

WORKSHOP REPORT

Experience from Effective Learning Strategies Workshop

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Context

The nature of the medical curriculum demands a lot of tasks burden on medical students. This seeks for guidance in the current era of active student learning in teaching and learning methodology. Based on these principles, a workshop on effective learning strategies (ELS) was developed by the candidates of MSc MedEdu., Department of Medical Education, School of Medical Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia in collaboration with The Student Personal and Professional Development Program (SPPDP) in achieving the university's program objectives.

Reason for Ideas

It is imperative for medical schools to develop critical thinking ability among the medical students. Graduating medical students are expected to critically evaluate novel cases using their previous clinical experiences and knowledge. Based on the need analysis, it was identified that mind mapping and time management seems to be of main preference of the USM year 1 medical student. Mind mapping is an efficient learning tool to effectively digest the large amount of information which is shown to be very useful for medical students compared to traditional note taking strategy (1). Time management has been identified as an important skill that needs to be mastered by the students in order to adapt to the student centered and problem based learning in the USM MD curriculum (2). This workshop comes up for such exploration and familiarization.

Methods

The half day workshop was conducted, with the objectives to enable students to adopt the mind mapping skills and management of their time effectively. This was achieved through the first one hour of lecture on mind mapping and time management, followed by hands-on session to develop their own mind map through a given text material and to identify as well as avoid procrastination through time scheduling. Video

clips were presented on the principles and concepts of mind mapping and time management. Upon completion of the workshop students are expected to apply the effective learning strategies highlighted in their daily learning activities.

Evaluation

A total 34 undergraduate medical students participated in the workshop. They were requested to rate the success of the workshop via feedback form. Data was analyzed using SPSS 18. About 97.1% of the students rated the workshop as useful and beneficial and similar percentage of them rated the workshop as had achieved the objectives. The workshop thrived in establishing some skills, mind mapping and time management, among participants of their needs. In a nutshell, the objectives of the workshop were successfully achieved. To facilitate effective learning especially amongst the medical students, such workshop provides an extra mileage in their pursuit to excellence in academic work. Furthermore, the workshop gave an opportunity to the Medical Education candidates to put their theoretical knowledge into hands on experience and reflect on their given task.

Reference

1. Farrand P, Hussain F, Hennessy E. The Efficacy of Mind Map study technique. *Medical Education*. 2002; 36: 426–431. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2923.2002.01205.x>
2. Kanar CC. *The Confident Student*. 4 ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

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