Rethinking knowledge and pedagogy in dental education

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Abstract

Dentistry as a profession has often been considered both art and science. Traditional dental education has attempted to address both; however, in many places only the science of dentistry is emphasized. The move toward competency-based curricula in dental education requires an expansion of what constitutes meaningful knowledge in the curriculum and what pedagogies best support that curriculum. The scientific and technical knowledge considered foundational to clinical practice is not sufficient to teach competencies associated with the art of dentistry. Habermas, a social scientist, offers a way of looking beyond technical knowledge to consider two other forms of knowledge: practical and emancipatory. Pedagogy that supports development of practical and emancipatory knowledge includes problem-based learning and case methods, heuristics, reflective practica, journals, storytelling, and performance-based assessment methods. These important teaching strategies are being integrated into various dental curricula including a new competency-based dental curriculum at Marquette University's School of Dentistry. It will be critical for dental educators to continue developing these methods to provide efficient and effective education for future practitioners in both the art and science of dentistry.

Comments

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