

Opinion Corner: The competence-experience gap (Part 1)

How do you become competent and stay competent in performing potentially lifesaving procedures that occur infrequently in clinical practice. In high volume centers with the number of physicians and learners working on any given day ensuring exposure to even core skills such as intubation is difficult. Staff may become 'observant experts' who unless challenged regularly will lose their previously acquired expertise. Overlearning where the goal isn't just skill competence but skill mastery is one way of managing this inevitable loss of competence. But the master is not immune to the effects of time but the slope of decay becomes more favourably gradual and when challenged with another bolus of overlearning the re-ascent to mastery is comparatively quick. The challenge is how to find the overlearning opportunities. The OR has always played an important role in airway management education. Access to relevant OR experiences is however often difficult. What about manikins and high-fidelity simulators? Stay tuned for the Competence-Experience Gap- Part 2 and the problems with plastic.

