Pressing the Button or Flipping the Switch?

Developing “Soft Skills” in Medical Imaging Students

Jo Thorogood
1. Health Educators are facing increasingly difficult challenges to develop “higher order learning” in their students. That is, the deep applied learning required to provide effective patient care in an increasingly complex healthcare setting (Billings 2008:iix).

2. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (2009, p.1) stated "...employability skills are the lubricant of our increasingly complex and interconnected workplace. They are not a substitute for specific knowledge and technical skills: but they make the difference between being good at a subject and being good at doing a job"
3. “So many of our curricula are designed to cover the content deemed essential for the discipline...it is rare that application of knowledge is the cornerstone of the curriculum’s design” (Billings 2008 p.4).

Looking for greater student engagement and participation in the learning process.

Students to understand that academic knowledge and clinical practice do not sit in separate boxes but are truly integrated.
Guides students through a process that involves confronting values and developing communication, problem-solving and team working skills.
Creating a Team

Groups evolve into teams when the following conditions are met:

1. Time together

2. Opportunity to find ways to work out their differences

3. Feedback on performance

(Fink, 2003, p.22)
LECTURER APPROACH
Students undertake pre-class reading
Key focus is to use activities in class to allow students to deepen and apply knowledge
MEDICAL IMAGING
TBL

Readings - iRAT - tRAT - Appeal - Mini Lecture

1. Readiness Assurance
2. 50 - 70 minutes
3. Formative Peer Evaluation
4. 3 - 5 Class Periods
5. In-Class Team Application Activities

Complex

Simultaneous Report
Specific Choice
Same Problem
Significant Problem

Students Ready

Course Start

Repeat 5-7 Modules

Sibley & Spiridonoff (2010)
Challenges with Introduction: Staff and Students

Can these skills be taught?

Students right to self determination

Discomfort students experience when moving from traditional didactic lectures to dialectic teaching (Janssen et al., 2008).
“Learning to co-operate with other members of the team I was not comfortable dealing with at the start of the year. I have felt I have come out of my shell by not being in my comfort zone anymore. .. I have found my confidence has been boosted as I stand up for my ideas and justifying them when everyone is questioning them. I believe in my perceptions of questions and how I logically plan to eliminate and justify myself.”

“... I respect everyone in the team and I understand that everyone works differently, because there is a range of diversity among individuals. Diversity allows me to adjust the way I am working to help others, which in turn can benefit me by making me develop alternative working processes. These strengths benefit me in the clinical environment ...”
Student Voices

“This model is congruent with holistic learning and will produce better individuals, people who are able to work together in teams and this is what this world is about, we’ve got this global society coming in, and we’re forced to work with people from all over the world, different countries, different cultures and the best ideas come from people who are able to work together with diversity and its a no brainer, you see that time and time again so why not learn in that way.”
A Story...

Students are in clinical placement.

During the day they notice a problem occurring when a particular piece of equipment is used within a larger process.

The students run tests on the equipment, and document the problem.

They take it to the charge MIT who analyses the issue and re-evaluates workplace practice.

As a result, new equipment is purchased and a training programme is put into place for all staff.
Final Thought

All of us have a responsibility to go beyond flipping a switch or pressing a button; not only in the clinical environment but also in our educational practise.

http://mariafresa.net/clipart/turn-off-lights-clipart.html
Acknowledgements

1. My Co-Researchers:
   Jennifer Haven
   Dr Matthew Farry
   David Rhodes

2. The Unitec MI students

3. Unitec Institute of Technology


Images- Sourced under Creative Commons License.
References

