"Oh god, please don’t let me hurt them!"

Assessing Self-Regulated Learning in Medical School Education

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Research Question
How do medical students express self-efficacy as self-regulated learners and provide evidence of learning?

Context
ENCORE, an innovative medical education curriculum, explored a shift from lecture-centric to student-centered learning, using a self-regulated, outcomes-based approach.

Participants and Data
Six medical students participated in a summer 2009 program. They created a total of 160 journal entries addressing learning experiences and progress toward personal and program learning goals.

Method
Discourse analysis was used to elicit evidence that was not readily accessed through traditional standardized tests.

Results
The journal entries provided evidence of growing self-regulation and learning through analysis of how students position themselves in relation to others (footing), how they communicate (registers, metaphors, stake inoculation), and how their discourses build on prior texts to illustrate progress (intertextuality). Clinical skills assessments provided additional evidence of learning.

Future Work
The ENCORE LMS tools are currently being deployed across the entire medical school curriculum. Future work will utilize surveys, student interviews, and analysis of student journals and other artifacts to assess how this approach improves medical education.

ENCORE Learning Management System (LMS)

Assessment Scores

Analysis
"This whole week was a great opportunity to stretch my wings and try to fly a little for the first time. I feel like the Wright brothers. My first flights are very short and bumpy, but one day, I’m really going to make it work and I’ll walk into the room thinking ‘I can help this person’ rather than ‘oh god, please don’t let me hurt them!’”

Analysis: Through metaphor, the student shows self-awareness of challenges and potential.

"While diagnosing is not really a skill we’re expected to have mastered yet, I think it’s tremendously useful to push us to try and think it through. I may not be brilliant and quick yet, but I did come to the same conclusion as Dr. X.”

Analysis: Use of hedging plus stake inoculation (“I’m not claiming to be an expert”), but an assertion of accomplishment.

"Moreover, I had the opportunity to interview three patients, two with type II and a type I.”

Analysis: Jargon appropriation by mimicking the (inappropriate) metonymical talk style of clinicians in a register for “medical speak.” After being pointed out, this style of intertextuality was not used again.

To support this program, the Medical School partnered with the Schools of Information and Dentistry to prototype new learning management system (LMS) functionality to track learning objectives, create journal entries, etc.