

A New Era of Student Engagement in Medical Education: Students as Partners

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ABSTRACT

Recognizing students as partners in medical education is not just beneficial but essential. It improves the learning experience, promotes a culture of continuous improvement, and prepares students to be adaptive, thoughtful, and adequate medical professionals. By adopting student engagement, we can create a more dynamic and responsive educational environment that better meets the needs of students and ultimately leads to improved patient care.

Keywords: Medical Education; Medical Faculty; Medical student

Received Date: 5 July 2024

Revised Date: 10 August 2024

Accepted Date: 30 August 2024

Published Date: 29 September 2024

Editor: Pourhoseingholi (Conflict of Interests: None)

Reviewers: M. Allahverdi Khani (Conflict of interest: None), M. Jafari (Conflict of Interests: None)

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Cite as : Parsa Hasanabadi, Keivan Lashkari, Amir Ali Moodi Ghalibaf. A New Era of Student Engagement in Medical Education: Students as Partners. Canon Journal of Medicine. 2023 December; 4(4), 113-114.

Dear Editor;

With an increasing recognition of the value students bring as active participants rather than passive recipients, the landscape of medical education is evolving. This partnership model encourages students to take ownership of their learning, promoting critical thinking, student empowerment, stability, and a deeper understanding of what they need to know. With the engagement of students as partners, they contribute unique perspectives that can enhance curriculum development, improve teaching methods, and eventually lead to better patient care.

One of the critical advantages of student engagement in medical education is promoting a culture of feedback and continuous improvement (1). Through their experiences, students can identify gaps and suggest innovative solutions that might otherwise be overlooked. This feedback loop enhances the quality of education and empowers students, making them feel valued and respected. Moreover, student engagement in medical education prepares future physicians to be lifelong learners. Rapid advancements characterize the medical field, and the ability to continually adapt and learn is essential. By involving students in the educational process, we invest in self-directed learning and critical evaluation habits, which are essential for their professional development.

There are numerous examples of successful student engagement endeavors. For instance, some medical faculties have established student-faculty curriculum committees, where students actively

participate in decision- and policy-making (2, 3). Other faculties have implemented peer-teaching programs, where students teach and learn from each other, promoting a collaborative learning environment. These initiatives enhance the educational experience and build a sense of community and mutual respect. Additionally, several studies have highlighted the positive impact of student engagement on learning outcomes. These studies indicate that students actively involved in their education are more likely to retain information, develop critical thinking skills, and exhibit greater professional competencies. These findings highlight the importance of creating opportunities for students to engage meaningfully with their education (4).

While the benefits of student engagement are clear, implementing this approach can be challenging. One of the primary barriers is resistance to change. Traditional education models, where students are seen as passive recipients of knowledge, are deeply implanted in many institutions. Changing these perceptions requires a cultural shift and devotion from faculty and administration to adopt new ways of teaching and learning. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to provide training and support for faculty members. Educators must have the skills and knowledge to facilitate student engagement effectively; this includes understanding how to create inclusive learning environments, how to encourage active participation, and how to provide constructive feedback. Institutions should also provide opportunities for faculty to share best practices and learn from each other. Another challenge is ensur-

ing that all students can engage meaningfully with their education; this requires addressing barriers such as time limitations, workload pressures, and lack of access to resources. Institutions need to create flexible and supportive learning environments that adapt to the diverse needs of students. This might include offering online learning opportunities, providing access to learning resources, and creating policies that promote work-life balance (5).

With the intensification of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), attention has been gathered to the technologies in higher education. Technology can play a crucial role in facilitating student engagement. Online learning platforms, virtual simulations, and interactive educational tools can create active and engaging learning experiences. These technologies also allow students to collaborate, share ideas, and receive real-time feedback. By using technology, institutions can create more flexible and personalized learning environments that meet the needs of today's students (6, 7). For example, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies can create immersive learning experiences that allow students to practice clinical skills in a safe and controlled environment. These technologies also provide opportunities for students to engage in interdisciplinary learning and develop a deeper understanding of complex medical concepts (8, 9).

In order to have student a successful engagement, it must be supported at the institutional level. This requires a commitment from leadership to create policies and practices that promote student engagement. Institutions must administer resources to support engagement initiatives, provide training and support for faculty, and create opportunities for students to participate in decision-making processes (10). One way to achieve this is by establishing student advisory boards or committees that provide input on curriculum development, teaching methods, and other aspects of the educational experience. These boards can serve as a platform for students to share their perspectives and contribute to the continuous improvement of the educational program.

Ultimately, medical education aims to prepare students to provide high-quality patient care. Student engagement plays a crucial role in achieving this goal. Students are more likely to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to provide effective and sympathetic care when actively involved in their education.

Engaged students are also more likely to develop a sense of professional identity and a commitment to lifelong learning. These qualities are essential for physicians who need to navigate the complexities of the healthcare system and stay current with advancements in medical science. By boosting student engagement, we can create a generation of well-prepared physicians to meet the challenges of modern healthcare (4).

Recognizing students as partners in medical education is not just beneficial but essential. It improves the learning experience, promotes a culture of continuous improvement, and prepares students to be adaptive, thoughtful, and adequate medical professionals. By adopting student engagement, we can create a more dynamic and responsive educational environment that better meets the needs of students and ultimately leads to improved patient care.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare there is no conflict of interests.

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Author Contribution: All authors have contributed in this study.

Funding statement: There is not any fund support.

Acknowledgements: None.

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