In Just Five (5) Questions...?
A deceptively simple, learner-centered, transformative learning activity

“The first object of any act of learning is that it should serve us in the future” (Bruner, 1983)

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BACKGROUND

• Current shift away from assimilative toward transformative teaching/learning.
• In the assimilative (mimetic) tradition, learners:
  o Primarily receive knowledge, rather than discover it
  o Are typically able to fit new knowledge into pre-existing knowledge structures
• In the transformative tradition, learners are:
  o Actively engaged in knowledge formation
  o Placed in positions of discovery/connected to the learning
  o Expand knowledge constructs/understanding of others
• Transformative learning requires:
  o Deep learning–rather than superficial exposure to broad information
  o Revising frames of reference

CONTEXT

• In healthcare education, learning is ideally an ‘embodied’ process, which means:
  o Linking student ‘know-how’ with the ability to act in practice situation
  o Providing deep learning opportunities
• Yet, current curricula are heavy laden:
  o Knowledge explosion/technological advances
  o Content overload/insurmountable amounts of information to deliver
  o New practice/certification requirements

GOAL/OBJECTIVE

• Create a meaningful learning activity that is not only learner-centered and transformative, but also incorporates key course content, critical reasoning skills, evidence-based practice, and ongoing clinical relevance.

FRAMEWORK

5 QUESTIONS

METHOD/LEARNING ACTIVITY

Learning “How to” Approach/Respond to Parent Questions

• Part 1: Students are provided with five (5) successive parent questions:
  o Based on actual/common parent concerns
  o Across the pediatric lifespan (e.g. newborn, infant, early childhood, school age, adolescent)

PARENT QUESTIONS
1) “What do you think about pacifiers?”
2) “How do I know if my baby can hear me?”
3) “My 3-year-old got all his shots and now someone told me that I may have set him up for getting autism. How will I know if he has it?”
4) “I was told my child suffered a ‘little’ concussion yesterday during the soccer game. Should I be worried? What should I watch for? What about regional championships next week?”
5) “I am not sure about this HPV vaccine. She is only 12. I’ve heard once they get it they think it’s safe to have sex”.

• Part 2: Students are asked to prepare a very brief (~1 minute) response that is:
  o easy to understand, evidence-based, AND empowering to the parent

• Part 3: Faculty initially provide extensive framing and scaffolding; all evidence/resources provided; modelling feedback, challenging habits of mind/points of view.

• Part 4: Faculty gradually remove scaffolds, students must locate own evidence, identify resources, and seek/provide peer feedback; learning becomes increasingly self-directed, internalized, and faculty assistance is no longer needed.

In the end, students have learned “how to” approach/respond to ANY parent question, today and into the future!

IMPACT & EFFECTIVENESS - Over the past 6 years

• 182 graduate PNP/FNP students (2 universities) completed “5 Parent Questions” activity
• 157 (86%) completed course evaluations; 97 (62%) of whom identified “5 Parent Questions” as the most impactful course-related reading, learning activity, or experience.
• 0 students complained/provided negative feedback about “5 Parent Questions”
• 68% of PNP/FNP alumni responses (from one university) identified “5 Parent Questions” as the one course-related reading, learning activity, or experience they still remember and/or use.

IMPLICATIONS

• The intentional use of a focused transformative activity can promote student growth, self-confidence, and movement toward autonomy.