

Chapter 4

The Influence of School Education on the Professional Identity of Healthcare Professionals: The Formalization of Knowledge Transfer in Schools and Clinical Environments

António Fernando Caldeira Lagem Abrantes
University of Algarve, Portugal

Carlos Alberto da Silva
University of Évora, Portugal

Kevin Barros Azevedo
University of Algarve, Portugal

Luis Pedro Ribeiro
University of Algarve, Portugal

Rui Pedro Pereira Almeida
University of Algarve, Portugal

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the influence of school education on the formation of professional identity of radiology professionals. The research approach selected was based on a bibliographic review regarding the concepts involving professional identity and the transfer of knowledge at the school level, and the methods utilized to translate it into the clinical environment. These two themes were approached in two different researches, one aiming to evaluate whether or not the skills that students perceive as being acquired at the degree level will correspond to professional field demands, and the other aiming to collect perceptions regarding the clinical support provided to students by tutors. There is continuity between school socialization and professional socialization processes, allowing the implementation at the school level of the real needs of the radiology professional, and the contents provided to students prior to the clinical environment were sufficient to assure the development of professional competencies.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout a school education, students often experience doubts and uncertainties that are distressing, particularly with regard to their professional future, their competencies, and the requirements and perceptions that their profession itself demands. Being restricted to the school environment, which is centered in theoretical and abstract references, many of these questions remain unanswered until the moment of integration into the professional work field, backed by concrete actions and practices. Thus, it is of major importance to explore aspects such as learning, identity, and competence, and how they interconnect in the various environments, from healthcare students to healthcare professionals, and analyse the process of socialization of undergraduate students.

The healthcare degrees should provide a space for professional socialization, where information is transferred and, with a focus on how they are received by the students. When the awareness of how school education influences the professional identity of healthcare professionals, it will be easier to adjust the actions of the learning environment according to the real needs of the professional field, which is the driving force for development of the healthcare student, whether as a future professional or as a person.

One of the current concerns is the organization and implementation of clinical teaching that promotes student development, not only in particular areas of knowledge, but also in terms of personal and interpersonal development, as clinical settings promote student autonomy, the ability to be effective in practice environments, and enables the development of appropriate forms of intervention in the future. The promotion of social development is fundamental for a professional group such as healthcare professionals, as it teaches students how to competently and appropriately respond to patients and situations.

Clinical teaching represents a key element in the learning and training of undergraduate students, as it promotes contact with the reality of the profession, and consequently, allows students to experience various procedures that enable them to assimilate techniques in the delivery of healthcare to the patient. Clinical teaching is essential in the development of a student's social capacity with patients and with the various elements that constitute a multidisciplinary team, as it allows them to experience these techniques and procedures, acquire greater skills and to develop professional attitudes and discover their way of self-learning in a safe, supervised environment.

Clinical training involves complex interrelationships of that present opportunities, experiences, observations, and actions, that promote the constant development of technical and scientific knowledge, analytical capacity, and critical opinions about the reality that surrounds them and how to deal effectively with numerous professional situations in the future.

Clinical training involves multiple actors, each playing key roles in student learning. Supervision is an essential element for good clinical practice, since it is a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge, building professional work adequate to the specific social demand. However, the way it is performed varies according to different environments, cultures, and theories.

Supervision is a challenge because of the diversity of influencing variables that are included in this process. While different perceptions are found, generally, supervision is understood as a moment of formal and collaborative relationship between a tutor and the supervised, with the objective of development, teaching, and learning of the clinical practice, and which occurs in a specific organizational environment. In a way, the tutor is in charge of providing an honest report of students' work, and the tutor provides feedback and guidance with the aim of assisting the development of competencies and diagnostic and therapeutic skills in accordance with the ethics of the profession.

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