EVALUATING THE POTENTIAL VS. THE CURRENT PERFORMANCE

- Introduction: Social psychologists have repeatedly referred to the notion that humans are what they could be, not what they are now. Professional evaluations are only based on what students have learned in the past, not their ability to learn in the future. Using an evaluation technique that measures not only how well they have mastered previously taught material, but also their ability to learn will allow better evaluation of candidates. There are many factors that affect a person when they are evaluated at a single point in time. A single evaluation may reflect more than just their performance that day. Individuals with high potential with or without current good performance will be able to keep up with the evolving field and research required.
- Methods: Tests used to determine the ability of a person to learn in real life situations include focus on tasks that are not obligatory to assess willingness to learn and improve on new skills, focus on principles and concepts rather than small details, measuring difference/improvement of performance on the same tasks over a time period and to test candidates with tasks under less than ideal/unusual circumstances. The overall goal is to test a student's ability to efficiently learn new skills within a set amount of time or with a certain amount of instruction, and not just test the skills they have previously been taught.
- Results: Focusing on evaluating potentials and applying some or all of the strategies may be very challenging, and results may not be highly predictive at the beginning. However, refining these evaluation tools over time to a level where the results can be implemented safely and effectively in practice will only improve the ability to evaluate how future professionals will perform in their field. It is true that potential may not always be fulfilled since ideal learning and/or life conditions rarely occur, therefore these tests are not absolute, a condition which should be considered. Students may also find that the results help them to learn about themselves and call a focus to this type of personal development.
- Conclusion: Potential performance is important indicator of long-term performance and can be used synergistically with current academic performance evaluations. In professions where the landscape of knowledge is constantly evolving and adapting with new techniques, research and best practices, the ability of incoming professionals to evolve with these changes is crucial.

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- Acknowledgements: CMED provided funding for travel. Dr. Faiz Tuma, MD guided abstract production.