

CTLA Article Review

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Article:

Anvik T, Gude T, Grimstad H, Baerheim A, Fasmer OB, Hjortdahl P, Holen A, Risberg T and Vaglum P. Assessing medical students' attitudes towards learning communication skills – which components of attitudes do we measure? *BMC Medical Education*. 2007; 7:4

What the article is about:

Several scales have been developed to measure medical students' attitudes towards learning communication skills. The Communication Skills Attitudes Scale (CSAS), the scale used in this study, has been widely used to measure positive attitudes and negative attitudes towards learning communication skills. This study demonstrates that in addition to these affective components, there may also be a cognitive component affecting students' attitudes towards learning communication skills. Negative attitudes towards learning communication skills may therefore be more reflective of the way communication skills are taught than medical students' actual use of skills in a clinical setting. Cognitive attitudes should therefore be tested separately.

Why the article may be useful:

Good communication skills are important for any healthcare practitioner interacting with patients. The article proposes strategies for successfully encouraging medical students to learn communication skills and to encourage positive attitudes about learning communication skills. The results suggest that certain teaching strategies may be more or less effective in encouraging positive attitudes towards learning communication skills.

Who the article is for:

This will be helpful for any professors or clinic supervisors incorporating communication skills training in their curricula or interactions with students.