



# Medical Education Scholarship: We Can't Afford to Wait!

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Medical education scholarship is more important than ever. At first glance, this may seem paradoxical. We are facing an overwhelming and deadly situation. Shouldn't we just put our heads down, save lives, do what we can, and minimize the distractions that education adds to our daily work of caring for patients? This isn't the time for thinking, research, and dialogue about education, right? Wrong! This is exactly the time we should be focusing on *both* responding to immediate needs and planning for a desirable but uncertain future.

It is at these times when we need to think clearly, listen carefully, share ideas, and collaborate. By measuring the rapid innovations and shifting accreditation requirements, we can assess outcomes and share what we learn. Only then will we understand how to do the most good for the most people, both now and in the future. A disciplined approach will prepare us to capture new discoveries and insights, understand the tradeoffs we are making, and be vigilant for unintended consequences of our well-meaning efforts.

Kern faculty members are exploring a wide-ranging set of scholarly topics including:

- The implementation of virtual OSCEs that assess readiness for graduation
- The measurement of student, resident, faculty and staff well-being during a pandemic
  - Exploring topics beyond wellness as “food and bathroom breaks”
  - Understanding the effect of inadequate PPE on morale
  - Supporting character and professional identity development in times of crisis

- The mobilization of faculty and students in service to high-risk communities in the face of an implicit distrust of medicine
- The utility and safety of baby wipes as PPE
- The balancing of health care providers' responsibilities to self, family, institution, community, and society
- The preparation of health care providers and learners for high-level ethical challenges
- The utility of repurposing a city bus to provide community, low-PPE, mobile SARS-CoV-2 testing

As you read this, medical educators internationally are scrambling to create forums for the exchange of ideas. For example, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the highly respected *Journal Medical Education* has launched Medical Education Adoptions ([www.mededuc.com](http://www.mededuc.com)) for the rapid review and publication of brief reports from educators around the globe. Many of these approaches are dramatic and disruptive. US and Canadian medical education organizations are establishing central repositories for instructional materials and offering opportunities for funding to support innovation.

In the pages of the *Transformational Times*, MCW community members share what they are thinking, doing, and learning in under 500 words. With the discipline of writing “short,” we get to the heart of the matter, and make it easier to keep everyone engaged.

Over the next weeks, we will submit an IRB protocol for a Medical Student Registry, providing an ethical framework to longitudinally study the education of our students. We will also release a Request for Proposals with a rapid turnaround to provide funding for educational adoptions.

Educational rules we thought were “written in stone” are bending and breaking in the face of a very clever virus. It will take courage to change our behavior, reorient our systems, and make difficult resource decisions. What seemed prudent yesterday is gone. We must be agile and responsive to the emergent situation with attention to detail, thought, and anticipation. Our students and the next generation of teachers deserve nothing less.

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