Feedback Quality, an Important Ingredient of the Educational Management Recipe

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INTRODUCTION
An exploratory study was performed, aimed at identifying educational interventions to bridge the gap between the increasing number of tutors for simulation-based medical education (SBME) and the reduced availability of formal training for them.

Starting point was Van de Rider’s (2008) definition of feedback in clinical education: “specific information about the comparison between a learner’s observed performance and a standard, given with the intent to improve the learner’s performance.”

Three convergent questions were investigated:
1. How can the new generation of tutors obtain necessary information regarding performance standards for tutors?
2. What are the most relevant educational mechanisms involving both tutors and teachers which improve knowledge management?
3. What are the most important features and best practices which support tutor and teacher’s performance in SBME?

METHODOLOGY
1) One-to-one and focus groups informal-conversational interviews, with both teachers and tutors, were performed. The original study, initiated in 2011, had a broader aim in connexion with knowledge transfer processes in medical education. Additionally, the number of hours for workshops/seminars dedicated to creating and updating the theoretical knowledge and teaching ability of the tutors was analysed, in connexion with the number of the participants.
2) Direct observations and conversational interviews initiated in 2013.
3) Results were obtained through fixed-response interviews with different groups of tutors in SBME (2013). 152 tutors at SBME workshops were asked to rank the 12 best practices and features proposed by McGagie, Issensberg, Petrusa and Scalone (2010), with the most important in the first position.

CONCLUSIONS
- The actual educational structure of the Romanian University system can not offer to teachers and tutors the necessary support for effective participation in tutorship activities. In this respect, a better management of the knowledge repository, which should be created with and for tutors and leading teachers, is seen as a feasible and durable solution.
- Both teachers and tutors consider assessment FOR learning (i.e. formative) and feedback as sine qua non methods for learning quality improvement.
- A variety of time effective methods, which must be found, tested and if successful implemented, will be needed. This must be done by embedding teaching activities with research for science & education.
- Dedicated research activities are needed to initiate and develop a living educational mechanism for collecting, selecting, processing, storing, and distributing dedicated knowledge, for both teachers and tutors.

REFERENCES
McGagie, R., Issensberg, H., Petrusa, E., Scalone, L. (2010) ranked by SBME tutors in UMFVBT, (Table 1)
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The consolidated efforts of our University to effectively introduce the most appropriate student-centred educational methods have revealed many educational areas having an enormous potential of intervention. One of these areas is the learning assessment.

Prior to Graz Conference 2012, held in Timisoara, almost all the learning assessment in UMFVBT have been conducted in a classical manner, as a reflection of the teacher-centred educational culture followed since 1946, when the University was born. Oral and written exams have often tested mainly the student’s capacity for memorising the course notes, rather than the ability to integrate their knowledge during a complex situation.

The educational efforts of both teachers and students were reflected by a centralised situation of the semestrial summative evaluations marks. Those marks have represented the most important criteria taken into consideration for the learning process analysis done by the University managerial staff. All of the managerial decisions were introduced at that time in a reactive manner, aiming to correct and/or improve specific educational outcomes, late, after the end of learning processes.

During the last six years, a lot of our teachers and tutors have been involved in various seminars and workshops addressing the student-centred educational paradigm. Many of them have successfully introduced various formative, rather than summative methods to assess the learning process. As a consequence, there was a real need for educational management to become more proactive and thus a significant change process has been initiated.

Such a complex educational management change process is characterised by several critical factors such as top management support, perceived utility, formative and summative assessment, teacher training and curriculum description. We have ascertained that among these factors, the formative assessment is of a paramount importance.

Following a case study analysis, the related results are presented two-folded: as supporting the need to include students’ understanding of the feedback information in the analysis of formative assessment, as valid remarks of Sadler’s (2010), and as possible ways for overcoming the existing learning barriers to a valuable feedback.

The discussion proposed emphasizes both the fact that positive effects of feedback are not always the case, since more than one-third of the effects indicated a negative impact of feedback on learning (Kluger and DeNisi, 1996) and the importance of a flexible
strategy for introducing structural changes in medical education as a prerequisite of a successful organizational change process.

Based on some quantitative metrics used for educational management analysis the authors formulate conclusions which emphasise the need that educational changing process to be tightly connected to research in educational science and service science to better address knowledge creation and innovation in medical education.

References: