



How to Help Students Learn Better: View on Teaching Innovations

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LETTER TO EDITOR

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Content

To the editor:

Over the years with the explosion of information in nearly every discipline in general and pharmacy in specific, has led to expanded curriculums. This has put a lot of burden upon students to study late hours as compared to few decades ago. This is especially true in many countries where Pharm. D degree has been introduced in the recent years. The curriculum of Pharm. D in many western countries is clinically orientated. In Pakistan however, it has been kept as to deliver the demands of both industry as well as clinical pharmacy practice. The syllabus of the industrially oriented B. Pharm. degree has not been replaced entirely; rather there has been a lot of addition as to suffice both the major practicing areas of pharmacy.

Moreover the family system here in Pakistan put many social responsibilities on the students, as they are required to fulfill several household duties on daily basis with very less time to spare for the studies. This results in many students being less active during the lecture next day, partly due to less sleep and partly due to lower retention of the previous lecture. As pharmaceutical educators we face these problems during teaching on almost daily basis. To engage students more actively in the lecture, some methods and techniques can be employed to keep the students motivated and alert such as,

- Brief discussion (5 min) of the preceding lecture before starting the new one.
- Random cross questioning during lecture.

- Walking around the classroom during lecture, asking questions and having brief discussions with the students who need extra attention.
- Case based learning at the completion of every topic.
- Summarizing the topic (5-7 min) at the end of each lecture

In this regard one of the pharmacy teaching institutes in Karachi, Pakistan, to which we are affiliated, has taken a step forward to execute these techniques in teaching pharmacy students. Along with problem based learning (PBL) strategy which is an extensively used tool throughout the world, these classroom innovations help the students to learn a great deal of knowledge about pharmacy in the given circumstances. These methods are showing optimistic signs for the students in acquiring a profound understanding of their respective subjects.

Besides introducing these techniques, it is essential requirement that the academic staff should be groomed enough to utilize the techniques properly. They must know how to motivate their students and how to create interest in their subject and make them comfortable in the class. The teacher and students must be friendly rather than having typical master slave style relationship, which exists in many developing countries, so that they won't hesitate in asking any query from the teacher which may involve questions relating to studies to counseling tips.

It is the responsibility of every teaching staff to encourage the hard work of their students by appreciating them in front of the whole class. Give the group assignment to the students which increase the interaction and develop a competitive environment among the students so they work with more zeal to do better than one another.

We believe that introducing these types of innovations can help many students to learn in a better fashion.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Authors contributed equally to all aspects of the study.



PEER REVIEW

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests