

# SECTION 6

## TODAY'S TEACHER AND TOMORROW'S DOCTORS

*'Everyone who remembers his own educational experience remembers teachers, not methods and techniques. The teacher is the kingpin of the educational situation.'*

Sidney Hook

### OVERVIEW

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Chapter 34 The changing role of the teacher

- The teacher is a key factor in the education of tomorrow's doctors
- The good teacher embodies a range of abilities
- The teacher should adapt to changes in medical education
- The abilities required of a teacher can be learned
- This book can help the teacher to develop the necessary skills

## THE TEACHER IS A KEY FACTOR IN THE EDUCATION OF TOMORROW'S DOCTORS

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This book is about the teacher and the essential role the teacher plays in the education of tomorrow's doctors. The achievement of the learning outcomes by the student and the sort of doctor they become can to a large measure be attributed to the teachers who have served as their role models and who have been responsible for their undergraduate and postgraduate training. The teachers, as we have discussed in the Preface and in Chapter 1, are a medical school's most important asset.

## THE GOOD TEACHER EMBODIES A RANGE OF ABILITIES

Teaching is a complex activity that requires a range of abilities of the teacher as described in Chapter 2. This includes not only the teacher's mastery of the content area but also the technical competencies necessary to serve as an information provider, a role model, a facilitator of learning, a curriculum planner, an assessor and a resource developer. As a professional, the teacher requires a basic understanding of the underpinning educational principles and an appropriate attitude and passion for teaching. The teacher should be an enquirer into his or her own competence and keep themselves up-to-date with developments in the field. This is summarised in the equation:

$$\text{An excellent teacher (ET)} = (\text{Ieq} + \text{Req} + \text{Feq} + \text{Aeq} + \text{Ceq} + \text{Leq}) \times (\text{S} \times \text{E} \times \text{D} \times \text{T}) \times (\text{P})$$

where I is information provider, R is role model, F is facilitator, A is assessor, C is curriculum planner, L is learning resource developer, e is extent, q is quality, S is scientific principles, E is ethics and attitudes, D is decision making, T is team working and P is personal development.

With the necessary skills, teaching is not a chore; it can be an enjoyable experience and can be rewarding and fun. The good teacher will have a passion for teaching that will help to motivate and inspire students and trainees.

## THE TEACHER SHOULD ADAPT TO CHANGES IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

Important changes are taking place not only in medical practice but also in how the doctor of tomorrow is trained. The changes are outlined in Table 34.1. They reflect changes in the students admitted to medical studies, changes in educational thinking and learning technologies and changes in public expectations. These changes impose new demands on the teacher with a change in emphasis from the teacher as an information provider to the teacher as the facilitator of learning. The teacher must respond to changes in what is expected in terms of the learning outcomes. The teacher has also to be familiar with the application of the new technologies to education.

**Table 34.1** *Changes in medical education*

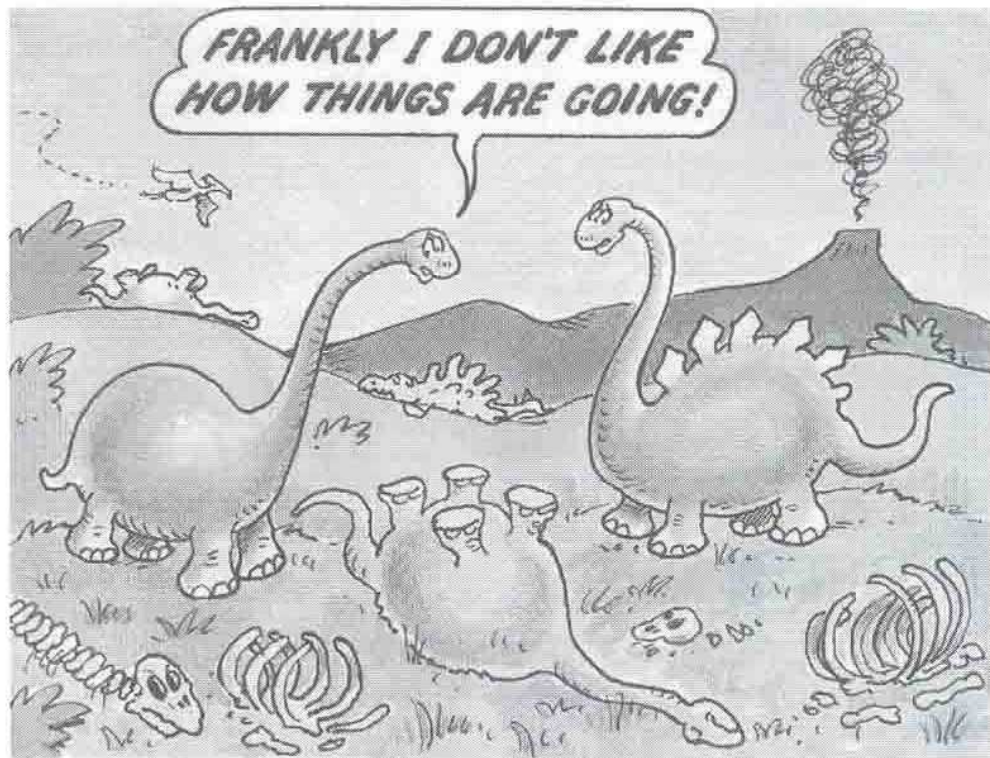
Past	Present and Future
Emphasis on the process and the methods of teaching and learning	Emphasis on the product and the learning outcomes
Learning dominated by mastery of basic and clinical science theory	Authentic learning with theory related to real-life situations and problems
Clinical experiences introduced later in the course	Clinical experiences introduced early in the course
Learning through lectures and hospital-based clinical teaching	A mixed economy including e-learning and simulation and learning in ambulatory and community-based settings
Teachers take responsibility for the education	Students actively engage in their own learning
Uniform or standard education programme	Teaching personalised to the needs of individual students
Curriculum content compartmentalised and discipline based	Curriculum content integrated
Education based within the medical profession	Inter-professional education and learning to work in teams
A competitive environment with students learning as individuals	Students collaborate and learn together
Assessment prioritises mastery of fact	Assessment rewards skills and attitudes
Emphasis is on being correct, with mistakes and errors ignored	Learning from mistakes and errors in practice
Education decisions made on the teacher's prejudice and personal experience	Education decisions informed by the best evidence available

## THE ABILITIES REQUIRED OF A TEACHER CAN BE LEARNED

Expertise in medicine or in a content area is not necessarily associated with the skills required to teach the subject to students or trainees. While a good teacher may naturally have the necessary skills and passion to teach others, some of the required skills have to be learned. Everyone can learn to be a teacher. With appropriate training, the good teacher can become an excellent teacher and the poor teacher can become a good teacher.

## **THIS BOOK CAN HELP THE TEACHER TO DEVELOP THE NECESSARY SKILLS**

Teachers who fail to keep up-to-date with education developments will no longer have a meaningful role to play in the education of students (Fig. 34.1).



**FIG 34.1** Medical teachers need to be able to adapt to change.

This book helps the teacher to keep up-to-date by providing practical guidance on the competencies necessary to deliver a high quality education programme. It introduces the teacher to their responsibilities in curriculum planning, in implementing a teaching and learning programme and in the assessment of students and provides the necessary theoretical underpinning.