

**THOUGHTS ON MEDICAL
EDUCATION, AND A PLAN
FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649305728

Thoughts on medical education, and a plan for its improvement by Anthony Todd Thomson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ANTHONY TODD THOMSON

**THOUGHTS ON MEDICAL
EDUCATION, AND A PLAN
FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT**

THOUGHTS
ON
MEDICAL EDUCATION.

2 H. 1826.

THOUGHTS

ON

MEDICAL EDUCATION,

AND

A PLAN FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT;

ADDRESSED TO

THE COUNCIL

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.



By ANTHONY TODD THOMSON, M.D. F.L.S.
&c. &c. &c.

Dictu necessaria.—Hm.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

M.DCCC.XXVI.

742.

1. The first step in the process of identifying a problem is to recognize that a problem exists. This is often done by comparing current performance with a desired state or goal. For example, a manager might notice that sales are declining or that customer satisfaction is low. Once a problem is identified, the next step is to define it more precisely. This involves determining the scope of the problem, its causes, and its effects. For instance, a manager might define a problem as "a 10% decline in sales over the last quarter, primarily due to a loss of market share in the competitive market." The third step is to analyze the problem. This involves gathering data, identifying key factors, and determining the underlying causes. For example, a manager might analyze sales data to identify trends, compare performance with competitors, and identify areas where the company is losing market share. The fourth step is to generate potential solutions. This involves brainstorming ideas and evaluating their feasibility. For instance, a manager might generate several potential solutions, such as increasing marketing efforts, improving product quality, or offering discounts to attract customers. The fifth step is to select a solution. This involves evaluating the potential solutions based on criteria such as cost, effectiveness, and risk. For example, a manager might select a solution that offers the best balance of cost and effectiveness. The sixth step is to implement the solution. This involves putting the chosen solution into action and monitoring its progress. For instance, a manager might implement a new marketing campaign and track sales and customer satisfaction over time. The seventh step is to evaluate the results. This involves comparing the actual results with the expected results and determining whether the problem has been solved. For example, a manager might evaluate the results of a marketing campaign by comparing sales and customer satisfaction before and after the campaign. If the problem has not been solved, the manager may need to re-evaluate the solution and try a different approach.

TO

THE COUNCIL, &c.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

CIRCUMSTANCES connected with the progressive march of knowledge, which so conspicuously distinguishes the period in which we live, have placed within your power the opportunity of improving greatly the system of education of young men designed for the Medical Profession; and, certainly, none of the objects of the New University, over which you are appointed to preside, is of more general importance than the promotion of the study of medicine. To it, indeed, in my humble opinion, is the University to look for a large share of its prosperity, provided the system of instruction which it shall follow be settled upon a sound foundation, and embrace as its object the formation of efficient medical practitioners.

As the nature of your projected establishment, and the era of its foundation, equally exempt you

from being fettered by the chains of prejudice, and, by a weak adherence to antiquity, when it possesses no other claim to veneration than that which is derived from the rust which covers it, the public has every reason to hope, that you will be guided in adopting your plans of teaching, rather by their fitness for the objects intended to be accomplished, than by any respect for the established usages of other universities. The more venerable, indeed, these institutions are, the less likely are they to contain proper models for modern education; and in no branch of study is this so evident as in that of medicine, as the principal improvements which it can boast of have been effected within the last half century. Impressed with these truths, and anxious to promote, by any means in my power, the benefit of a profession to which I owe every thing I possess, I am emboldened to lay before you my opinions on the subject of medical education, in the hope that they may direct your attention to so important an object, and, by inducing you to obtain opinions upon it from the best informed members of the profession, you may be enabled to arrange such a course of studies for those who shall be educated for medicine in the University of London, as may equally advance the profession and benefit the public.

It is unnecessary for me to detail the ineffi-

ciency of the present mode of educating young men who are designed to practise medicine, more especially of those who are intended for general practitioners in England: much of it arises from one evil, which I deeply regret you cannot remove; but which, as it has been lately deeply felt and lamented by the liberal part of the profession, I will shortly notice:—I mean the custom of serving apprenticeships. When a parent determines to educate his son for the practice of medicine, the boy is taken from school, and, without any other preliminary education than a very slender proficiency in the Latin language, perhaps a superficial knowledge of Greek and of French, and a very imperfect acquaintance with English, is bound an apprentice to a general practitioner. This period of unnecessary servitude occupies five of the best years of his life; and I will venture to affirm, that it is generally dissipated in acquiring little more than the method of compounding medicines, which might be attained in as many months. Habits of idleness are consequently formed; the mind of the pupil is filled with confused ideas of the effects of drugs, without any knowledge of the principles which should always direct their application; and it is in the last year only of his apprenticeship, or, in numerous instances, not until it be completed, that he really begins the

study of his profession. But suppose that the student has now passed the twentieth year of his age; that he feels the necessity of commencing the actual business of life; and, consequently, looking chiefly to the rapid attainment of such a portion of information as will enable him to pass his examinations, and enter upon the practice of his profession, that he attends only to those branches of medical education which will enable him to accomplish these objects in the shortest period of time. He studies anatomy, and dissects, because he cannot advance one step without these aids; but, from his ignorance of mechanics and of chemistry, he is not prepared to understand physiology; and having no acquaintance with the philosophy of mind, he cannot trace its influence upon the corporeal functions; so that not unfrequently he becomes a mere routine practitioner, or a trader in specifics, depending for assistance, in every case of difficulty, on the opinion and skill of others. And it is well for the public, if the imperfectly educated practitioner timely demand such assistance; for, as ignorance and temerity generally go hand in hand, the threatened danger is too often either not perceived, or the disease is awkwardly grappled with, until the moment has passed in which skill and judgment might have averted the fatal result. Another disadvantage arising from