons to undergraduate and postgraduate teaching. The scope of teaching activities range from simple descriptions of rationale and techniques to a clerk in the OR, to the establishment of regular formal sessions on technical skills such as suturing, or advanced skills training for residents in the Surgical Skills Centre.

From the recent data, it appears that clerks seem to learn most during ambulatory clinic sessions where they are given the opportunity to work up patients on their own first. This can be an outstanding learning experience, especially if their workup is then reviewed by the attending staff surgeon. For clerks already committed to a career in surgery, or for junior residents in surgery, gaining experience in technical skills is a priority for them.

Here are some tips distilled from interviews and written comments for improving your TES:

Clerks:

1. Provide some orientation re: clinic and OR schedules
2. Communicate goals, objectives & expectations
3. Provide list of basic procedures for your specialty
4. Provide feedback on their workups in the clinic
5. Describe what you are doing in the OR

Residents:

1. Spend some time early on getting to know the junior residents (i.e. establish lines of communication). This will allow you to judge their skills and provide feedback
2. Provide appropriate independence in the OR
3. Provide technical skills instruction wherever feasible, with feedback
4. Discuss rationale for decision-making & encourage independent management plan
5. Communicate your enthusiasm for your specialty

Good luck and thank you for everything you do for teaching the next generation of surgeons.

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