Hit the Ground Running: Engaging Early-Career Medical Educators in Scholarly Activity

New faculty seeking an academic focus in medical education are often intimidated by the perceived resources, protected time, and research expertise required to produce a full-length research manuscript.¹² Mentors can help early-career medical educators gradually develop increasing levels of sophistication in scholarly work by adopting a broader definition of scholarship.³⁴ Below, we discuss initial strategies for medical educators to engage in scholarly work early in their career and provide examples of academic pursuits stratified by increasing effort and skill.

First Steps: Learn the Landscape

- Familiarize yourself with medical education journals to enhance your understanding of the medical education landscape.
- Create a list of medical education topics for which you have a specific interest (e.g., feedback, wellness, assessment).
- Identify mentoring, networking, and collaborating opportunities by meeting with faculty educators at (and outside of) your institution.
- Assess the resources available through your home institution including pilot grants, administrative time support, statistical assistance, etc.

Presentation-Based Scholarly Growth

- Didactic Lecture: Present a topic within your expertise to learners, using a teaching or educational framework.
  **Examples:** Medical school, residency or fellowship program, nurse practitioner or physician assistant training program

- External Grand Rounds: Present on a medical topic, focusing on recent updates and evidence-based practice.
  **Examples:** Community hospitals (many recruit guest lecturers to fill grand rounds slots)

- Poster or Oral Presentation: Present scholarly work with a narrower scope, such as a needs assessment, survey, curriculum innovation, or clinical vignette.
  **Examples:** Regional or national medical education or (sub-)specialty conferences

- Workshop: Create an interactive session involving audience discussion, hands-on experiential learning, or role-playing to demonstrate an education concept.
  **Examples:** Regional or national medical education or (sub-)specialty conferences

Publication-Based Scholarly Growth

- Letter to the Editor: In a short article, present counterpoints, future directions, tips for implementation, or additional data related to a very recent medical education article from the same journal or provide brief comments on an issue important to the academic medicine community.
  **Examples:** Academic Medicine, Journal of Graduate Medical Education (JGME), Medical Education, The Clinical Teacher, Medical Teacher

- Education Commentary: Describe a controversial or emerging topic in education combining personal experience with existing literature.
  **Examples:** Academic Medicine’s Perspectives, JGME’s Ripouts or On Teaching, Medical Education’s Commentaries, The Clinical Teacher’s Insights, Medical Teacher’s Twelve Tips

- Brief Report: Use initial data to describe a needs assessment, survey results, or curricular intervention in a format much shorter than a typical research article.
  **Examples:** Academic Medicine’s Innovation Reports, JGME’s Brief Reports, Medical Education’s Really Good Stuff, The Clinical Teacher’s In Brief, Medical Teacher’s Short Communications

- Research Manuscript: Present a research project using the background, methods, results, discussion/conclusions format with rigorous data analysis and thorough detail (e.g., all curricular materials).
  **Examples:** Academic Medicine, MedEdPORTAL, JGME, Medical Education, The Clinical Teacher, Medical Teacher

Make It Count Twice

Be creative about turning work you are already doing into multiple forms of scholarship, such as lectures into grand rounds and posters into brief reports.

References:

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