



Book review: Principles of Medical Education, 5th edition

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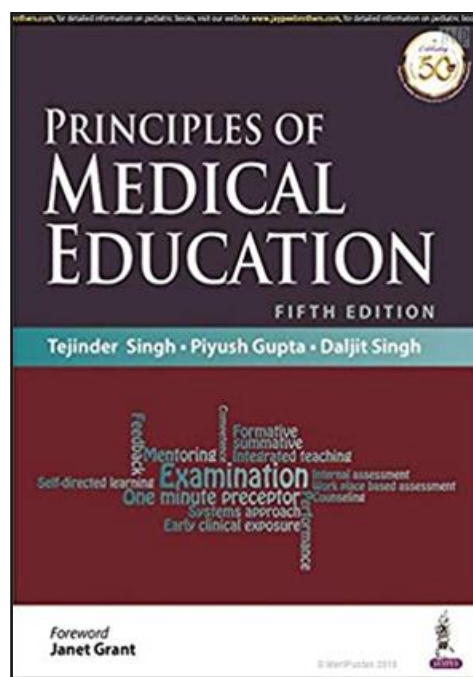
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Received: 30-SEP-2021

Accepted: 09-OCT-2021

Published: 12-OCT-2021



Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers

01 January 2021

Paperback: 258 pages

ISBN-10: 9390281415

ISBN-13: 978-9390281411

Price: INR 550

The fifth edition of Principles of Medical Education—by Dr Tejinder Singh, Dr Piyush Gupta, and Dr Daljit Singh—is one of the most relevant books in current times. It has been released at just the right time to support the National Medical Commission's new undergraduate medical curriculum which was introduced in 2019. The competency based curriculum makes it necessary for each and every medical teacher to introspect on their traditional teaching methods and to familiarize

themselves with updated medical education principles in order to ensure competency based teaching-learning interactions between trainer and trainee. There is also a need to adopt new assessment methods to explicitly depict the students' trajectory of learning.

The quote at the beginning of this book by Hassezmusings: "Teach a student and you impact a life; train a teacher and you impact generations of lives" aptly sums up the

Cite this article as: Aulakh R. Book review: Principles of Medical Education, 5th edition. RHiME. 2021;8:106-8.

premise of this book. It promises to serve as an easily accessible handbook which succinctly describes the current concepts in medical education. It offers many thought-provoking ideas that will instigate the reader to question further and motivate them to search for answers by reading further. This, indeed, is the life-long learning cycle which medical teachers need to continuously follow in order to add relevance to their teaching activities and have a much wider impact.

The authors possess more than requisite qualifications to address the unique requirements of health professionals who are yearning to deliver to their utmost capacity and capability in the midst of this fundamental change in medical curricula. Further, they are all ground level teachers deeply involved in the day-to-day teaching of medical graduates and are, thus, fully aware of the challenges and hardships being faced by the medical fraternity as they strive to bring about the required overhaul in medical education in India.

The book highlights the crux of the changes we seek in the medical education: focussing on learning by students rather than teaching alone, assessment methods to positively reinforce further learning, different approaches to be adopted while dealing with adult learners with prior baseline knowledge, improving our teaching techniques, using group dynamics and integrated teaching to maximize learning, the importance of classifying educational activities and professional tasks into various domains of learning, understanding the concept and undeniable importance of learning objectives, and practical tips including multi-media use to ensure good lecture delivery. In addition, the book concisely provides a pragmatic approach to conducting tutorials, small group discussions, and teaching as well as assessing clinical skills. A detailed analysis of how to prepare different types of questions—objective, short, and essay type—has

been added along with merits and demerits of each. The latter section of the book deals with assessment techniques including assessment of practical skills, work-place based assessment, and assessment of non-cognitive abilities. There is due emphasis on continuous internal assessment with an aim to foster further learning and use of grading rather than awarding marks, with the former having more inter- and intra-observer consistency than the latter. The well accepted concept of 'Reflective Writing' is dealt with beautifully highlighting not only the process involved but also its importance as well as advantages. Last but not the least, the book reinforces the concept of mentoring of students so as to motivate them to reach their utmost capabilities, and it encourages the utilization of innovative teaching-learning methods to promote 'out of the box thinking' among the mentees.

Another unique aspect of this book is that it provides the basic framework to teachers cum mentors to improve their own teaching skills by way of micro-teaching, self-evaluation, obtaining well-reasoned student feedback and utilizing it honestly for self-improvement. It also briefly touches on the need for dynamicity in faculty development programs.

This book, thus, holistically presents the Principles of Medical Education but requires the reader to consider further reading in order to get an in-depth knowledge of the unique challenges and hardships encountered during the implementation of the Competency Based Medical Curriculum in India and updated references for the same have been provided. The writing style, learning objectives at the start of each chapter, and the illustrations all enhance comprehensibility. Perfectly selected and placed quotes are an added feature.

Unlike most other books, the appendices incorporated in this one are not theoretical but provide a hands-on approach to students as to how to ensure maximum

output by improvising their technique of studying. Tips to improve recording of information while taking notes in class, processing of information while reading books, cooperative and collaborative learning via group study, enhancing memory, and information retrieval have been dealt with splendidly. The concept of time management has been duly emphasized. This is undoubtedly essential, but is often ignored by students and left unaddressed by teachers.

In my opinion, certain modifications in this book could further add to its ease of use by end-users who are likely to be medical teachers as well as medical institutions. I feel that there could have been separate sections for the medical institution, the teacher, and the teaching-learning-assessment techniques. The section for medical institutions could focus on management of faculty and infrastructure, on collaboration, and on development, especially the setting up of skill labs, arranging integrated teaching sessions and organizing inter-college educational activities. The teachers' section could focus on introspection on current traditional teaching methodologies, on improvisation, and on continuous self-improvement via feedback analysis. The final section could be further segregated into theoretical and

clinical teaching, learning, and assessment methods. Furthermore, a more step-wise approach of using these techniques in a graded manner could be provided for use as students progress through various phases of the medical curriculum, making them more and more receptive to relatively complex learning. Assessment techniques could be added to serve as a basic framework while allowing adequate flexibility as per feasibility and requirements of the medical institution.

I congratulate the authors and the editors for the timely release of this book, the content being most relevant in the current scenario wherein medical education in India is undergoing a fundamental change. I strongly recommend this book to medical teachers across the nation - young and old, experienced and naïve. I believe we necessarily need to be well acquainted with the current concepts in medical education in order to justify our role not only as medical teachers but also as mentors to generations of students. In this way, we can profoundly impact them via the new curriculum and ensure that each one of them develops into an Indian Medical Graduate who possesses the knowledge, skills, attitude, values and responsiveness to function effectively on the ground so as to achieve 'health for all'.