

## Books and media

### *Practice-based teaching: a guide for general practitioners*

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Good clinicians are not necessarily good teachers, but they have the potential to become great teachers. Practice-based supervision and teaching in general practice usually involve either medical students or postgraduates who are undertaking vocational training programs for general practice. This book presents information to help general practitioners fulfill the supervisory teaching role well. It recognizes that the needs of these different levels of learners are different, and that teaching skills may need to be applied differently to medical students and postgraduate vocational trainees. Each chapter in this book is designed to stand alone, and includes references and suggestions for further reading for those who wish to extend their knowledge of the theory. Chapter 2 (Curriculum issues), Chapter 3 (Assessment) and Chapter 12 (Evaluation) provide the most theory-based discussion.

Chapter 2 shows that curriculum may be viewed from different angles, considering the curriculum plan and what the learners experience. One is the *delivered curriculum*. Formal curricula are often not delivered as intended, either because of difficulties faced during implementation or because teachers do not use them as the basis for instruction. This often is related to poor curriculum development and lack of participation of teachers in the development process.

Another is the *assessed curriculum*. This reflects the all too frequent mismatch between what is considered important in the curriculum plan and what is assessed. An example might be a curriculum that places em-

phasis on ethical and professional behavior, but which does not assess these attributes. The delivered curriculum and the assessed curriculum combine to produce what is often called a *hidden curriculum*. This is what learners really learn regardless of the formal curriculum, and will include elements of the formal, delivered and assessed curricula. A hidden curriculum has the potential to impede progress towards achievement of desired learning objectives. The situation is best avoided by proper curriculum development.

Chapter 3 is concerned with assessment of learning in general practice. Assessment has been defined as the measurement of the achievement of progress towards meeting defined educational objectives. Four types of assessments are described: formative assessment, summative assessment, program evaluation and in-training assessment. I found an extremely valuable description of the characteristics of a good assessment:

- *Validity* - the capacity to assess that which is intended to be assessed.
- *Reliability* - the capacity to produce the same result if the assessment is repeated.
- *Impact* on the learning process of students or candidates as assessment drives learning. *Acceptability* of the assessment, which includes a range of community and professional ethical considerations that might have different emphases.
- *Feasibility* determines the degree to which the assessment practices consume resources, such as time, money and personnel.
- *Efficiency*, which indicates the capacity to produce an acceptable result with optimal use of examiners, test cases, and particular test formats.

In conclusion I advise medical educators, examiners, and academics, especially those in general practice, to read this book.

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