

What skills do we need to develop in our students and how might we go about doing this?

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Why is this an important question?

- Changes in the essential nature of what a “pharmacist” is and does
- Legislative evolution in scopes of practice
- Broader social and health system changes
- A nagging sense that we haven’t “done right” by our students, our profession

The Variables

- Learners: demographics, interests, motivations, needs, demands
- Environment: cultural norms, social trends
- Societal expectations: patients, allied health professionals
- System issues: legislation, finances, structure
- Technology: instantaneous access to information and its impact on judgment and wisdom

How do professionals learn to be professionals?

- Learning of knowledge, skills and attitudes is shaped by profession-specific socialisation practices
- A system that incorporates media, teachers, parents, the playground, etc.
- What is the role of the “teacher” in professional development?

How Doctors Think - Groopman

The cognitive-developmental pathway of physicians:

- Reasoning from first principles
- Application of rules
- Pattern recognition

Pattern Recognition

- What is expertise in clinical work?
- Advantages: speed, confidence, 95% accuracy
- Disadvantages: speed, confidence 95% accuracy
- Where does reflection, self-improvement, professional evolution fit?

In the footsteps of Flexner....

- Why are health professions taught in a university?
- Why is “science” at the core of university-based health professions?
- How did the evolution from “character” to “characteristics” to “competencies” occur?

Character to characteristics to competencies

- A major shift in the way we think about professionals

Professional = a man of great character who therefore must be competent

vs.

Professional = a person who displays the right characteristics by proving his/her competence

Foucault and the shifting discourses that affect our thinking

“Madness”

18th century = spiritual possession

19th century = criminal deviance

20th century = biochemical abnormality

21st century = simple variation

The shifting discourses of competency

“Competency”

Patients: affable, available

Professionals: no errors, ever

Regulators: no complaints

Lawyers: peer-referenced

Educators: measurement

We can teach but what will students *actually* learn?

Today, in pharmacy education:

- competency/outcomes oriented
- emphasis on reliable and valid measurement to prove to ourselves/others that “learning” has actually occurred
- a culture of “assessment as proof of learning”

Where do we go from here?

What skills do we need to develop in our students and how do we go about doing this?