

Using Team- based learning (TBL) to promote integration of Public Health and Microbiology

Author: Harsha Parmar. Manchester Pharmacy School, University of Manchester .

Background: Team-based learning (TBL) has been used as a teaching and learning strategy to promote a learner-centred environment whereby learners are provided with opportunities to identify gaps in their understanding and gain new experiences by working in small groups to solve case-based problems.¹ TBL was introduced into a year 1 unit designed to enable students to apply their learning of the role of the pharmacist in health promotion and its underpinning microbiology in the context of the provision of patient-care.

Method: A series of five TBL sessions was developed, each focussing on a pharmacy service. Pre-reading was developed for each session, drawing upon literature from pharmacy practice, and microbiology. This was assessed via individual and team Readiness Assurance Tests (iRAT and tRAT). TBL sessions focussed on discussing patient-cases relevant to the pharmacy service and the role of the pharmacist in preventing and controlling associated communicable and non-communicable disease. Students (n=176) were asked to complete an anonymous end-of-semester evaluation questionnaire to comment on their learning experiences in this unit.

Results: The overall iRAT mean was 71% and the overall tRAT mean was 95%. 71 (40%) students completed the survey. 80% agreed that the content of the unit enabled them to link theory and practice. Students reported that TBL sessions were useful opportunities for instant feedback to learning and contextualising their prior learning to patient-cases at an early stage of the course, whilst simultaneously building their communication skills. They valued the facilitator's role in guiding them to make informed decisions about the scenarios. Students felt that being rewarded a mark for self-directed learning was a motivator to learn the material well, though some found this challenging.

Conclusion: TBL can nurture an environment where the learner can contextualise underpinning theory of science and practice in the provision of patient-care.

Reference

1. Hrynchak P, Batty H. The educational theory basis of team-based Learning. Medical Teacher 2012;34:796–801