

Pune District Education Association's
Seth Govind Raghunath Sable College of Pharmacy, Saswad

Best Practice No.1: Journal Club Activity

1. Title of the Practice

Journal Club Activity

2. Objectives of the Practice

What are the objectives / intended outcomes of this “best practice” and what are the underlying principles or concepts of this practice?

Journal clubs are a well-recognized quality improvement strategy used by health practitioners to critique and keep up-to-date with relevant health literature. The Journal Club of Department has been formed to keep pace with the knowledge explosion taking in the field of Pharmaceutical Sciences. The club intends to discuss actively the literature pertaining to latest findings in the areas of Pharmacy. The main objective of this activity to enhance knowledge along with improvement in critical literature appraisal skills and to generate ideas for future research.

3. The Context

What were the contextual features or challenging issues that needed to be addressed in designing and implementing this practice?

A successful journal club is said to be long existing and high attending program. It is effective in most of the time with a single leadership (program director), mandatory attendant (administrative incentives) and motivation (interesting and healthy environment). It can be made fruitful if it is question or problem driven; appraisal focused and seeks to generate a written record.

4. The Practice

Describe the practice and its uniqueness in the context of India higher education. What were the constraints / limitations, if any, faced?.

1. The activity is department-wise for relevant, in-depth discussions, allowing faculty to explore expertise-specific topics
2. Meetings adapt to faculty availability
3. A faculty member selects papers aligned with club objectives
4. Interactive discussions, led by the facilitator, cover methodology, result, discussion and future scope.

Criteria for selection of an article:

1. The article should be relevant to the goals of the journal club
2. It should be of a suitable length.

3. The material should stimulate discussion.

Role of the participants:

1. To attend and participate actively.
2. Critique the article/paper frankly
3. Evaluate the activity.

5. Evidence of Success

Provide evidence of success such as performance against targets and benchmarks, review results. What do these results indicate? Describe in about 200 words.

Journal club is a group of college teachers who meet regularly to critically appraise published research papers.

1. Acquisition of critical appraisal skills.
2. Promotion of critical thinking.
3. Improvement of reading habits.
4. Improvement of group participation and presentation and communication skills.
5. Strengthening of collegial relationships.
6. Development of research, writing, and publishing skills.

The practice of journal club is adjusted and formatted according to the set goal of the organizing authority and the learning objectives of the participants. Depending on the adult learning principle there is scope for innovation. Evaluation of the program and its individual segments has provided information for further improvement.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Identify the problems encountered and resources required to implement the practice (in about 150 words).

Journal clubs have got its limitations and are not equally successful because of failure to maintain interest and continuity. Common causes are lack of time, lack of or ill-defined goals and objectives. Identified that lack of training on the process and orientation are other problems. Time pressure may lead to short cut. Sending articles before the club may have negative impact and results a waste of time and paper. In case of evidence based journal club the selected paper may not be the most suitable for the topic under question.

To overcome these problems one person having experience in the process has the responsibility for basic and refreshers training on information technology, literature search and the basics of research methodology. Focusing on the current problem, bringing triggering question, a sense of humor and provision of good food, clear distribution of role and good signposting of time, place and topic is encouraging and motivating the participants to attend regularly. Use of structured format for review and critique on the literature saves the time and improves understanding of the process among the learners. Having a core group for regular attendance is essential to maintain continuity. One person who has interest in pharmacy education is responsible and a trainee or junior faculty is the leader supported by the senior faculties. If the task is of recent interest and can match with the personal goal of the participants then they are motivated to attend the club

and think on the topic. Flexibility of the organizer and participants' innovative ideas make it more attractive. Convenient time and place with administrative and financial support lead the club to success. It is not too frequent or irregular, regular and monthly meeting is well accepted and easier to follow by most of the participants.

7. Notes :

Optional. Add any other information that may be relevant for adopting/ implementing the Best Practice in other institutions (in about 150 words).:--Nil

Best Practice No.2: Problem Based Learning

1. Title of the Practice

Problem Based Learning (PBL)

2. Objectives of the Practice

What are the objectives / intended outcomes of this “best practice” and what are the underlying principles or concepts of this practice (in about 100 words)?

The objectives of this practice are to develop i) cognitive (Knowledge), ii) affective (attitude) and iii) psychomotor skills of the students through the process of acquiring new knowledge based on recognition of a need to learn. It's a technology platform to enhance the teaching & learning process for students.

3. The Context

What were the contextual features or challenging issues that needed to be addressed in designing and implementing this practice (in about 150 words)?

PBL is an instructional method that instigates students to "learn to learn," working cooperatively in groups to seek solutions to real world problems. Learning is initiated by a posed problem i. e. a 'Trigger' that the learner wants to solve. The most critical part of this method is to develop problems (triggers) that i) draw on students' previous learning and experience ii) integrate content objectives with problem-solving skills iii) require a cooperative, multi-staged method to solve and iv) necessitate that students do some independent research to gather all information relevant to the problem. The problem based learning approach i) has greater relevance to the needs of industry, ii) encourages self-directed life-long learning of the student and iii) promotes the ability of the student to retain and apply the knowledge.

In PBL, as knowledge is acquired in the context of a specific problem it is likely to be better focused and retained. PBL needs to be designed in such a way that it will enhance the understanding of the students through practical learning and exhort them for self and better learning.

4. The Practice

Describe the practice and its uniqueness in the context of India higher education. What were the constraints / limitations, if any, faced (in about 400 words)?

The institution has designated a faculty as a PBL co-ordinator who ensures smooth and effective conduct of the activity. The schedule for conducting PBL for all the classes is prepared in advance and circulated. The students are divided in groups randomly, each group consisting of 6-8 students. Depending on the number of groups of students in a class, the faculty members are designated as facilitators for a specific problem. The 'Trigger' is prepared by the subject teacher on a topic relevant to the course/ subject curriculum, along with the facilitators' notes and

submitted to PBL coordinator. Facilitator's notes comprises of the learning objectives and a list of reference books. During PBL session the trigger is conveyed to each group by the respective facilitator. A leader (who co-ordinates the whole process of solving the problem), a reader (who reads out the compilations on behalf of the team members) and a scribe (who writes the notes, questions, discussions and solutions on behalf of group) are selected amongst each group. The students are directed to list out the learning objectives to be achieved as a team which is then conveyed to the facilitator by them. Learning objectives should be clear, specific and of appropriate scope to be addressed in the time available between sessions (1-7 days). The facilitators play an important role in identifying the correct objectives. The group leader assigns tasks to group members. In the follow-up session, students report on their self-directed study and share their knowledge in the form of solution to the problem. All students are expected to contribute and their unique perspectives are incorporated into the process of problem solving which helps in their knowledge building. The exchange and debate of ideas promotes the consolidation and elaboration of new knowledge and understanding. The scribe prepares a write up on behalf of the team and the reader presents it before the facilitator. Facilitator invigilates this entire process and evaluates each student on the basis of his/her participation.

The uniqueness of this process is development of soft skills among the students such as communication skill, event management, leadership qualities, team management etc. It also enhances the logical thinking approach of the students. These qualities enhance the employability of the students.

The main constraint is the availability of sufficient number of the reference books in the library at a time. Facilitator cannot witness the process in between the first session of understanding the trigger and writing the learning objectives and the follow up tutorial.

5. Evidence of Success

Provide evidence of success such as performance against targets and benchmarks, review results. What do these results indicate? Describe in about 200 words.

PBL is a paradigm shift from focus on teaching to focus on learning. The benefits of PBL are that it prepares the students to apply their knowledge and skill to real-world situations/ problems enabling the students to develop communication, reasoning and critical thinking skills. The performance of the students in terms of logical thinking, reasoning, effective communication has been improved tremendously. The results of review of effectiveness of PBL are mentioned as below:

1. Students have developed interest in the process of self learning.
2. Increased student –faculty interaction is observed.
3. Increased use of computers and library resources by the students.
4. Students continually explore their knowledge, identify both their personal learning needs and strategies required to address them. This process helps to develop skills for life-long learning.
5. Students are developing team spirit.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Identify the problems encountered and resources required to implement the practice (in about 150 words).

The practice of PBL has definitely enhanced the analytical and communication skills of the students. However, while implementing the practice; the institution encountered certain problems which are as below:

1. Balancing course curricula and co-curricular activities requires effective time management.
2. Large numbers of reference books are required at a time.
3. A large (around 7-8) number of teachers need to be available at a time to act as facilitators.

In spite of these problems, the practice of PBL is conducted efficiently. The problems are overcome by carefully planning the activity and continuous follow-up of the bustle in which the finance is involved.

The resources required are-

1. Willing and enthusiastic students and faculty
2. Updated Library facilities
3. Internet facilities

7. Notes :

Optional. Add any other information that may be relevant for adopting/ implementing the Best Practice in other institutions (in about 150 words).:- Nil

P. Chauhan
PRINCIPAL

PUNE DISTRICT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION'S
WITH GOVIND RAGHUNATH SABLE COLLEGE
OF PHARMACY, SASWAD, TAL. PURANDAR,
DIST. PUNE - 412301.