

Educational Challenges, Obstacles and Critical Incidents in Problem Base Learning (PBL) Tutorial Group**Ibrahim A Ali^{*1}, Mazin. S. Abdalla², Ahmed T. Abdalla³, Omnia T. Abdalla⁴**¹Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, The National Ribat University, Khartoum, Sudan²Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, Napata College, Khartoum, Sudan³Medical Practitioner, Khartoum, Sudan⁴Dentistry Medical Practitioner, Khartoum, Sudan***Corresponding author**
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Abstract: Since the dawn of the era of innovation, the need for novel methods in making life easier has been interminable. The learning process shows no exceptions to this rule. One would argue for the classic methods in handling the trade of information between the teacher and the students, which has been unilateral. The introduction of problem based learning (PBL) process to the system of education is facing many struggles. In this student-centered active learning process, the teacher is just a guide focal point of education systems. Literature search strategy included electronic database searches, internet searches, hand searching, ancestry searching and networking. Objectives: The objective of this review article is to study the challenges, obstacles and critical incident in PBL tutorial groups. Problem base learning model is counteracting by a lot of educational, financial and psychological challenges and barriers.

Keywords: PBL, student center learning, real problem, active learning

INTRODUCTION

The active learning is a learning process in which the student takes the full responsibility of his/her educational, this gives the students the chance to adopt decisions concerning the different aspects of the learning process [1]. In the student-centered active learning process, the teacher is just a guide focal point of education systems. The basis of the problem-based learning is mainly comprised of 'Problem Solution, Questioning, Realism, Practice, Research, Originality and Integration.' The goal of this new learning method is to provide acquisition of information based on practical facts, so, to achieve this aim, problems of the PBL sessions are selected from the real world.

The student is being developed and learned how to deal with the cumulative information and making it possible for integration between basic and clinical sciences. Observing from a practical point of view, differences are recorded; sessions are the platforms, where the problem-based learning takes place. The sessions usually include 6 or 8 persons with educational mentor.

Barrows et al, Schmidt et al found that the tutorial groups in problem-based learning are important and lead to generation of cognitive processes such as elaboration, summarizing, monitoring learning and applying knowledge and supposed to stimulate this way of learning [2, 3].

The PBL model as a novel method of teaching, which bears a lot of advantages and disadvantages, hopes and challenges, in this review highlights the most important critical incident in PBL tutorial groups.

The humongous issue in the face of such process is to provide tutors, the allocation of resources and, the need for more staff and availability of the facility. This is why some educators regard PBL overwhelming from the implementation point of view [4].

Students also report uncertainty with information overload and are unable to determine how much study is required and the relevance of information available. Students may not have access to teachers who serve as the inspirational role models those traditional curriculum offers [4].

Another challenge for the PBL module is that it could be difficult for teachers and tutors to change their teaching traditional styles.

Another issue strikes in the face of the PBL, is the possibility that this would be a time-consuming endeavor as the students face problematic situations.

Solid research and rich material are considered the prerequisite for problem-based learning.

Four studies were conducted in a different time were found the PBL is quiet difficult method to assess learning process [5-8].

Lack of interaction and motivation is also found to be one of the obstacles that face the tutor of the PBL group; tutors often talk about being “lucky” to have a good group or being “unlucky” and having a bad group.

There are variations in the distribution of the PBL groups, some tutorial groups work perfectly, but there are also some group could do much better or that don't work at all

Other studies investigated the group dynamics of problem-based learning to explain unproductive tutorial groups. Previous studies addressed group dynamics of group functioning in tutorial. Tipping *et al.* [9] and Mpofu *et al.* [10] investigated the development of group dynamics in tutorial groups but limited their research to the introduction phase of problem-based learning. Students with greater experience in problem-based learning might differ in the way they handle problem-based learning in the tutorial group.

Tipping observed low awareness of effective group dynamics among students and tutors and a discrepancy between self-reported behavior and observed behavior in relation to group dynamics [9].

Difference in what is perceived and Gender variation were also noticed by Mpofu *et al.* who found that differences exist in what students and tutors perceived as important, thus demonstrating a staff-student perception gap's, Hence, first of all, the teachers should be prepared to deal with critical incidents, for example, tutors must know how to stimulate elaboration, thinking, motivation and how to deal with difficult personalities in tutorial group. Mpofu also reported gender differences in perceptions [10].

The results of many studies found occurrence of six different critical incidents, they are reported below:

Lack of connection and elaboration “Skipping remaining learning issues”

In this context, the students might forget to study some questions and learning points, which are considered leftovers from the previous tutorial group meeting.

A dominant student in the tutorial group”, Difficult personalities

This is demonstrated by the one student hijacking the study discussion, and starts to speak about everything in the subject matter. He/she does not give a chance for any other students to participate; a one man show, so to speak.

Lack of interaction “Reading out aloud”

Such case is observed when one student reads from his/her notes or copies of articles instead of reporting in one's own words.

Lack of Motivation “Negative expectations”

Tutors may come in contact with students, who show a low spirit of motivation and a lack of interest in the process.

Lack of participation “One student does not say much”

Sometimes, a student may have prepared his/her material and it is obvious that a lot of effort has been put into it. However, the lack of participation is evident.

Lack of Cohesion “You should know that by now”

The other end of the stick is when the students did not bother to prepare the material at hand for the session and they keep asking questions, which show their lack of preparation. This brings discomfort to the other prepared students, who know that this should have been known by now.

In order to overcome all these critical incidents and to reach a resolution on the hanging issues, a safe, motivating environment, must be provided. The addressed topics should be dealt with in way that would be considered interesting to the students. Bringing contrast to the discussion in the manner of how people assemble and investigate information, and conduct continuous academic and psychological assessment after each PBL session.

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