



Structured framework for organizing an effective interactive teaching-learning session for medical students

Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava^{*ID}, Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava^{ID}

Department of Community Medicine, Shri Sathya Sai Medical College & Research Institute, Sri Balaji Vidyapeeth (SBV) – Deemed to be University, Ammapettai, Nellikuppam, Chengalpet Taluk, Kancheepuram District, Tamil Nadu, India

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Dear Editor,

In the field of medical education, conducting an effective large group teaching session is a major challenge for most teachers regardless of their teaching experience.¹ In order to clarify the issue and enhance the competence levels of teachers, the Medical Council of India has been conducting different faculty development programs through various nodal and regional centers for faculty development. The aim of these sessions has been to expose teachers to different ways in which a large group teaching session (and other types of teaching-learning sessions) can be made interactive and effective.¹⁻³ The Medical Education Units of various medical colleges have been instrumental in carrying out these sessions/workshops for the benefit of medical teachers.

However, despite these initiatives, it is not incorrect to say that the trained teachers do not consistently employ interactive teaching methods in their large group sessions. This could be due to various reasons, such as unfamiliarity with the methods, resistance to change, lack of confidence to employ these methods, lack of awareness of a plan of action to organize interactive teaching-learning (T/L) sessions, etc. Before moving on in depth, it is important to ensure that a teacher create a classroom atmosphere conducive to interactive learning, which means that students should feel comfortable in approaching and interacting with teachers; this can be accomplished by an ice-breaker activity on the first day.³

The organization of an effective interactive session can be done in three phases: Planning (viz. identification of student needs, selection of the content, defining specific learning of the session, selection of interactive

T/L methods, logistics arrangement, etc), Conducting (set induction through trigger question/videos/images/real life stories, defining objectives, session lesson plan, content delivery through appropriate T/L methods, clarification of doubts, summarization of key concepts, etc), and Evaluation (collection of feedback, reflection from students, and preparation of follow-up activities, if necessary) of the sessions.¹⁻⁵ This type of structured plan clearly shows that the time required for planning an interactive session is more than the session time and it is vital for a teacher to prepare prior to the session.^{4,5}

A teacher plays the most vital role in the successful organization of an interactive session. The teacher ensures that the content delivery will not be monotonous and is interspersed with the use of some anecdotes or other methods like think-pair-share, buzz, case-based learning, etc.^{1,4} Teachers have to control the pace of the session and analyze its progress to ensure that all positive aspects are included in future sessions while the points that do not resonate with students are either removed or modified.⁵ Teachers must test students periodically to gauge their learning and to ensure that the process of learning is stimulating with moments of “fun,” which will indirectly encourage participation and enhance the effectiveness of large group teaching sessions.^{3,5}

In conclusion, the organization of an effective and interactive large group teaching session is crucial for the professional growth of a teacher and for enhancing the involvement of students in class. However, the success of such sessions is crucially determined by planning done by teachers prior to offering these sessions.

*Corresponding author: Saurabh RamBihariLal Shrivastava, Email: drshrishri2008@gmail.com



Ethical approval

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Competing interests

None.

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