

## Art in Teaching Professional Behaviors and Values to Medical Students

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### Dear editor

The primary purpose of medical ethics education is to prepare qualified physicians, who can improve the community's health while respecting the patients' rights and values (1). To improve the professionalism of medical students and physicians, basic components of professionalism (e.g., communication skills and ethics) and professional characteristics (e.g., accountability, altruism, professional excellence, and moral behavior) should be taken into consideration (3). In other words, ethics education attempts to communicate the governing virtues and values related to physicians' interactions with patients, colleagues, and community (2).

First and foremost, administrators and authorities of educational institutions should openly advocate for professional training and professional commitment; this ensures the success of related programs. Second, the etymological features of professionalism (historical roots, definitions, values, attributes, behaviors, and responsibilities) should be explicitly explained. Third, the learning environment should be in coordination with the objectives of the institution and professional regulations. Also, institutions should act based on their professional and organizational values, such as accountability, impartiality, honesty, integrity, and service, as their behaviors can influence the individual behaviors of learners and physicians.

Finally, faculty members in charge of professional

training should be respected by academic members with professional qualifications and values. Generally, the primary purpose of education is to internalize the concepts of professional commitment and behavior in medical students and physicians (4, 5). Since the purpose of education is clearly to internalize values in learners, instructors are required to show effective performance in this area. However, problems and challenges of professional ethics education have been discussed in multiple studies. It is still unclear which method is the most effective one for medical ethics education (2). In a previous study, the authors examined the medical ethics curricula of undergraduate students and evaluated educational practices. It was shown that educational curricula are becoming more student-centered, requiring the students' active participation. Previous studies support the use of student-centered methods in teaching the concepts of professional ethics, and it is recommended to involve students in the learning process as much as possible (6).

In another study, the researchers believed that the researchers believed that integration of adult education principles, such as the development of a targeted curriculum, training in accordance with the student's educational level, attention to the educational environment, use of student-centered methods, and ultimately use of multiple methods in an educational program, is effective in teaching medical ethics (7).

In another study performed in 2016 in Tehran

University of Medical Sciences, a new educational method, outside the medical ethics curriculum, entitled “Medical students’ ethics”, was implemented. In this study, 335 students from the fields of medicine, dentistry, nursing, and pharmacological sciences were recruited. Different methods of medical education were used in combination, including theater-based presentations, large group discussions, and use of multimedia. Both pretest and posttest analyses were carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of these methods. In this study, the students’ satisfaction with the applied method for teaching medical ethics was also determined. In this program, which integrated different educational methods, such as theater-based presentations and storytelling, ethical analysis was found to be appealing to students, and pretest-posttest analyses indicated a clear improvement in the students’ knowledge and attitudes (8).

Moreover, the use of artistic practices, such as painting, has been evaluated in teaching some medical concepts, such as cardiac function (9). Another study evaluating the relationship between medicine and art confirmed this association. Overall, many studies have highlighted the link between medicine and art and have emphasized the value of art in improving our understanding of individual characteristics. The connection between medicine and art is very important, as it improves the ethical understanding of physicians and increases their sensitivity and empathy for patients. Medicine is not only a science used for disease prevention and symptoms alleviation but also a form of art helping the physician recognize the individual experiences of patients to propose suitable treatments (10). Therefore, it seems that art practices, such as such as poem, theater, film, guide students to rethink their ways of learning and introduce them to professional behaviors and values. In this method, learners can actually understand, characterize, and express ethical behaviors and virtues, rather than only discuss a subject; this can lead to the internalization of values and behaviors in a profession.

Undoubtedly, the teaching of values and concepts related to professional commitment in medical classrooms requires the use of different methods. Achievement of educational goals in this field requires the learners’ great contribution to the educational process, allowing them to actively learn the concepts of professionalism in medicine and observe the principles of professionalism.

#### Supplementary Material

Supplementary material(s) is available [here](#) [To read supplementary materials, please refer to the journal website and open [http://sdme.kmu.ac.ir/jufile?ar\\_sfile=803229](http://sdme.kmu.ac.ir/jufile?ar_sfile=803229)].

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