INTERACTIVE EDUCATION

The continuing challenge, whether in the workplace or in education, is to understand what factors affect an individual's ability to learn. How environments can be created that speed up learning to enable higher levels of performance.

A conventional view on learning is that people learn from experience through task repetition and feedback to adjust their behaviour and improve performance over time. This might be at its lowest level be considered as 'trial and error' but any dependency on task repetition to gain improvement has serious implications especially within healthcare.

Recent research is showing that interaction between learners has a significant positive effect on individual learning over time. Interactive learners compared with non-interactive learners, were found to exhibit substantial improvement in the quality of their decisions and make significantly smaller decision errors over time.

The implications of this recent research are that healthcare education needs to consider forms of interactive learning for faster more effective learning: to create learning environments that encourage communication and the culture of information sharing among learners. And given the growing presence of social media, how this phenomenon can support interactive learning.

http://www.ifets.info/journals/5_3/handzic.html
SOCIAL LEARNING

The way we learn is not just about access to knowledge: we all learn and know things in different ways dependent on our experiences and what we understand as competence in that area.

Human knowing or learning, particularly within the health system is fundamentally a social act: about experiences, perceptions and connections in communities and networks and how these collectively shape our ‘knowing’. There is a natural tendency to focus social learning on social media but social media just adds another avenue (be it increasingly powerful) for the social nature of learning to show itself.

The ability to learn, or learning capability, is the foundation of success for individuals, communities and organisations. The importance of social learning capability was illustrated by a doctor at a WHO event “We know everything we need to know to save 95% of children under five today. What we don’t know is how to increase the social learning capability of societies to make it happen”.

Making sense of social learning at any level is about understanding how best the social structures, be they within real or virtual communities or networks can be supported to connect people in meaningful ways and enhance learning.