

**Title:** Lessons learned from a pilot course in emergency medicine

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**Context and Setting:** A new course to provide all fifth year students with consistent and integrated exposure to common problems in the emergency ward was developed, as a critical pilot course for a comprehensive curricular reform program at Javeriana University School of Medicine in Bogotá, Colombia.

**Why the idea or change was necessary:** Prior to the introduction of this pilot course, students participated in six distinct, required activities in surgery subspecialties (e.g. urology, ENT, ophthalmology) that covered around 50 different topics. These separate courses were lecture based with clinical experiences, but there was no consistency across the courses and the approach inhibited integration of the information and was too specialized for the general education of the physician.

**What was done:** From the previous six distinct courses, 11 topics were identified as mandatory content following group discussion with course directors in Anesthesiology, Urology, ENT, Ophthalmology, Orthopedic Surgery and Neurosurgery. Faculty were resistant but course directors required faculty to work with the changes.

The theoretical background of the topic was delivered via web based learning.

Students used mannequins to learn fundamental clinical skills.

Two classes of students (n=, one class per semester) participated in the first revised course during 2009 and feedback was collected from faculty (using structured interviews) and students using surveys.

Adjustments to the content of the web based material were minor. However, the clinical skills component required more change. This included a test of student knowledge prior to the clinical skills session, and the development of a script for faculty to assure consistency for each student in the clinical skills experience. Each change was included in a revised pilot course taken by 54 students in 2010.

At the end of the revised pilot course, a survey of students was conducted to evaluate satisfaction and their learning perception.

**Evaluation of the results or impact:** 54 students (57.4% female and 42.6% male) participated in the revised pilot course. 50 students completed a survey about the sessions and their overall perception of the course.

All students achieved good performance on assessment of the knowledge attained by exposure to web material based on the results of the test. (Mean: 4.10/5.0).

90% of the students in the revised course were very satisfied or satisfied with the entire course compared with 54% and 51% in the previous classes.

The impacts of this pilot were as follows:

- 1) Created a pilot course that was evaluated in order to apply lessons learned to a larger, comprehensive curriculum reform.
- 2) Changed a distinct set of courses to a single integrated course.
- 3) Provided consistency across the course for all students.

4) Faculty and students resisted the changes. Support from course directors was critical to the success of the pilot. The course evaluation showed that students learned the core materials and had a consistent experience.

The results of this pilot will be applied to a larger comprehensive overhaul of the entire curriculum.