Professional Identity Formation

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Intended Learning Outcomes

• Consider what it means to be a “professional”
• Understand the necessary components of professional identity formation
• Develop familiarity with reflective judgment stages
• Identify techniques to promote professional development
WHAT IS A “PROFESSIONAL”

Take 10 seconds and write down 3 things you ‘expect’ of someone who is a professional
A ‘Professional’:

- Expert knowledge and skills
- Ethical behavior, exhibits integrity
- Altruistic, benefits others
- Licensed and accountable
- Self-regulating—individually and as a group

» how do we teach these attributes???
• **From the ACGME:**
  Professionalism: “Commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles and sensitivity to a diverse patient population.”

• **From the LCME:**
  IS-16: “The development of core professional attributes (e.g., altruism, social accountability) needed to provide effective care in a multidimensionally diverse society.”
  MS-31-A: “As part of their formal training, medical students should learn the importance of demonstrating the attributes of a professional and understand the balance of privileges and obligations that the public and the profession expect of a physician.”

• **From the AACN:**
  "Professionalism is defined as the consistent demonstration of core values evidenced by nurses working with other professionals to achieve optimal health and wellness outcomes in patients, families, and communities by wisely applying principles of altruism, excellence, caring, ethics, respect, communication, and accountability (Interprofessional Professionalism Measurement Group, 2008)”
From “they” to “we”

- Knowledge/expertise (cognitive development)
- Psychosocial development
- Moral development
  - Reflective judgment as a skill (King and Kitchener)
  - Proto-professionalism as a state (Hilton and Slotnick)
Reflective Judgment

• How can individuals answer “ill-structured” problems?
  – The uncertainty of ‘knowing’
• Depends on how one views knowledge…..
• Depends on one’s understandings of mitigating factors and how those are judged/weighed in coming to an answer or conclusion

Stages of Reflective Judgment

• Pre-reflective (Stages 1, 2, 3)
  – 1: Knowledge is concrete/absolute, no justification needed
    • “I know what I see”
  – 2: Knowledge is certain and held by an authority
    • “If it is on the news, it must be true”
  – 3: Knowledge is absolutely certain or only temporarily uncertain. If uncertain, it is just a belief until you can get the knowledge
    • “Just guessing until someone proves it with evidence”
Stages of Reflective Judgment

• Quasi-Reflective Thinking (Stages 4 and 5)
  – 4: Knowledge is uncertain and knowledge claims are idiosyncratic to the individual due to ambiguous circumstances. Choose evidence based on belief.
  – 5: Knowledge is contextual and subjective
    • “People think differently and so they attack the problem differently. Other theories could be as true as my own, but based on different evidence”
Stages of Reflective Judgment

- Reflective Thinking (Stages 6 and 7)
  - 6: Knowledge is constructed by individual conclusions based on a variety of sources. Criteria for weighing the evidence exists.
  - 7: Knowledge is the outcome of a process of reasonable inquiry in which solutions to ill-structured problems are constructed. Based on evidence as it currently exists, and can be re-evaluated as new evidence/perspectives arise.
Reflective Knowledge is constructed and can change Criteria for determining the best evidence

Quasi-reflective Ill-structured problems exist Not sure how to deal with ambiguity

Pre-reflective Knowledge comes from direct, personal observation or from an authority All problems have a correct answer, there is no uncertainty
Supporting proto-professionals

• Professionalism is an acquired state
• Encourage reflection on ill-structured problems
• Provide role-models for dealing with uncertainty, ambiguity, and complex teams
• Foster the correct balance of attainment and attrition of traits such as idealism/cynicism or naivete/wisdom

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Professional Identity

• Complex state involving beliefs about knowledge, its justifications and applications
• Depends on role-modeling and expectations
• Evolves over time and can be influenced
Adult Learning Summarized

• Individuals want to learn when activities are relevant, have meaning, and provide benefit

• Many theories regarding how individuals learn
  – External training, co-creation, individual action, social interaction, identity formation

• Knowledge of theoretical frameworks can improve your teaching strategies