



# Dental students' reflections on their fieldwork experiences

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## Abstract

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to explore the learning outcomes of the fifth and sixth-year dental students from their community-based education experiences as documented in the self-reflection essays.

**Materials and Methods:** Fifth-year and sixth-year dental students were assigned to submit a written reflection after their 2-week and 4-week fieldwork experience. The fieldworks were organized every year in Nakhon Ratchasima province for 5<sup>th</sup>-year students, and five provinces in Northern Thailand for 6<sup>th</sup>-year students as a part of the dental curriculum at Faculty of Dentistry, Mahidol University. Content analysis was used to analyze the student's learning from their reflections. Investigators read essays independently to identify the learning outcome from 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year student's reflection. The categories were coded by discussing among the investigators, and then each category was emerged to themes.

**Results:** A total of 116 fifth-year students and 105 sixth-year students from the 2013 academic year were included in this study. Five major themes were identified similarly for both fifth-and sixth-year students. They were communication and interpersonal skills, personal and professional development, translate theory into practice, social awareness and commitment to services.

**Conclusions:** According to students' reflections, the fieldwork experience affected their attitudes and perspectives. It also enhanced a sense of profession and enabled them to appreciate the important role of the dentist in a community.

**Keywords:** self-reflection, community-based, education, dental students, fieldwork, experience

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