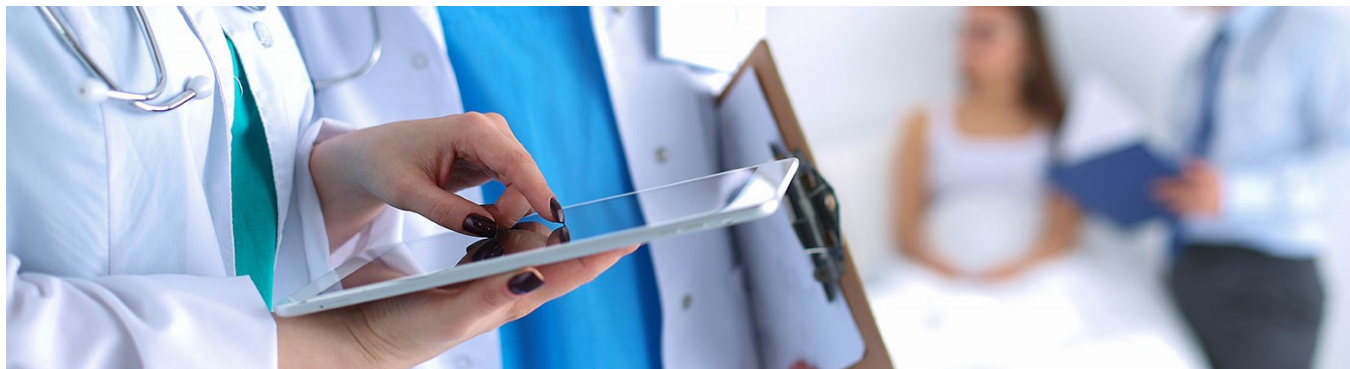


## Teaching versus learning in a personal perspective



### Short Communication

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To communicate the personal experience between teaching and learning in medical schools in traditional setup and problem based (PBL) setup.

**Methodology:** It is a short communication based on personal experiences of two writers that narrates the basic difference between methodology of studies in medical schools in traditional setup and Problem based (PBL) setup.

Both writers were trained in a traditional medical school, where they started medical education with two years of 'pre-clinical' training, followed by the 'clinical' training, of approximately three years, during which they worked in hospital wards under the supervision of consultants to get hand on training in medical and surgical procedures. At the end of five years of medical education, they cleared the final examination with high marks. The grades evaluated the memory, but what they learnt was never assessed.

In comparison, the system of PBL was observed by writers which they realized is more suitable and useful as far as learning is concerned.

**Results:** It was experience by the writers that PBL is a student's based learning process where students are given medical scenarios to resolve and learn from. For learning they depend on self-directed learning and group work.

**Conclusion:** PBL is experienced to be an effective system of learning in medical schools that keeps the learning more important than teaching.

### KEYWORDS:

Problem based learning (PBL), Teaching, Learning.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

Teaching is one of the principle segments in medical schools which is a key factor in obtaining results of educational plans<sup>1</sup>. Many medical schools in the world still stick to the traditional teaching methodology of teaching. They are sticking to “teacher-centered classes” with major role of knowledge dispensers rather than facilitators.<sup>[2]</sup> Problem based learning (PBL) is an educational practice utilized in numerous medical schools.<sup>[3]</sup>

Being in Pakistan, we were trained in a traditional medical school, where we started our medical education with two years of 'pre-clinical' training, involving study of the basic medical sciences. This was followed by the 'clinical' training, of approximately three years, during which we worked in hospital wards under the supervision of consultants to get hand on training in medical and surgical procedures.

At the end of our five years of medical education, we cleared the final examination with high marks. The grades evaluated our knowledge, but what we learnt was never assessed. This traditional method of teaching was considered effective and can be best described in by David W. Andrews, Ph.D of Johns Hopkins University.<sup>[4]</sup>

According to Dr. David W. Andrews, the traditional system of teaching is like feeding chickens as Education by the four steps:-

1. Put some content in a bucket.
2. Gather the students and throw it out.
3. If the students get a bit of content, they get it. If not, they don't.
4. Continue this practice daily until all of the content has been distributed and it is time to harvest the benefits of instruction.



(Source: Lecture in Coursera “Teaching with the science of learning” by David W. Andrews Ph.D , Johns Hopkins University<sup>4</sup>)

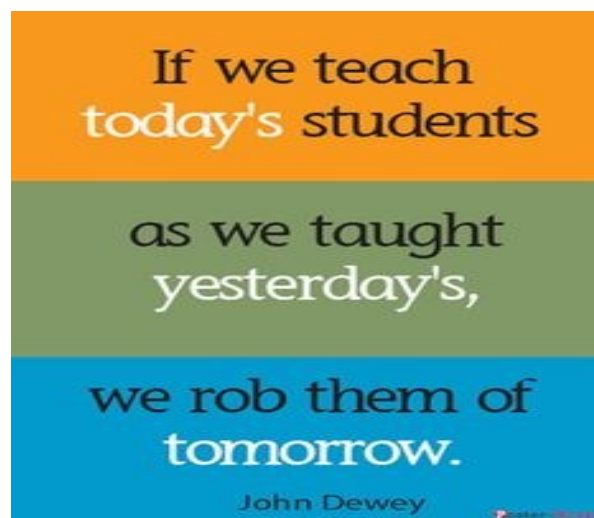
**II. METHODOLOGY**

The writers were trained in a traditional system of teaching in a medical school. The co-writer has served as a teacher in a traditional medical school for a long time. Since last few years, he got a chance to work as a facilitator in a university with a pure problem based learning system (PBL). PBL is a student’s based learning process where students are given medical scenarios to resolve and learn from. The students are guided by a teacher to work as a facilitator. For learning they depend on self-directed learning and group work.<sup>[5]</sup> During this training, thus they learn communication, teamwork and problem solving skills, personal responsibility and respect for others.<sup>[6]</sup>

This engagement has changed his thinking, attitude and behavior about teaching. He feels that teaching has to be done for students to learn and student’s learning should be a criterion for a successful teaching in present time. This short communication is based on personal perceptive of writers.

**III. DISCUSSION**

In the modern era of advanced education and technology, the following quotation of John Dewey holds good:



(From: [http://www.poster-street.com/posters\\_inner/teacher-posters--inspirational-poster--if-we-teach-todays-students-as-we-taught-yesterdays\\_we-rob-them-of-tomorrow\\_84.html](http://www.poster-street.com/posters_inner/teacher-posters--inspirational-poster--if-we-teach-todays-students-as-we-taught-yesterdays_we-rob-them-of-tomorrow_84.html)<sup>[7]</sup>)

In some of studies it has been found that when students are actively involved in the learning task, they learn more than when they are passive recipients of instruction.<sup>[8]</sup>

**IV. RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS**

We believe that learning should be more important than teaching as it is the prime objective of teaching. Is it not a bare reality that students can learn without teachers, but teachers can't teach without learners.<sup>[9]</sup>

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