



Editorial

Medical Teacher

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The word 'doctor' means physician, and derived from the Latin *docere*, means to teach¹.

All doctors are required to teach future generations of doctors, yet, there has traditionally been a deficiency in appropriate teacher education in the medical profession.

Medical education is changing day by day and there is a continuing need to assess the role of the teacher in medical education. The responsibility of conveying the language of medical science into the minds of learners falls upon the shoulders of medical teachers. A good medical teacher is the one who paves the way in the making of future clinicians².

The educational process has three elements. The curriculum, students and teacher. Much attention has been paid to the curriculum including the different approaches to teaching, learning & assessment and students including their selection for medical studies and how they can learn more effectively. Less attention has been paid to the teacher. The teacher or trainer is the key element in creation of the condition in which learning occurs. Good teachers have a range of technical skills, understanding of a basic educational principles, enthusiasm and passion for teaching and a commitment for evaluating and improving their own teaching. The possession of this attributes by a teacher is important.

Accrediting bodies, such as the General Medical Council in the UK, have recognized that all doctors to a greater or lesser extent have teaching responsibilities, and have highlighted teaching competence as an important learning outcome in undergraduate and postgraduate programs. A teacher, to fulfil their educational role, needs to possess or acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes³.

While a good teacher may have the necessary skills and passion to teach others, some of the required skills have to be learnt. According to a study conducted on 1st, 2nd and final year MBBS students of Andhra Medical College, Andhra Pradesh, India, the qualities that a student perceives as the best qualities in a medical teacher are –

- Quality of subject
- Student-friendly nature
- Creating interest & motivation in subject
- More explanatory / more informative teaching
- Best personality – personal and professional skills
- Easy approachable teacher
- Master of good communication
- Better narration of class
- Cracking jokes
- Best assessor of students
- Good looks / decent looks
- Problem solving nature
- Using AV aids

The foundation that builds a doctor's life is based to a great extent on the knowledge he gets from his teacher. A good medical teacher who is also a doctor has a unique opportunity to share some of the magic of the subject with the students. It is the great art of the teacher to awaken creative knowledge of the student.

Role models are people we can identify with, who have qualities we would like to have and are in positions we would like to reach⁴. Role modelling is an integral component of medical education as it is an important factor in shaping the values, attitudes and behavior of medical trainees. Role models have a strong influence on the career choices of medical students, and are important in medical teacher development^{5,6}.

The competencies and attributes expected of an effective teacher are outlined as follows –

1. Technical competencies

- Preparing and giving lectures and presentations that engage the audience and make use of appropriate technology
- Choosing appropriate small group methods and facilitating a small group teaching session
- Teaching practical or clinical skills in a variety of settings including the workplace
- Facilitating and managing the student's learning in a range of settings, giving the learner support to obtain the maximum benefit from the learning opportunities available, helping the student to assess his or her own competence and providing feedback to the learner as necessary
- Planning an education program for the students or trainees that combines appropriate learning opportunities to help them to achieve the expected learning outcomes
- Identifying, developing and adapting learning resources for use by students in the form of handouts, study guides or multimedia presentations
- Assessing the achievements of learning outcomes by the students or trainees using appropriate technologies including written, performance-based and portfolio assessments
- Evaluating the education program, including the use of feedback from the learner and peer assessment
- Using social media

2. Approach to teaching

- An understanding of basic educational principles
- Appropriate ethics and attitudes
- Strategies for decision making

3. Professionalism

- The role of the teacher or trainer within the Health Service and University
- Personal development with regard to teaching³

In a traditional teacher-centered teaching environment like our country most teachers play a central role and act as transmitter of information to the novice learner. Here the students are being passive and have the least involvement and participation in teaching learning process. The lack of creativity and initiative results in

memorizing and surface learning without deeper understanding of the topic.

But in student-centered learning main focus is on changes on the students learning and on what the students do to achieve this rather than what the teacher does. The teacher plays the role of a facilitator who creates interest in subject, guides the students for self-learning and supervises for the rectification of the mistakes made by them so that the expected learning outcome is achieved and students become life-long learner.

A good teacher should be approachable, engaging and inspiring, must have a sound knowledge of the subject to be taught, should have the ability to communicate with confidence and clarity at all levels.

There is no magic bullet to become a competent teacher but the commitment of teachers and trainers is important. Teaching is both a craft and a science. The work should be enjoyed not endured. With a better understanding of work, 'poor' teachers can become 'good' teachers and 'good' teachers can become 'excellent' teachers.

It would be concluded with the sayings of Christa McAuliffe, who was to be the first teacher in space but died tragically when her spaceship disintegrated 70 seconds after take-off. Earlier, when she was asked about her profession, she replied, "I touch the future, I teach."

References

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