Workplace learning: A hands-on exploration of practice and theory

Ann Poncelet, MD
Michael Vertino, PhD
Vanja Douglas, MD

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Goals and objectives

At the end of this workshop participants will be able to:

- Identify key elements of workplace learning
- Experience and describe common challenges associated with workplace learning.
- Describe, demonstrate and practice at least 2 strategies to facilitate workplace learning in their own clinical setting.
Overview of session

- Meet and greet
- Small group activity 1 + debrief and discussion
- Presentation on workplace learning
- Small group activity 2 + report back and discuss
- Closing thoughts and plans for incorporating ideas into practice
Napkin Folding exercise

Your medical school is out of money and much of the support staff is on furlough due to the budget crisis. The school hosts an annual fundraising banquet for 200 people that traditionally raises substantial financial support for key programs including student scholarships and medical education research. There are no support staff available so the Dean, in desperation, has asked medical education faculty to help fold napkins “to the highest standard” so as to impress all guests at the banquet. The Dean is offering a small research stipend to the group that does the best job.

Each group has 7 minutes to fold their napkins.
Workplace Learning

- What is it and how is it relevant to medical education?
- What makes it difficult?
- What strategies can optimize workplace learning?
## Classroom and Workplace Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner Identity</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learner Identity</strong></td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Novice professional</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge is</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge is</strong></td>
<td>Situated in more controlled environments and activities – e.g. planned activities, individual or group assignments</td>
<td>Situated in more routine practice, authentic problems, and co-participants – e.g. discussions on rounds, charts, development of plans</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decomposed</td>
<td>Integrated</td>
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<th>Performance is</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance is</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrated on exams, behavior in simulated situations</td>
<td>Demonstrated through completion of tasks &amp; Participation in real work</td>
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<th>Valued Outcomes include</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
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<td><strong>Valued Outcomes include</strong></td>
<td>Mastery of facts, conceptual understanding, critical thinking</td>
<td>Finding solutions to unanticipated problems, Efficiency, Effectiveness (meeting quality standards)</td>
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Premise: Activity Structures Cognition

- The activities in which we engage influence how we think, act, and learn

- Examples:
  - The Hair Salon
  - The Tailor
  - In the Clinic / On the Wards

Why is Clinical Learning so Difficult?

- Required knowledge & technical skill
- Complexity
- Speed
- Hidden Knowledge
- Lack of continuity & sequencing
- Acuity

- Understanding roles
- Communicating effectively
- Expectations
- Personalities
- Lack of guidance & support
- Few near peers

- Workload & pace of work
- Mix of routine & non-routine activities
- Resource constraints
- Scheduling
Differences in Perspectives (Students and Clerkship Directors)

- Self-directed learning: Diff 3%
- Culture: Diff 5%
- Knowl & reasoning: Diff 5%
- Skills: Diff 17%
- Roles: Diff 35%
- Logistics: Diff 47%
- Frequent change: Diff 54%

Areas of Struggle
Conceptual Framework for Workplace Learning

Selection of tasks and activities
Responsibility
Sequencing
Continuity

Learning through participation
Invitational Quality
Supported participation
Personal engagement

Nature of Work Practices
Time pressure/workload
Organization of work
Technology & Resources

Relationships within the practice community

Application of Workplace Learning to Novices in Clinical Setting

- **Group 1**: Clinical faculty physician orienting and managing a student during a neurology clerkship
- **Group 2**: Clinical faculty working with a struggling learner on a neurology clerkship
- **Group 3**: Clerkship director designing orientation for medical students on the first day of a neurology clerkship
Wrap-Up and Carry Forward

- Final thoughts
- 2 changes you will make in your practice based upon what you learned in this workshop
- Evaluation and feedback