**Practical Approaches to Applying Conceptual & Theoretical Frameworks to Education Research: A MESRE Session**

**Sessions on Medical Education**
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**Session Plan:** Social scientists and educators use relevant theories and conceptual frameworks when conducting education research. The conceptual or theoretical framework provides a lens through which to identify gaps in the literature, operationalize appropriate constructs and hypothesize relationships as well as design appropriate methodology. In addition, such frameworks can provide scholars lenses to understand how societies, organizations and people interact in certain ways. Despite what we know about the importance of using frameworks, educators struggle to consistently identify and incorporate them when designing their research studies. Knowing that this puts them at risk for negative peer review and rejection from some of the top medical education journals, it is critical for educators to have understand the practical application of such frameworks and how they can help situate ones research study in the existing literature. Thus, the purpose of this session, which is sponsored by the GEA's Medical Education Scholarship Research and Evaluation (MESRE) section, is to explore the practical application of conceptual and theoretical frameworks to education research.

**Session Agenda:**
- **20 min** An opening panel discussion with members of MESRE will illustrate how common frameworks have been utilized using examples from prior research projects in the literature. Panelists will explore their decision-making process and share perspectives on why a particular framework was (or was not) selected. Examples will reference various paradigms including qualitative and quantitative approaches.

- **30 min** Participants will complete a small group activity using a sample case vignette that tasks them with developing a potential educational research project. MESRE members will serve as small group facilitators to help participants navigate the various frameworks that could be utilized for this project. Using a worksheet that pulls suggestions from the existing literature, participants will think through the potential implications of various frameworks on the development, design, and interpretation of hypothetical results of the project. The worksheet will include guiding questions and considerations for discussion. Two experienced research mentors will observe the various small groups and note common questions and themes that emerge.

- **10 min** Observers will provide their reflection on common themes that emerged from the small group discussions as a way of illuminating potential barriers and

- **15 min** An editor of a medical education journal will discuss tips and potential pitfalls for incorporating frameworks into research manuscripts, connecting principles discussed in the small group case vignette to examples in the literature and building upon the themes identified by the
small group observers. The session will close with a review of a sample publications handout and a list of available resources.

**Learning Objectives:** At the end of this session, participants will be able to:
1. Describe and give examples of conceptual and theoretical frameworks commonly used in different research paradigms
2. Examine how the selection of a framework can impact research design
3. Discuss strategies to situate results through the lens of a conceptual or theoretical framework

Additionally, participants will leave the session with resources that support the identification and use of conceptual frameworks.