

EDITORIAL

Introducing Educator's Podium: A New Forum for Sharing, Thinking and Questioning

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This edition of the journal contains an exciting new feature, the Educator's Podium. The Educator's Podium is an opinion-based, non-peer-reviewed forum that provides an opportunity for optometric educators to share, think and question within any area related to the educational process or improving patient care. This new forum is a way of shar-

ing and brainstorming with colleagues. Appropriate articles for this forum include descriptions of creative or innovative teaching methods, programs and curricula. Innovative ideas related to patient care may also be included as a means of supporting clinical educators. The new forum is meant to be inspirational and to showcase educators' creativity. In addition to showcasing information, Educator's Podium provides an opportunity to think out loud and present educational challenges and dilemmas. Success in optometric education often involves mentorship and learning from colleagues. This forum opens an exchange among educators to help support and guide colleagues.

The Educator's Podium was conceived by myself and colleague Dr. Erik Weissberg. Dr. Weissberg is a member of the Scientific Program Committee of the American Academy of Optometry. As a committee member, he is responsible for reviewing poster and paper submissions for the annual meeting. Discussions related to our experiences in reviewing revealed that many faculty have great ideas about educational activities that have not been formally tested, but they have no outlet for sharing these thoughts. Our discussions also revealed that many faculty have difficulty distinguishing a scholarly article from one that is mainly descriptive.

What constitutes a scholarly article or scholarship? Scholarship can be defined as the "creation, discovery, advancement or transformation of knowledge."¹ The knowledge is then evaluated by peer review and made public.¹ Ernest Boyer's broader concept of scholarship identifies several categories.² These categories include the scholarship of discovery (original research); integration (novel insights, interpreting themes in discoveries, identifying connections between discoveries, e.g., literature synthesis, conceptual framework); application (building bridges between theory and practice, e.g., teaching case reports); and teaching (communicating one's knowledge, facilitating students' learning, enhancing self-directed learning, e.g., comparison of teaching methodologies, development of new pedagogy).²

The scholarship of discovery (original research) is driven by a research question or hypothesis, a specific scientific methodology and assessment of outcomes. Faculty are most familiar with this type of scholarship. The scholarship categories of integration, application and teaching are often less familiar and more at risk for misunderstanding. These types of manuscripts must contain scholarly elements, such as novel insights, interpreting themes in discoveries, identifying connections between discoveries, linking theory and practice, comparisons or analysis of teaching methodologies, etc., to be considered scholarly. All types of scholarship should reflect a clear understanding of the current literature and contain links to past scholarly work. Articles that are merely descriptive and lacking in scholarly components may be valuable but do not fit into the categories of scholarship.

The Educator's Podium can be thought of as a preliminary step in the development of scholarly work. The table on the next page provides an example of how an article for Educator's Podium could be further developed into a formal study for peer review and publication.

Educator's Podium	Scholarly Study
Describes challenges with current program	Describes challenges with the current program and provides evidence to support the challenges such as faculty or student surveys, clinical grades, or observations, and/or provides current educational literature regarding the challenges
Provides expectations and beliefs for future programs	Expectations and beliefs are translated into a formal hypothesis or research question
Describes how the program currently operates	Describes how the program currently operates and includes educational theory or pedagogy to support the design of the program and outcomes
Provides anecdotal information on the experience	Provides data from a formal assessment of the program and learning

The first Educator's Podium contribution, which was submitted by Dr. Weissberg and appears in this edition, focuses on "TEST" (The Enhanced Student Training). The article describes a new and innovative program designed to enhance the clinical component of the second-year curriculum at the New England College of Optometry (NECO). At this time, 25% of the second-year class at NECO is assigned to the "TEST" program and the remainder of the class participates in the traditional "clerkship program." The article clearly identifies the challenges associated with the clerkship program and the expectations and goals of TEST. The article further describes the experiences so far with the new program and plans for future outcome assessment and determination of success.

Dr. Weissberg and I envision this new forum as an outlet for showcasing ideas, discussing challenges and brainstorming with colleagues. A brief summary of the content from the Educator's Podium will be posted on ASCO's Facebook page. This will enable an immediate dialogue between the author of the podium article and colleagues. The process for submission and publication is below. I invite all faculty to submit to this new forum.

References

1. Kennedy RH, Gubbins PO, Luer M, et al. Developing and sustaining a culture of scholarship. *AM J Phar Educ.* 2003;67(3):Article 92.
2. Boyer EL. *Scholarship reconsidered: priorities of the professoriate.* The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Princeton, NJ. 1990.

EDUCATOR'S PODIUM SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Contributions to the Educator's Podium should be submitted to journal Editor Dr. Aurora Denial at deniala@neco.edu. The editor will review the submission and determine if it is appropriate for the forum. The submission may be returned to the author for minor revisions or comments.

Submissions should be a minimum of 500 words and a maximum of 1,500 words. They should include a brief synopsis of the article (maximum of 150 words) for posting on Facebook.

Suggestions for inclusion:

- traditional teaching method vs. a new, innovative method
- identified problem and intervention
- expectations for a new method, lessons learned, recommendations to others
- potential for future scholarship

Educational challenges, dilemmas or problems to be solved:

- what has already been tried?
- implications of success or failure
- impact of the issue