



# Discipline and Dental Education form Oral Surgeon's Perspective

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## Opinion

Several years ago I watched a televised interview with the famous Hollywood actor Kirk Douglas. He was talking about his preparation for a role he played in a "Western Movie" where he left dental practice and became a professional gunman. He expressed the eloquence of dental behaviour and how important to portray this eloquence as he grasps the cup of coffee the way dentist does. At that time I started to realize how some professions influence human behaviour.

In the last 10 years I become more involved in oral surgery education as dental academic. In addition, I have been involved recently in giving lectures to first and second year students. I started to think that teaching in dental profession is not only about knowledge in all related scientific aspects embracing both theory and practice.

In fact I became more engaged in other aspect of the profession in general and oral surgery in particular. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery by its nature is a highly disciplinary practice. Meticulous handling of surgical instrument in a limited space (patient's mouth), simultaneous multitask actions and patient's control require highly controlled behaviour and subtle attention to different details. Despite, this is true for other dental specialties, it is more relevant to oral and maxillofacial surgical practice, which involves quick decision making and problem solving skills.

This, as I believe, requires as same attention as scientific aspects in dental education. Dental academics need to consider how to draw students' attention from the beginning of their first year of their undergraduate study. Disciplinary behaviour is very important aspect of dental education to ensure efficient oral surgeons. It represents the platform through which dental students can endorse appropriate surgical practice.

The question is how can dental academic help undergraduate students as early as possible to embrace this disciplined clinical practice? Dental academic as I see is the student's window toward his or her future career as oral surgeons. The way the dental academic behave, speaks and treat their students will influence students' attitude toward their future profession and possibly toward the subject they are teaching. Dental academic in this sense will serve an excellent medium to transmit the sense of discipline to their students.

The dental teachers need to keep scientific authoritative distance between them and their students. Students, especially in their first and second year should perceive this authoritative distance as a gap they need to bridge as part of their scientific quest. Achieving this authoritative position is not an easy task, especially, with miscommunications between generations become part of the issue. At the time being academics deal with a generation who enjoys high self-esteem do not accept criticism and at the same time they lack initiative and motivation. In addition, their intellectual development is highly technologically enhanced [1]. Furthermore, the relationship between students' personal characteristics and academic environment did not get much attention, although the relationship between student's personality and their academic performance has not been confirmed [2].

Accordingly, there are no fixed rules regarding the way academic can encourage this disciplinary behaviour among their students and it is highly dependent on his/her personality. However, the academic scientific dedication and personal belief in the importance of their role as elegant image of their profession play a major role in achieving this goal.

It is not an easy message to convey and probably it is the hardest aspect of profession to be taught to students. It is a personal endeavor and as students try to find their way to overcome learning challenges it is the dental academic way to overcome intergeneration miscommunication and serve as wide and clear window for his students to look beyond lectures, laboratory work and

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clinical tasks and enjoy the idea of holding their cup of coffee as real dentists and efficient oral surgeons.

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