

Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE): As an Assessment Tool in the Problem Based Learning (PBL) Curriculum

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COMMENTARY

Problem based learning (PBL) has been adopted by various medical school globally as an advanced medical education methodology based on well know theories. The emphasis is on switching the educational methodology from a conventional curriculum focused on subject expertise to a student-centered learning outcome. This model theory is based on the need to produce a competent physician who is multi-dimensional, contextual, developmental, and self-long learner.

Worldwide, competencies based on medical education have become essential to build a competent future doctor at the same content in both patient health and community service. A Study conducted by Gowri TLS [1] found that the PBL integrated system is a better mode of teaching when compared to the traditional method. The changing in the nature of the education has remarkably improved and maintained the quality of assurance and the enhancement of learning and teaching, along with the diversity among the student population.

The effectiveness and achievements of learning in higher education vary between student based and of that teacher based learning. In the figure 1 shows the relationship between student learning and achieving the required intended learning outcome which is ranging from describing to theorizing in the teacher-centered learning, which is obvious that the achievement in the student-centered learning is magnificently higher than the traditional teacher-centered learning [2].

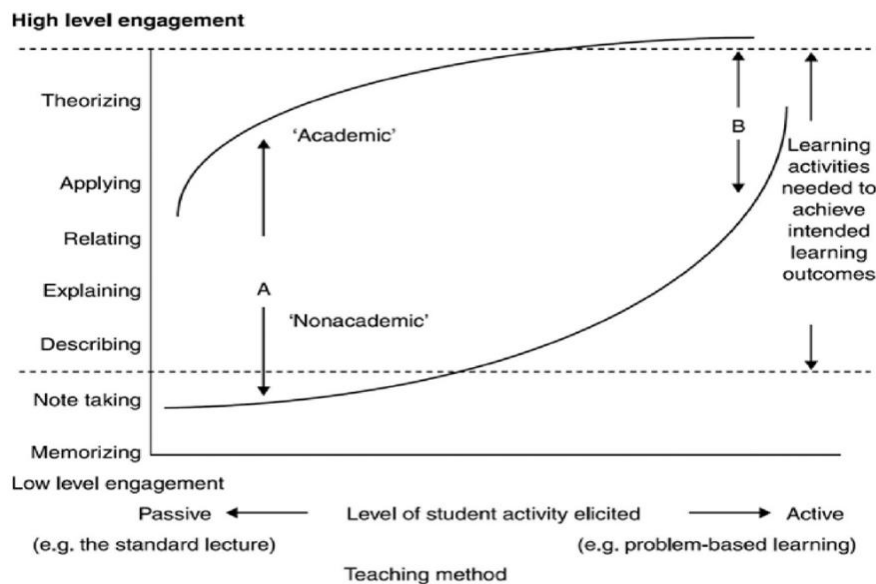


Figure 1: shows the student achievements in comparison between teacher centered and student centered learning.

As the medical education process keeps in progressing and institutions using the Competency-Based educational framework (CBE), in which the mastery of specific skills and knowledge is achieved in student-centered learning. This concept has started in early 1920 in the United States in which the transitional method focused on the student achievements (outcomes), they emphasized on the vertical and horizontal integration between different disciplines to fill in the gaps in the knowledge and to achieve certain learning outcomes whether skills or theory [3]. More recently, an international educationalist worked together to modernize the definition of CBE as an intended learning outcomes-based approach to design, implement, assist, and evaluate the medical program using the local framework of competencies [4].

Practical sessions in the PBL system are designed to distinct the competences which includes Cognitive, knowledge, communication skills, self-directed learning, behavior, and teamwork. After completing designing the learning objectives for the practical session the required equipment's need to be prepared and the student should be divided into small group (from 3-4) to ensure the quality, effectiveness, and equality among the student in order to achieve the required learning objectives. Prior to the session students will have self-reading of the objectives form various resources and during the session demonstration of the objectives in the lab will led by the students into their small group, at the end of the session the students will discuss the objectives with the supervision of the tutor, and the tutor will ensure covering the targeted learning objectives by the students efficiently.

The assessment in medical education based mainly on the competencies that are required from the students to achieve, and the assessment should cover all the objectives in order to have a quick and prolong feedback about the students' performance and their achievements. Objective Structured Practical Exam (OSPE) is the best assessment tool used to evaluate the practical skills competencies in medical schools particularly for the basic sciences which are skilled based assessment [5]. Why OSPE assessment method is because it's objective, reliable, provide transparency, also can assess the cognition, interpersonal, communication and psychomotor skills, moreover, a good tool for the discrimination between the different group of students, and its covers a wide range of objectives, which gives a broad range for the educators to assess.

In the final conclusion from various educational researches is that OSPE is an effective assessment tool in giving the marks to the students without any bias in the results, and thus OSPE can be considered as an accurate and reliable method of assessing routine laboratory practical's in the basic medical sciences.

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