

Student Professionalism: Raising Awareness

May 30, 2003

Student Scenario 1 : A new female faculty member, in her first faculty position after a Pharm. D. program and year-long residency, complains of the unprofessional behaviour of some students in her lecture-based course. They talk during her lectures, use cell phones and pagers, come in late and leave early. Additionally, a couple of “front row” students have asked to tell the “back row” to quit chattering so much. She is not sure how to handle these problems.

What is the professional issue involved in this scenario?

- Commitment in profession/teaching
- No responsibility for self-learning (2)
- Lack of commitment
- Lack of respect (other students/instructors) (2)
- Lack of confidentiality (2)
- Lack of professional behaviour
- Possible harm to patient (false info)
- Ethical, integrity issues
- Taking responsibility for actions
- Confidentiality
- Reliability
- Lacking desire to learn

What might be the possible causes of this behaviour?

- Lack of recognition
- Teaching methods foster passive learning
- No active learning
- No understanding of relevance of material and/or sense of purpose
- Boredom / presentation style by lecturer culture – attitude towards young female over stressed/ responsibilities
- Lack of class unity
- Potential drug problem of student
- Mental health issues
- Personal stressors
- Arrogance
- Deficiency in undergrad program in preparing him as professional

- Lack of assertiveness by the instructor
- Non-interactive lecture style
- Mission/values/code of conduct by the faculty
- Students issues:
 - Arrogance
 - Not receptive to feedback
 - Lacking respect, empathy, integrity
 - Doesn't understand importance of pharmacists' role
 - Not accepting responsibility
- Faculty issues:
 - Professional expectations not set out
 - Problem not identified at an early stage
- No expectations outlined
- Previous acceptance of behaviour
- No consequences
- Students perception

How should this problem be handled?

- Actively engage students in learning
- Indicate expectations
- Address issue directly with students
- Lecturer training (re : classroom management)
- Students responsibility for code of c...in class
- Lecturer's professional behaviour ? i.e. pager in class
- Lecturer to self examine professionalism
- Withdraw student ASAP
- Discussion with student
- Follow up apology with Robert
- Set ground rules (enforce them)
- Ask students what would make the class more valuable to them
- More interactive style
- Discuss behaviours with students individually
- Regular evaluations (interactive)
- Focus on feedback
- Deal with issue immediately
- Outline expectations
- Consistent approach
- Discuss with Faculty

What could be done in the future to prevent this problem from occurring?

- Staff education on active methods of learning (e.g.: small group PBL)
- Implement peer assessment
- Student evaluation of Faculty
- Suggest a mentor for lecturer
- Set ground rules for students
- Guidelines for classroom management for new faculty
- Curriculum review – re: professionalism
- Review admissions criteria
- Evaluate preceptor & training site
- Develop process of Faculty to deal with this issues
- Ensure that the Faculty encourages an environment where professional behavior
- Assess extent of problem in Faculty
- Set ground rules from beginning
- Set expectations early in Pharmacy program
- Increase role of mentors in the program
- Early on expectations
- Determine from student their expectation
 - Start of rotation
 - Prior to rotation
- Preceptor training – setting expectation – support preceptors

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Student Scenario 2 : An Introductory Practice Experience at one faculty of pharmacy requires that students meet weekly with an assigned patient, establish a relationship, and submit reports on the experiences to a mentor-professor. One professor learns that one of the students in her group who had submitted a report describing this weekly visit to the patient, in fact did NOT visit the patient that week – the report was false. The professor is not sure what action to take upon learning this information.

What is the professional issue involved in this scenario?

- Dishonesty
- Disrespect (2)
- Lack of accuracy in report
- Lack of knowledge and competence
- Respect for patients, colleagues
- Competency, reliability, integrity
- Patient safety
- Academic dishonesty
- Breach of a contract
- Ethics (inaccurate info)
- Quality work
- Lack of commitment
- Accountability
- unreliability
- judgmental
- lack of respect
- not good team player
- integrity
- Lack of commitment

What might be the possible causes of this behaviour?

- student indifference
- professor not approachable
- lack of calling (competence – confidence)

- lack of ethical responsibility (e.g. In educating future professionals vs. patients to other colleagues)
- taking frustrations out on colleagues & patients
- personal issues carried over into work
- lack of dedication/commitment
- inconsiderate of others
- did not recognize value of assignment
- other commitments
- lack of confidence/ability to complete task
- behaviour worked before
- pt not available (out of student control)
- drug/substance abuse
- chemical imbalance
- has not been confronted or no previous discipline
- poor mentoring
- entered profession for wrong reasons
- A fraud
- Lazy
- Student's perception of value of the activity
- Competing priorities
- Laziness
- Lack of accountability
- Did preceptor reinforce value/expectations
- Student had poor experience with prior visit
- Lack of commitment
- Personal values
- Self-centred – feeling of superiority
- Improper socialization (training)
- Work overload
- Fear (communication – failure)
- Perception of benefit of activities
- Internal values

How should this problem be handled?

- need to identify the reason(s)/cause(s)
- professor to handle
- negotiate with the student the consequences
- talk to the individual to identify issues
- colleague to handle this
- inaccurate advice provided
- validate (did this really happen?)
- look for root cause

- discuss directly with student
- confront with supervisor
- isolate from students
- documents behaviours – dates, times, confrontation
- get advice from H.R. Department
- Address problems to help person
- Value system of this practice must be clear and explicit – including what kind of behaviour will/will not be tolerated
- Interventions if necessary – A.a., N.A.
- Discuss problem with student – gather facts (did student know it was wrong)
- If violations
 - If honour board – send to it
 - Send to appropriate administrator of committee
- Engage due process – educate the student
- Individual
 - Confrontation – why? Identify cause
 - Mark – Redo activity
 - Support student if fear
 - Explain importance of Activity – consequences of cheating
- Collective
 - Explain importance of activity
 - Identify fear – provide support

What could be done in the future to prevent this problem from occurring?

- clarify expectations
- ongoing communication
- mechanism in place for student to inform Faculty if possible to miss a visit
- set standards
- re-evaluate student prep
- interviewing skills, modelling inter. Skills
- patient selection/preparation (if student can not complete, see prof.)
- background check – (see value system above)
- possible interview before hiring
- probationary period
- have student write
 - fears
 - expectation
 - preceptorship contract

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Student Scenario 3 : In a recent faculty meeting, there was discussion about the lack of student interest in their learning and outside activities. They seem to expect to be “spoon-fed”; they complain about assignments, exams, and about professors who don’t provide detailed handouts. They don’t seem to engage when class discussions are prompted. Additionally, participation in student organization activities has declined in the last two years.

What is the professional issue involved in this scenario?

- Autonomy
- Responsibility (3)
- Self-learning
- Respect (2)
- Role model
- Pride in school
- Professional pride
- Accept criticism
- Team spirit??
- Motivation/ desire-to-learn
- Attitude
- Non-active/passive learning
- Dedication
- Lack of positive attitude
- Leadership
- Lack of understanding/appreciation for mentorship role

What might be the possible causes of this behaviour?

- Generation differences
 - Learning process
 - Interest/motivation
 - Expectations (+ unrealistic/different expectations)
- Communication
- Personal ? Professional ?
- « generation X » behaviour
- University education up to this point has been « spoon feeding »

- Very grade conscious
- Tenured
- Sought out academic environment for academic freedom
- Non-conformist/personality traits
- Overly discussed on research with little appreciation for the role of teaching
- Chosen a lab-based career; are not comfortable with dressing appropriately for teaching
- Does not see this as a problem

How should this problem be handled?

- Identify clearly expectations
- Timely more consistence agreement
- Faculty vision/commitment/Chart/Agreement/contract
- Remove/minimize emphasis on grades
- Modify evaluation process to reflect importance of participation (professional behaviour)
- Re-write portions of exams to include questions that assess Understanding
- Give students appendices (formula sheets for exams – less nervousness)
- University-wide guidelines / policy for appropriate dress for meetings, teaching
- Bring in a third party mediator with experience in conflict resolution

What could be done in the future to prevent this problem from occurring?

- Improve program interview/selection process
- Educate possible applicants, re: expectations/logistics of program
- Ensure hiring faculty based not only on research/grant ability but also on desire to teach and/or past teaching reviews
- Mandate teacher-training course for new faculty