

Considerations about teaching and assessing professionalism for faculty members

Sir,

Emphasizing conventional ways for teaching like the lecture that highlighted the cognitive domain of competencies and different definitions of professionalism are the most challenges for teaching and assessing professionalism. In addition, students may learn some behaviors in “implicit curriculum” that affects anything they realized regarding professionalism.^[1] The principles of professionalism that are related to the cognitive domain can be trained in the classroom as a formal curriculum and also can be taught in “workshops and small group” practices as an informal curriculum. Moreover, “witnessed” is an important part of learned professionalism and derived from the “hidden curriculum”. However, “formal, informal, and hidden curriculum” usually oppose together, and learners may conclude that professionalism “doesn’t practice what it preaches” and makes them feel unsure, worry, and doubt.^[1,2] Therefore, outcomes of learning professionalism through the “hidden curriculum” are not predictable; hence, the necessity of teaching professionalism is stressed. Furthermore, to enhance learning and motivate learners, what has been taught to learners should be assessed.^[3]

According to the importance of teaching and assessing professionalism, these practical points seem to be useful to guide faculty members:

1. Provide adequate resources to teach professionalism formally with the help of organization directors^[4,5]
2. Teach the “cognitive base” of professionalism clearly^[4,5]
3. Accommodate learning environments based on the institution’s goals and professionalism principles^[4,5]
4. Select teachers to teach professionalism, who are genuinely honored and deeply admired by colleagues^[3]
5. Familiarize all faculty members with principles of professionalism and informing them about the methods for teaching and assessing professionalism^[4,5]
6. Provide learning objectives to learners about expected behavioral outcomes when starting a formal professionalism course^[3]
7. Teach your learners from the beginning of the undergraduate level and assess their learning^[3]
8. Use the assessment to improve and make effective your teaching^[3]
9. Provide feedback to your learners during formative evaluations^[3]
10. Make changes in your work situations such as financial matters, task hours or environment, administrative hierarchy, and work pressure to facilitate professionalism
11. Apply various assessment methods and multiple tools to increase reliability and validity of the evaluation, like using the observational checklists and multiple evaluators^[3]
12. Give timely and adequate feedback to learners aimed at improving professional performance^[3]
13. Create an informal learning environment by communicating between teacher and learner or senior and junior. Hence, mentors’ behaviors must adhere to the standards of professionalism like the role models^[3]
14. List all learning experiences as the results of teaching and assessment^[3]
15. Provide conditions that learners participate in learning and apply self-directed learning and self-reflection to develop their professional practice. Learners must be able to manage issues such as conflict of interest, continuing education, and other unpleasant matters.^[3]

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