
AUTHENTICITY IN PHYSIOLOGY EDUCATION

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SUBTHEME: Assessment

BACKGROUND

The study explored the concept of authenticity in physiology education and practice. The demand for a more skilled labour force, has led to transformations in higher education as educators are encouraged to implement authenticity throughout assessment. However, a lack of shared understanding about authenticity in physiology education makes it challenging for educators to design assessment and learning experiences that adheres to the University's assessment criteria.

AIMS

The primary aim was to explore the perspectives of students, educators, and industry professionals on authenticity in physiology education through understanding definitions of authentic assessment and discussion of current physiology- specific assessments and frameworks.

DESIGN AND METHODS

The study employed a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews with 10 students, 11 educators, and 8 industry professionals. Participants were asked to articulate their understanding of authenticity, evaluate current assessments, and analyse four frameworks. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis and quantitative scoring using one-way ANOVA.

RESULTS

All groups emphasised the importance of transferable skills in assessment. Students critiqued traditional assessments for focusing on memory over understanding, while educators and industry stressed the importance of foundational knowledge. Logistical hurdles, such as time, funding, and resources, were identified as barriers to implementation. A need to tailor frameworks to physiology graduate's diverse career paths was identified. Final exams were rated significantly different across groups, with industry professionals valuing them more for developing transferable skills.

CONCLUSIONS

Authentic assessment and its application in physiology education is complex due to the diversity of career paths and logistical constraints. Considering the varied attitudes about authenticity across the groups, a co-design approach can be utilised to support the implementation of authentic assessment in physiology education through the development of a physiology-specific framework. Future research should focus on creating a physiology-specific framework to guide educators in implementing authentic assessments.