

Train the Trainers: A unique experience combining learning clinical teaching skills and global networking for all gastroenterology specialties



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Inspired by the past encouraging reports from our colleagues on the TTT program, we set out to travel from Finland to the Bucharest TTT on a beautiful spring Sunday. The Romanian Society of Gastroenterology and Hepatology hosted the four-day TTT course held in a congress hotel close to the Bucharest international airport. Having dutifully read and prepared for the assigned pre-tasks (including curious dance move videoclips), we felt already in advance that this was going to be a productive week. And indeed, it turned out to be so.

The three of us representing the Finnish Society of Gastroenterology come all from different specialties: a GI surgeon, a pediatric gastroenterol-

ogist and a gastroenterologist. During the course, the medical background became superfluous as the course subjects were those uniting us all: how to best teach/coach our trainees to succeed in acquiring the necessary clinical, academic and motor skills. There was much focus on evaluation: both encouraging self-evaluation and teaching us to give both critical and positive feedback. We learned to apply the Pendleton's Rules for evaluation in practice, including evaluating our own dancing performances ("Yes, we think the group succeeded best in actually following the beat of the music, and yes, next time we think a more organized practice session would be needed to kick up the performance").

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The course program in general was organized into well-defined sessions, breaking the participants into small groups for more hands-on practice, with general summary discussions concluding the sessions. Days were full: starting at 7:45 AM lasting until 4:30 PM, with evening social programs and dinner (and one afternoon city sightseeing trip) taking up the evenings.

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more interactive approaches. Each various session included also “old-fashioned” 30 minute lectures on a specific topic. While some of them were inspiring enough they did pale in comparison with the buzz and involvement associated with some other teaching modalities employed during the TTT. Academic skills teaching was addressed in sessions focusing on critical paper appraisal and trial design, and a small group teaching on abstract preparation. Regarding these workshops, the most notable was the small group breakout session where all groups had assignments on various clinical research setup challenges. This was a convenient way to point out how to spot confounding factors and trial design specifics, which have a major impact on the interpretation of trial results. Another specific entity

was professionalism, credentialing and formal assessment of trainees. We learned later that some of these were new additions to the TTT program based on previous participant feedback. We endorse this addition, while the single topic of professionalism would be best addressed in an interactive setting. Multiple choice question preparation and trainee program development were useful and important sessions, as well as the quick dip into interpersonal skills. With the acquired new skills, one of us has already created her first vodcast, as well as applied the Pendleton’s rules of feedback with great success!

Overall, the course was extremely well-organized, with well-functioning schedules (for us Finns very important...) and arrangements. The Romanian hosts provided for welcoming

and lively evenings with traditional music and dancing – lots of dancing! Team building events were very efficient and helped the entire group to feel more united and to befriend colleagues from all around the globe. The atmosphere between faculty and participants was warm and casual.

We warmly endorse participating in the TTT program for all WGO members, regardless of their background or whether coming from low- or high-income countries. We have made friendships all over the world, have learned new methods to improve our own practice of teaching medical students and specialist trainees as well as increased our understanding of the entire process involved in growing and nurturing a new generation of professionals.

