

Educating Homeopathically

I have never let my school interfere with my education.

—Mark Twain

What is the best way to learn and teach homeopathy? Should we adopt allopathic (conventional) methods and standards of learning and teaching or should homeopathy develop its own model of education?

Much has been written about the need for reform in conventional medical education, although little progress toward reform has been made in recent years. The literature describes a large gap between education and practice. As a medical student, I found that much of my education was academic and not related to what I would see in practice. It also was hierarchical and at times abusive.

Abraham Flexner's 1909 report on *Medical Education in the U.S. and Canada* may have contributed to the closure of homeopathic medical schools and to homeopathy's decline in the last century, but the Flexner Report had an impact on medical education that went beyond homeopathy. It helped to create a system of education that was academic in orientation and that poorly prepared students for practice. Training was focused on the mind, leading to increasing intellectualization, reductionism, loss of spirit and loss of heart.

What would it mean to educate homeopathically? Homeopathic education is different from education in other fields. At bottom, it is learning about all life. If we apply our Law of Similars, it would educate in a way that is similar to the material being studied. Good educators would incorporate what they taught into the process of education itself. The following are some ideas about what this could mean:

Individualization: The uniqueness of each learner, teacher and school must be sought and honored. Good educators honor their own and their students' individuality.

Holistic: Wholeness is an important goal of education. Homeopathic education is more than knowledge which is often the focus of allopathic education. Homeopathic education must address the actions, heart and spirit. We often neglect the emotional side of homeopathic education, but is critical to developing true homeopaths. So is also practicing basic respect

for and open to the world, to our craft, to our faculty, our students and ourselves.

Homeopathy as a Great Subject:

There are three models for teaching: * In the teacher-centered model, the teacher pontificates from the lectern. This traditional method of teaching that encourages authoritarianism in the teacher and passive dependence in the student. * In the student-centered model, the student is the center of the classroom, while the teacher is a facilitator. This encourages independence and self teaching in the student, yet in so doing often misses the heart and mystery of homeopathy. * In the subject-centered model, the "Great Subject" becomes the center of the classroom. Here the students, teachers and administrators keep coming back to the greatness of the source, which is homeopathy. "Great Subjects" rest on a firm unchanging foundation that inspires its learners on all levels of their being. Unlike allopathic medicine, homeopathy represents a Great Subject

Resonance: Resonances of energy occur throughout the educational process. They lead people forward on their educational journeys. The resonance amongst students, teachers and administrators allows effective homeopathic education to occur.

Less is More: According to the Law of the Minimum Dose, less is more. Teaching and learning homeopathy means being comfortable with silence. In an ever more hurried world, the pace of education has dramatically increased, leaving little time for reflection and self observation. Yet reflection and silence are that part of education where the greatest learning takes place.

Freedom From Prejudice:

Homeopathic education means developing freedom from prejudice and embracing diversity. Prejudice prevents educators from being fully present in their work. To develop freedom from prejudice, one must first know oneself. This is a never ending process. Education is a mirror that allows one to glimpse one's own face.

Succussion, Dilution and Potency:

Homeopathic education is a constant process of succussion, dilution and potentization. It is an ebb and flow, a movement forward here and backward there. Education is a chaotic and non-linear process. Yet with each repetition of the material, the student is brought deeper into the wonder and mystery of homeopathy.

Empiricism: Homeopathy reflects a system of healing based upon the therapeutic tradition of Empiricism, whereas allopathic medicine is based upon the tradition of Rationalism. These two traditions have been in conflict throughout the centuries. Rationalistic education predominates in the world today. Rationalist education focuses on knowledge, rigid logic and pathologic theory. It seeks to put labels on phenomena and strongly separates students and teachers. The rationalistic educator needs to stay in command and becomes the ultimate judge of how education should occur. Empirical education values experience and careful observation. It seeks to identify patterns of disease, health and education. It explores the commonality of the educational process.

Dynamis: Homeopathy is a field that is concerned with dynamis (energy). Homeopathic education must also be dynamic, energetic, movement-oriented and transformative. Homeopathic educators bring their dynamic vital

force into their work through their energy and enthusiasm for homeopathy.

Obstacles: Effective treatment in homeopathy requires removing the obstacles to cure in the healing process. These obstacles consist of behaviors within the client that prevent homeopathic treatment from moving forward. There are also 'obstacles to learn' in homeopathy that must be overcome before the learning journey can begin. Learning cannot commence until these obstacles are removed. There are similar 'obstacles to teach'.

By teaching within a homeopathic model, both teachers and students are learning homeopathy through direct experience, in addition to the content presented. Whether you are a beginning homeopathic student or an advanced teacher, these principles are a vital part of your educational journey.

Todd Rowe, MD (H)