THERE’S POETRY IN HEALTHCARE SIMULATION

There is poetry in healthcare simulation, at least as Dr. Christine Park sees it.

In fact, Park, who serves as the current SSH president, began her college career at Yale studying language and literature.

She would then go to medical school, following in her father’s footsteps, and complete residency in anesthesiology.

But something was missing.

“When I discovered simulation, I found finally the perfect marriage between this literary world of reflection and the world of healthcare, which can be more quantitative and transactional,” she said.

Park will soon join the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she will be Professor of Anesthesia and Medical Education, Associate Head For Learning and Innovation and Co-director of the Clinical Performance Center.

Her research is focused on cognition and cognitive bias.

“Historically we’ve often assessed the quality of education by measuring what the students learned,” she said. “What I’m interested in is how does the way I teach affect how people make downstream decisions.”

To illustrate the point, she asked, “If you teach someone how to use a hammer, then does everything then look like a nail?”

Park was the lead author of a study that published in the journal Simulation in Healthcare, which said, “cognitive bias is an inclination in judgment based on incomplete perspective and preformed patterns of thought.”

The study investigated whether curriculum design could influence bias in the
setting of simulation-based medical education, and it found “that the sequence of training in a simulation-based emergency airway curriculum contributed to the formation of cognitive bias.”

Park became involved in SSH in 2005, when she discovered how many people were thinking about the same things that she was, at a time when simulation was still considered something of a frontier in medical training.

Her core leadership philosophy as president for the society is one of servant leadership, pointing out priorities of stewardship, partnership and development of successors, both in terms of people, methods and technology. Her goal is to reach more people in the field and to have medical community decision-makers as well as the public understand better the value of healthcare simulation.

An exciting new initiative on that front will be Healthcare Simulation Week, September 11-15, 2017.

Park returns to her educational roots and cites Confucius in describing her passion for simulation in education:

“By three methods we may learn wisdom: First, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.”

The power of simulation is that it brings all three methods to bear to strive for the best possible learning outcomes, she said.