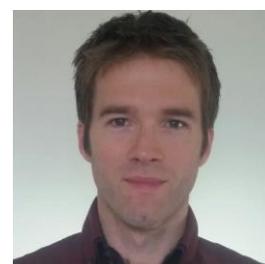


The Future Leaders Programme

Leaders Digest (April 2018)

Hello

I'm Matthew Roycroft, Leadership Fellow in the School of Medicine in HEE and am guest editing April's Leaders Digest! Enjoy!



Phrase of the month

"The perfect is the enemy of the good"

This is an idea I keep coming up against in my work. At first it sounds counter-intuitive: surely perfect is better than good! But the more complex discussions I end up in the more I realise how true this is! Fundamentally it means that in striving for the perfect you often end up with a task that's not completed at all and is therefore of no value and so it's better to aim lower but complete something. I've been in many meetings this year where people want more and more information and breakdown of something by smaller and smaller units when the broader picture is already known. Once that detailed information is obtained (at considerable resource expenditure) they then can't implement anything as their resources (often staff time) are used up.

The history of this phrase is particularly interesting. It's known in various subtly different forms in different languages all of which have the same or similar meaning. It was probably first written in the very early 17th century as an Italian proverb but at a very similar time was used by Shakespeare in King Lear ("striving to better, oft we mar what's well") showing how interconnected European culture was even then and how quickly ideas moved! I think the meaning here is subtly different however but is equally as relevant to us: in trying to mend something don't mess up what already works well! It was the French writer Voltaire around 150

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years later that both popularised and wrote it in its more modern form with “le mieux est l'ennemi du bien” or “the better is the enemy of the good.”

TED like talk of the month



Although nominally for the anaesthetist this talk is relevant to anyone that works, works with or manages anyone that works night shifts. It highlights just how much of an impact on both patient and individual safety something like fatigue has. We spend so long in medicine focussing on knowledge but when you hear that at the end of a nightshift your decisions making processes are similar to those of someone who's just over the legal driving limit for alcohol it really highlights the importance of looking after staff to ensure they can

actually use all the fantastic knowledge and skills they have!

I was lucky enough to hear Mike talk a month or so ago and I think this video is a nice brief version of that. It amazes me how much good content there is out there that's barely watched. This talk is clearly of TED quality but without the branding it's not even got 2000 views yet!

It's available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLWD9uXeNw>

My Project

Rather than anything very specific, I've a broad remit of improving Core Medical Training (and indeed medical training) as a whole. I'm therefore working on a number of different areas including less than full time training (LTFTT), returning to training, teaching day and staff development, addressing equality and diversity issues, recruitment, retention and improving trainee experience, guardian of safe working data analysis, organising a trainee conference, HEE website redesign, creating a new induction programme and working with individual hospitals to bring about positive change. Apart from the one or two areas in which I was more a technician than a leader (website redesign etc) most areas I've worked on as yet have brought about very little change. Indeed, I've just demonstrated no reported improvement following multiple LTFTT changes brought about!

Despite trying multiple different approaches towards these various areas I keep coming up against one fundamental issue: the idea of the trainee-trainer relationship and the breakdown in that as both sides are increasingly stressed with work pressures. In a way I'm glad I run into this: I, personally, like the idea that people are so positively affected by other people they work with and how inherently human that is. In another however I find it incredibly frustrating as in an era of underfunding finding ways to address it is proving incredibly difficult! I no longer think there's a magic key to fix everything but keep trying to find ways to subtly improving things!

Upcoming events

17th – 18th April: Politics Power and Persuasion

24th April: Writing for Publication

26th – 27th April: National Scottish Medical Education Conference