

The Kurusowa approach to teaching learning

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Undergraduate medical education builds upon the knowledge gained in the basic science phase to understand the applied aspects in the clinical phase. The spiralling curriculum and the teaching learning delivery methods make definite impact on the sharing of knowledge and the acquisition of skills and attitude. We referred to Akira Kurusowa and tried to apply his innovative, unorthodox but effective narration style to teaching learning methods.

Feedback from medical students revealed that they were confused when the same topic was handled by different departments during the same phase of education or when it was reinforced in later years. We used the Rashomon effect (Redfern, 2013) to reinforce concepts and his cinematography presentations to highlight the must know and to stress on the specific learning outcomes at each stage of learning.

In Rashomon, Kurusowa had different characters explain incidents based on their perspectives. The scenes were replayed but with the onus falling on the character who was explaining the perspective. This was the lesson plan followed by the lecturers when they facilitated integrated sessions.

Kurusowa used the flashbacks and forwards extensively in his narration. This technique can be used to reinforce information and to stress on different aspects as required. (Phillips, 2000). Reinforcement of prior knowledge need not always feature at the start of a lecture or the teaching-learning activity; we could use it when appropriate. The PBL trigger is an example of using a clinical vignette (flashforward) to raise interest in the students to relate and review the relevant basic science.

The clinical content always excites the basic science students. We used his butterfly theory to innovate the think-link-think concept to connect pieces of information. For a lecture on the immunisation schedule in the clinical years, the links can lead to information on primary and secondary immune response or the advantages of active immunity. Similar links can be used to introduce the clinical manifestations of measles when the measles vaccine is discussed during the basic science phase.

Use of Kurusowa style has not only helped the students learn meaningfully but has enabled the teachers to be aware of the specific learning outcomes, lesson plan and blue print. Pre and post teaching learning activity questionnaires have shown evidence of a better understanding in lectures where the Kurusowa approach has been practiced. It helps to adopt best practices of narration seen in movies to 'vector' teaching learning.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare no competing interests.

References

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