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Book Review: Perspectives in Medical Education, 1st edition

Kalpana Luthra, PhD, FAMS, FNA, FNASc

Professor & Head, Department of Biochemistry; Chief, Centre of Medical Education & Technology, AIIMS, New Delhi

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Kalpana Luthra

Department of Biochemistry

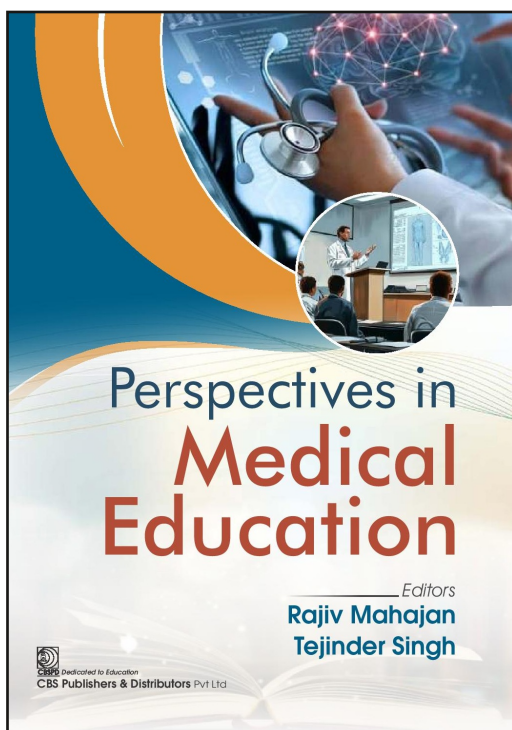
AIIMS, New Delhi

Email: kalpanaluthra at gmail dot com

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Perspectives in Medical Education is concisely written with the perspective to appraise stakeholders and healthcare educators about the rapid developments and reforms occurring in the medical education system. It includes the challenges that they might encounter and that they need to overcome during the implementation of Competency-Based Medical Education

(CBME). The book elaborates on the diverse tools of teaching, learning, and assessment that can be used to help medical students internalise the many facets of the health care profession. The ultimate hope is that learners will inculcate a holistic approach early in life, and will utilize the knowledge and skills gained from medical schools to effectively deal with real-life medical contingencies.

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The chapters are grouped under five sections that are written by authors with vast expertise in medical education. Broadly, these deal with essential components and innovations in teaching and learning that can lead to transformative learning; paradigms in ever-evolving assessment and evaluation strategies; faculty development strategies that have the potential to transform educators into reformers of medical education; emphasis on the importance of research in medical education in stimulating innovative ideas and developing or refining pedagogies that advance existing knowledge, skills and professionalism; and online teaching and assessment concepts and scope, and future trends. The final section delves on specific issues such as how postgraduate education can make clinicians adept at dealing with real time medical situations effectively in an evolving health care environment; change management, simulation-based learning etc., pertinent for their overall professional development and to empower them to deliver exemplary clinical care and patient management. This section further lays emphasis on the fine balance that needs to be maintained in resident autonomy and patient safety.

The first chapter describes the various theories of learning that offer the reader an insight into the fundamental aspects of teaching and learning. Each one of these theories focus on internal or external influences, and do not collectively address both. Presently, the CBME curriculum introduced in India has been holistically designed, stemming from all the theories of learning, and it addresses the three essential components that impact learning, viz. environment, content and incentive. In CBME, the learning outcome of a medical graduate is measured based on the change in observable and measurable behaviour and is learner centric. It is well brought out here that the behavioural theory underscores the influence of observable and measurable

behaviours on the learning outcome and thereby the competency and skills acquired. It is a focal component of CBME that aims to foster transformative and lifelong learning.

One of the last few chapters highlights the initiatives taken, by way of introducing CBME in Medical schools in India, to foster social accountability in the medical education fraternity. Understanding and owning up to social accountability involves a complex interrelationship between medical education, healthcare systems, and a rapidly changing society. Their preparedness to resolve the emerging health care challenges of society at large will enable health care professionals to ensure patient satisfaction and positive health care outcomes. This chapter is highly relevant to both educators and learners of the health care professions. I would wish to see, in a future edition of this book, a chapter on the 'hidden curriculum' and its synergistic impact - alongside a well chartered CBME based curriculum - upon learners and educators, and a discussion on how applying the strategies of a hidden curriculum could enhance comprehensive student learning.

The second chapter introduces the relatively recent concept of 'Microlearning' and highlighting its advantages as a teaching tool. Various traditional and emerging tools that can be employed for microlearning are detailed herein. Chapter three pertinently discusses the requisites and goals for employing newer teaching- learning tools. To attain maximal and active student-learning outcomes in the constantly evolving field of medical education, emerging teaching methods, aided by advancements in technology, should be employed by the teachers, along with more traditional tools, to facilitate synergistic and deep learning. The desirable features and learning goals of such teaching-learning tools are enumerated. A constant enquiry of and monitoring of these tools is warranted by educators to identify any lacunae or deficiencies in the way they are currently being used. We must, therefore, be ready to adapt to newer tools that can

advance learning and can address the needs of the evolving health care system.

Chapter four highlights the principles of Transformative Learning (TL), describing the distinct phases and the types of learning experienced by learners and educators who adopt a TL approach. When learners are introduced to new information, they assimilate it in the context of their background knowledge on the subject; further, by critical thinking, they arrive at the gaps or lacunae in knowledge that stimulates active learning and facilitates interpretation or decision making. The role of the educators and learners in TL, and how it can promote critical thinking and enhance decision making skills of the health care professionals is well brought out. With the advent of AI, the students in medical schools have access to a plethora of information on various aspects of teaching and learning that can influence their learning, and can bridge the knowledge gap arising at each step of their medical profession. Medical teachers need to find a balance between AI learning and the traditional teacher-centric approach so as to encourage medical students to think independently. The goal is to propagate critical thinking and active learning beginning right from the entry into medical schools, and continuing as they evolve into proficient health care professionals. Thus, it is essential to maintain a dynamic fundamental framework of medical education that co-evolves with AI.

Chapter five introduces the concept of clinical reasoning as a core competency that a health profession learner must be introduced to right at the outset. This skill needs to be honed all along throughout medical education, to enable a clinician to arrive at accurate clinical diagnosis and decision making, with minimal errors. The tools for assessment and the role of a teacher in assessing clinical reasoning in the learner and are also highlighted in a lucid manner. In later chapters, script concordance test has been described and is found to be an

effective tool to assess clinical reasoning. Further, the importance of blueprinting for holistic assessment is discussed in detail. Blueprinting must take into consideration the objective for assessment, subject content, domain of knowledge, and the level of competency if we are to improve the quality of assessment and ensure desirable outcomes in learners. Rubrics are discussed as being effective scoring scales that assess the performance of the students and help them towards self-directed learning. They are ideal for providing constructive feedback, thereby stimulating further learning.

Additional topics touch on how assessment drives self-evaluation, and how it is important to create a positive educational environment to promote a dynamic learning culture that will encourage students to learn self-care and in turn care for their peers and society. Program evaluation, too, has been highlighted as being of help to learners, educators, and other stakeholders who can imbibe and adapt to the evolving health care system and environment.

The entire section on faculty development provides details of comprehensive strategies to be adopted by faculty to prepare themselves, health care professionals, and their institutions for their respective roles, and is highly informative. The chapters that follow address the importance of online teaching and assessment strategies, that have phenomenally advanced during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The next chapter brings out the current challenges in post graduate medical education and how it can be revamped by implementation of competency based curricula. The need is to focus on high quality residency training in clinical and non-clinical settings, and adopt active and competency based learning and assessment strategies to equip the post graduates to develop into effective and competent health care professionals.

Some of the distinct and pertinent topics that follow are: autonomy of the post graduate

learner during residency, for which it is essential to provide a conducive environment for learning so that the resident grows into a confident and independent physician without compromising on patient health and safety; simulation based learning under guidance and with appropriate assessment, emphasizing the importance of feedback to encourage continued learning; drawbacks in the existing assessment strategies during clerkship when the learner participates in clinical care under faculty supervision; and importantly, guidance on use of suitable assessment tools. In a future edition, the upcoming topic on Entrustable professional activities (EPAs) could be included, to guide educators on how to develop them and the ways to validate EPAs as a framework for work-based training and assessment prior to their implementation in medical education.

To summarize, this book, with its prime focus on innovative strategies - self-directed

learning pedagogies like small group and problem-based learning, flipped classroom, simulations, clinical reasoning, appropriate assessment tools and development of blueprints - equips educators to adapt to the evolving demands of medical education. These innovative teaching learning tools facilitate educators who can then stimulate learners to achieve desired learning outcomes in an interactive manner (active learning). It also emphasizes the importance of assessment in Competency Based Medical Education, dedicating significant sections to tools and techniques for evaluating cognitive and noncognitive abilities. Written in simple language with practical examples, self-explanatory figures, and exhaustive tables, this resource book is highly recommended for healthcare professionals seeking to enhance their teaching and mentoring skills as effective leaders in medical education.