



Quarterly Newsletter

Issue: 4 December 2013



A Word From The Directors

As we approach January 1, we take time to reflect on where we are and where we are headed in the new year. The AOE leadership team continues to build on to the momentum of prior years. Though we are an academy that is dedicated to celebrating the achievements of medical educators, we continue to strive to increase the usefulness of the AOE to the institution, to the educators and to the learners. We function as an advising voice to the medical school, and work diligently to support the Vice Dean of Education (and our immediate past co-director), Julie Byerley. As this is the season to take stock in all that we have that is good. We are grateful to the new taskforce being led by Cheryl McNeil and Michael Myers as they provide substantive input on balancing service and education to the benefit of our medical students and residents. We are also grateful that Ryan Madanick is continuing to represent education on the EPIC team. Under the leadership of the Curriculum Committee, this past Fall we introduced a new three-tiered series of didactic sessions and workshops, which has received very positive feedback. Under the leadership of the Scholarship Committee, we continue to develop innovative approaches to assist clinical educators in completing scholarly endeavors. Finally, we are starting to realize how positive it is to have resident members in the AOE. One of our charges this Spring is to find even more meaningful ways to engage residents in the AOE.

So what do we ask of you? Get involved, or get more involved. Please contribute to our workshops and sessions through leading sessions and by attending offerings by your colleagues. We are constantly working to determine additional ways of assistance, so please let us know how we can aid you in your teaching mission. We look forward to yet another exciting year.

-Beat Steiner and Kevin Biese



2014 AOE Spring Banquet



Last year, we held a poster session at the AOE Spring Banquet and dubbed the event “An Evening of Educational Scholarship.” Based on the smashing success of the poster session, and numerous requests, this year we will be expanding the concept, which is being called: “Educational Scholarship Day.” The activities will kick off with a lunch and plenary presentation, followed by three rounds of concurrent sessions delivered by leaders in medical education. Following the concurrent sessions, we will again host a poster session reception. The call for poster proposal submissions will open in January. Please consider sharing your work in any area of medical education. The evening will cap off with the awards ceremony and dinner. Join your colleagues as the AOE recognizes just a sampling of the extensive work being accomplished in the School of Medicine this year. The featured evening speakers will include Julie Byerley and nationally renowned experts in the area of professionalism, Richard and Sylvia Cruess (both members of the Center for Medical Education at McGill University and pictured on left).

All AOE members are encouraged to attend and to contribute to what promises to be a fabulous day of sharing and learning the latest in medical education.

SAVE THE DATE: AOE SPRING BANQUET
Thursday, May 22, 2014



Evidence Informed Teaching Tips

The Power and Purpose of Testing | Todd Zakrajsek, PhD., Associate Professor, Family Medicine

To go over the test items or to not go over the test items.....that seems to be the question. Tests and examinations are often given for the sole purpose of assessing an individual on selected information. Good questions tease out how much an individual understands about very specific information and the extent to which she or he can think critically about the material. To use a test to “assess” how much a student knows is called a summative assessment, as it provides a summary of presented knowledge. These tests (e.g., block exams, step tests, MCAT) are typically high-stakes assessments.

It is also possible to use tests and exams for another purpose: to help a person learn, and to help inform effective teaching. Typically, a test that is designed to improve student learning, or improve teaching, is called a formative assessment. Formative assessments (e.g., quizzes, lecture checks, classroom assessment techniques) are typically low-stakes assessments. Can something be both summative and formative at the same time?

Although many say formative and summative assessments cannot (or should not) happen at the same time, they can occur simultaneously. However, there is always a cost. One way for a summative test to serve a formative function is to provide a test taker with an overall score. This informs the individual as to whether study techniques and test taking strategies are effective. It is not detailed information, and as a result, somewhat limited, and as a result somewhat poor formative feedback. Students often assume the formative value of the assessment is greatly increased by going over individual questions. The research is very interesting in this regard. Although there is no doubt that providing the correct answer on a specific multiple choice item will increase the probability of getting that same item correct in the future, there is evidence that it will not help a person get a “related” question correct with any more accuracy than when the correct answer was not provided (see figure). Therefore, it appears there is limited benefit to overall formative learning in going over specific items. There is also a very steep cost, in that specific test items that are shared with students become “compromised” for future tests.

All that said, there is ever increasing evidence that the process of taking tests helps students to learn new materials. While there are obviously some test taking strategies that come from answering multiple-choice questions, it appears that it also strengthens retrieval cues....and that is good for learning. Reading creates cues; testing strengthens them. Of course, you can definitely strengthen retrieval cues in other ways as well: discussion, engaged learning in the classroom, flash cards, quizzing one another, etc.

Bottom line: Tests are a valuable part of both teaching and learning. That said, it is extremely important to keep in mind what it is a test is designed to do, and then design it to do that well. For a continued discussion on this topic, references and additional information, please contact Todd Zakrajsek in the Academy of Educators: todd_zakrajsek@med.unc.edu.

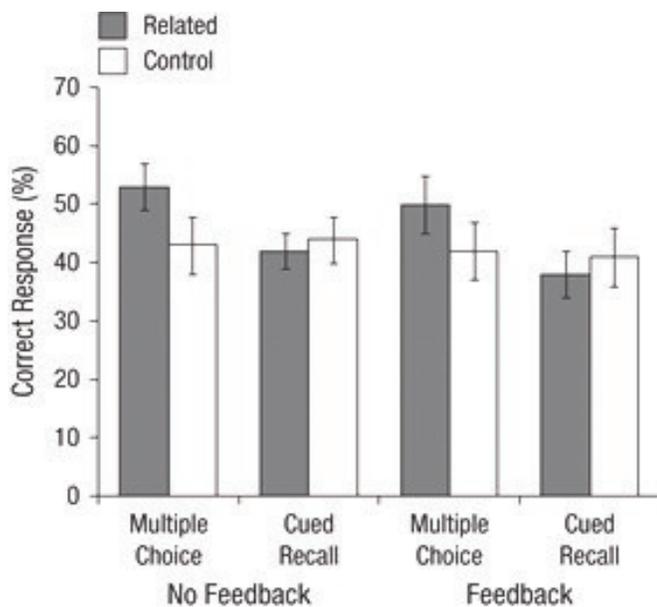


Figure from - Little, J.L., Bjork, E.L., Bjork, R.A., & Angello, G. (2012). Multiple-choice tests exonerated, at least of some charges: Fostering test- induced learning and avoiding test-induced forgetting. *Psychological science*, 23(11), 1337-1344.

The Mission of the Academy is:

1. to promote and support excellence in teaching and the work and career paths of excellent teachers
2. to promote and fund curricular innovation, evidence-based curricular change and a scholarly approach to the education mission; and
3. to provide a forum for education leadership and advice for the Dean, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, Vice Dean for Medical Education, and the leadership of the curriculum.



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