



Embracing the Future: Integrating Digital Dentistry into the Prosthodontics Curriculum for Dental Students

In Meei Tew*

Doctor of Dental Surgery, The National University of Malaysia, Malaysia and Master in Dental Surgery (Prosthodontics) The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

***Corresponding Author:** In Meei Tew, Lecturer, Department of Restorative Dentistry, The National University of Malaysia, Malaysia.

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The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed numerous facets of healthcare, and dentistry is no exception. As we approach a new era in dental education, a crucial question arises: Are dental educators prepared to integrate digital dentistry into the prosthodontics curriculum?

Incorporating digital dentistry into the prosthodontics curriculum is crucial for equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in contemporary dental practices. Beyond technical proficiency, this integration enhances students' ability to deliver high-quality prosthodontic care. For instance, computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing (CAD/CAM) systems allow for the precise design and fabrication of dental prostheses, such as crowns, bridges and dentures, directly from digital scans. This approach not only streamlines the fabrication process but also minimizes the margin for error, leading to more predictable results that ultimately improve patient satisfaction.

Despite the evident benefits, integrating digital dentistry into prosthodontics curriculum presents significant challenges. First and foremost, the curriculum must be updated to include comprehensive training in digital tools and techniques, blending both theoretical knowledge and extensive hands-on experience. This transition requires a substantial initial investment in cutting-edge equipment and software by dental schools ensuring that students have ample opportunities to practice and perfect their skills in a technological advanced clinical setting.

Furthermore, educators play a pivotal role in this transition. Educators must be well-versed in digital dentistry to provide the

necessary guidance and support to the students. To keep pace with technological advancements, continuous professional development and training programs for educators are essential. This commitment to on-going education ensures that lecturers can impart the most current knowledges and skills to their students, preparing them for the future of dental practices.

Another critical factor is the adaptability and willingness of students to embrace change. Today's dental students, often referred to as digital natives, have grown up in a technology-driven world and are generally comfortable in digital environments. However, the challenge lies in translating this technological familiarity into the proficient use of specialized dental tools. Fostering a mindset of continuous learning and adaptability is crucial, given that digital dentistry is a rapidly evolving field.

To address these challenges, a phased approach to curriculum transition can be highly effective. Starting with the integration of basic digital tools and gradually advancing to more complex technologies can help students ease the transition to a digital approach in prosthodontic treatments. Additionally, collaborative efforts between dental schools, industry partners, and professional organizations are vital in facilitating access to necessary resources and training, ensuring smooth and successful transition into digital era of prosthodontics.

In conclusion, despite the challenges, dental students are well-positioned to embrace digital dentistry within the prosthodontics curriculum. By embracing this shift, we can ensure that future den-

tal clinicians are well-equipped to provide the highest standard of prosthodontic care in a digital age. The key to success lies in creating a dynamic and supportive educational framework that nurtures both technical proficiency and a forward-thinking mindset.