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**Abstract**

Today's experts must continuously reconstruct their expertise and be able to apply their theoretical knowledge in actual work. The development of expertise is a long process, during which theoretical, practical and metacognitive elements of expert knowledge are integrated into a coherent whole. It is important to foster student's learning and integration of theoretical knowledge in practice during tertiary education. One tool for this is to pay more attention to practical knowledge in the theoretical part of the curriculum. The aim of this study was to evaluate the significance of early practical training as a part of the pharmacy curriculum and to find out to what extent the students felt their practical training fostered their learning. A total of 47 pharmacy students were interviewed during the three-month practice period. Content analyses of the interviews showed that the practical training increased students' understanding of theoretical knowledge and their motivation to study. The students acquired practical skills and knowledge in a working community of professionals. The

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results also showed that the students should be able to rehearse their reflective skills during the theoretical studies as well, because the practice period was too short to permit adequate development of reflective skills. (HRK / Abstract übernommen), Katajavuori, Nina, E-Mail: [nina.katajavuori@helsinki.fi](mailto:nina.katajavuori@helsinki.fi)