

EDUCATIONAL QUESTION: What is the best way to achieve expert performance?

Reference:

10.1111/j.1553-2712.2008.00227.x, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1553-2712.2008.00227.x/epdf>

Why is this paper relevant to emergency medicine education? This article summarizes what is known about one of the most important questions in medical education: how to acquire expert performance.

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Synopsis

Evidence collected from many domains in arts, science and medicine shows that a high level of performance is not well correlated with training, experience and reputation. In domains where objective performance can be measured, international level performers need 10 years or longer of intense involvement within that domain before reaching that level. Not all training/professional activities lead to improved performance. Those that do are called Deliberate Practice.

Deliberate Practice has several features:

The performer is

1. given a task with a well-defined goal.
2. motivated to improve.
3. provided feedback.
4. provided with opportunities for repetition and gradual refinement of their performance.

Moreover, the aspiring expert performer must combat the tendency of arrested development associated with automaticity, by actively setting new goals on their performance.

Applying to medical education, the authors propose that performers of all levels may benefit from simulation training using standardized cases just above their current level of expertise. Scenarios should have clear goals, right answers, with immediate feedback, followed by similar scenarios. With this version of deliberate practice, the aspiring expert may repeat this exercise until the newly acquired cognitive or other skill can be incorporated into future performance.

BOTTOM LINE:

Medical educators can use the principles of Deliberate Practice to foster development of expert performance amongst learners.