

## **SMALL GROUP TEACHING (SGT)**

### 1. Introduction

- It is a teaching method for generating free communication between teacher and his/her students and among students themselves
- Aim of SGT is to encourage students to develop deep approach in learning and to be a self-directed active learner.
- Must have characteristics of SGT
  - Active participation
  - Face to face contact
  - Purposeful activity

### 2. Importance/advantages of SGT

- There are two types of importance in SGT
  - Educational
    - Encourage students' active participation
    - Encourage them to explore subject matter
    - Stimulate critical thinking
    - Promote students' problem solving ability
    - Encourage for self-directed learning
    - Promote group skills and communication
    - Development of higher level intellectual skills such as reasoning and problem solving
    - Development of positive attitudes
    - Developments of interpersonal skills such as listening, speaking, arguing and group leadership
  - Social
    - Provides an important opportunity for social contact with peers and teachers

- This social contact helps students to resolve a range of issues indirectly associated with teaching
  - Difficulties with studies
  - Resolve any social problems

### 3. Two main factors need to be considered for effective management of SGT

- Tasks of the group
  - These must be clearly defined. It should be high in the agenda of the first meeting
  - Outlines for the tasks of the group
    - Course title, description and aims
    - Teachers name and availability
    - List of students and their names
    - How the group is to run (teacher & students role, methods to be used)
    - Work requirements (assignments, case presentation)
    - Assessment requirements
    - Reading materials
- Maintenance of the group
  - The successfully managed group will meet the following criteria
    - Prevalence of warm, accepting, non-threatening group climate
    - Learning approach is cooperative
    - Learning accepted as major reason for the existence of the group
    - Active participation by all
    - Equal distribution of leadership functions
    - Group sessions and learning tasks are enjoyable
    - Content adequately and efficiently covered
    - Evaluation accepted as an integral part of the group activities

- Students attendance is regular
- Students come prepared

#### 4. Types of SGT

- Tutorial
  - Group discussion – material already covered or previously assigned
  - Teacher may assign questions or problems for students to consider
  - The students will be encouraged to take responsibility to prepare for the session previously and determine which aspects require classification
  - Student should encourage to ask questions, participate in discussion
- One to one discussion
  - Group members (including the teacher) divided into pairs and each is designated as A and B
  - Person A talks to B for an uninterrupted period of 3 to 5 minutes on the topic of discussion
  - Person B listens and avoid any prompting or questioning
  - Role are reversed with B talking to A
  - At the conclusion the group assembles
  - Each person in turn introduces themselves as well the person to whom they were speaking
  - Then they briefly paraphrase what was said by his/her partner
- Buzz groups
  - Useful to encourage maximum participation at on time, it is very useful when the group is big
  - Procedure
    - The group is divided into sub-groups of 3-4 students
    - Discussion occurs for a few minutes
    - A clear task must be set

- Each group report back to the whole group
- Role play
  - Valuable for teaching interpersonal and communication skills, particularly with high emotional content
  - Procedure
    - Explain the nature and purpose of the exercise
    - Define the setting and situation
    - Select students to act out roles
    - Provide players with a realistic description of the role or even script. Allow the time to prepare and if necessary practice
    - Specify observational tasks for the non-payer
    - Allow sufficient time for role play
    - Discuss and explore the experience with players and observers
- Plenary session
  - Procedures
    - Groups divided into subgroups
    - Subgroups sit together facing other sub groups
    - The chairman of subgroup A briefly reports the discussion in his group
    - The chairman of subgroup B invites members of subgroup B C D etc, to ask questions to any members of subgroup A
    - After 10 or 15 minutes chairman B reports on the discussion in subgroup B and the process repeated for each subgroup
    - Time must follow strictly
- Workshop
- Free discussion
- Brain storming
  - Useful to encourage wide and creative thinking about problem
  - Procedures
    - Criticism is ruled out

- All ideas are welcome
- Quantity of ideas is the aim
- Combination and improvement of ideas sought
- State the problem to the group
- A silence thought period is allowed for the students to write their ideas
- Ideas are then recorded on a board, OHP
- After listed all ideas, a combination and improvement of ideas, discussion and evaluation
- Focus group discussion
- Panel discussion
- Alternate SGT
  - Problem based learning i.e. PBL
    - PBL is an approach in learning and instruction in which students tackle problems in small groups under the supervision of a tutor (Schumit, 1993)
    - PBL is an educational strategy whereby a practical problem constitutes the basis for the learning of relevant information. Study is centered around a problem and is triggered by recognition of the fact that certain items of information are necessary and must be acquired in order to understand the problem and or make the decision
  - Teaching in the laboratory i.e. practical teaching
  - Teaching in the hospital i.e. clinical skills teaching

##### 5. Disadvantages of SGT

- Weaker student may be dominated or discouraged by the more confident student
- Some students may depend too much on other
- Withdrawn personality type students may take no part in discussion

- Able student may be bored
- It requires to coordinate lecture with subsequent group discussion
- It is costly in term of money, material and man power

## 6. Difference between LGT and SGT

### **SGT**

- Student centered
- Active learning
- Encourage to self-directed learning
- Weaker students can learn from other students
- Offers experiences of working in a group
- Helps to develop communication skills

### **LGT**

- Teacher centered
- Passive learning
- Does not encourage independent learning
- Limited scope to learn from other students
- Does not offer experience of working in a group
- Does not help in developing communication skill

## 7. Evaluating teaching session

- Improving the quality of your teaching session depends on a combination of
  - Experience
  - Willingness to critically evaluate your performance
- Evaluation can be informal or formal
- Informal evaluation
  - By asking questions one or two student whom you know
  - Can also consider number of criteria
    - The quality of contribution
    - The amount of your talk

- Whether purpose of the session achieved
- Were the activities helpful
- Were the group work appropriate
- Did the questions stimulate discussion
- How did the student react
- Formal evaluation
  - Distribution of questionnaire to the class
  - Seek the services of a teaching unit
  - Record the presentation on video or audiotape – self-evaluation
  - Peer evaluation

## **ALTERNATE SGT (Small Group Teaching) – PROBLEM BASED LEARNING**

### 1. What is PBL?

- PBL is an approach in learning and instruction in which students tackle problems in small groups under supervision of a tutor (facilitator) (Schumit, 1993)
- PBL is a process of acquiring skills, understanding, knowledge and attitudes in the context of an unfamiliar situation. The process is designed to provide relevance and thus stimulates for learning
- PBL is a curriculum developed and delivery system that recognize the need to develop problem solving skills as well as the necessity of helping students to acquire necessary knowledge and skills
- PBL is an educational strategy whereby a practical problem constitutes the basis for the learning of relevant information. Study I centered around a problem and is triggered by recognition of the fact that certain items of information are necessary and must be acquired in order to understand the problem and to make the decision

### 2. Why PBL?

- A problem as the focus for knowledge acquiring, PBL helps students to retain their learning and comprehend it
- Helps developing knowledge and skills within a context
- Acquiring transferable skills (soft skills) that are venerable (valued) to their life after formal education
- Helps to develop interpersonal skills to draw on for the rest of the life

### 3. Advantages of PBL

- PBL emphasis the meaning not the facts
- Help retention of knowledge and skills and also helps in integration of knowledge
- Increased self-directed learning and helps to produce life long learner
- Develop an effective and efficient clinical reasoning process
- Increased faculty student interaction

- Developed self motivated attitude

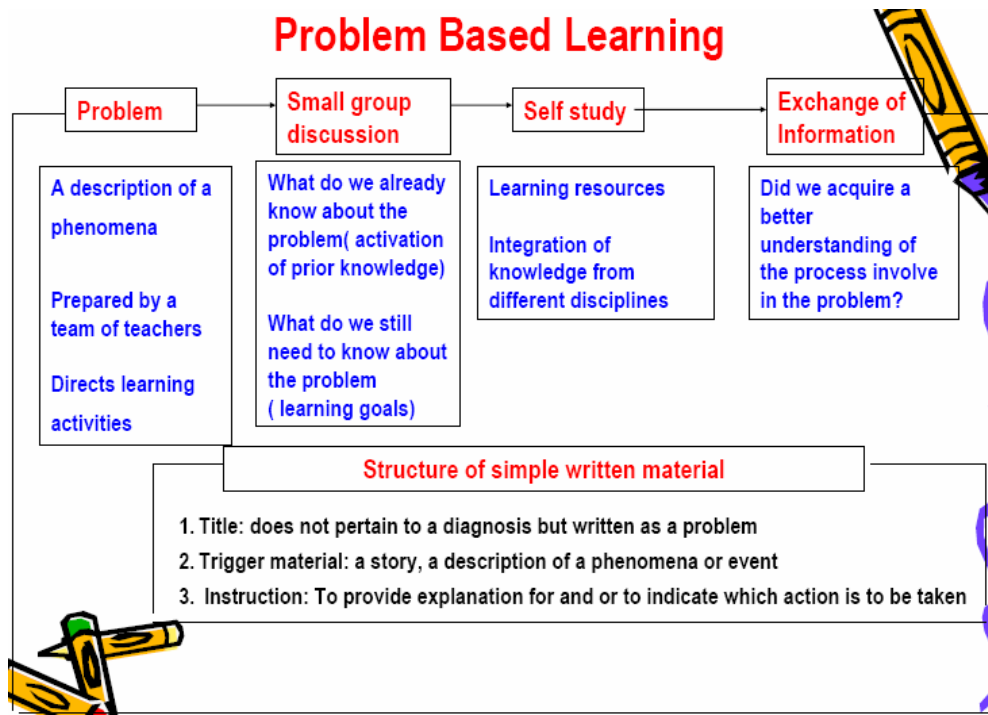
#### 4. Disadvantages/ Barriers to PBL

- Changing to curriculum – “Changing the curriculum is like moving a grave yard.”  
(Aspy, Aspy and Quimbly, 1993)
  - Difficult transaction
  - More time consuming for the same content
  - PBL cost more
  - Faculty lacks incentives
  - Faculty lacks facilitator skills
- How to overcome the barriers?
  - Overcome the resistance
  - Rewarding faculty
  - Facilitator training through Faculty Development Program
  - Strategy

#### 5. Developing a problem/trigger

- Identify the objectives to work – students to have acquired at the end of the course in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude
- Formulating problems/triggers
  - Encouraging and defining the problem – the nature of the problem
  - The problem situation is presented as in reality – the writing of the problem
- Combining problems
  - Note the concept and objectives not yet included. The residual concepts will act as guide for developing further problem
- Providing resources

## 6. Problem based learning process

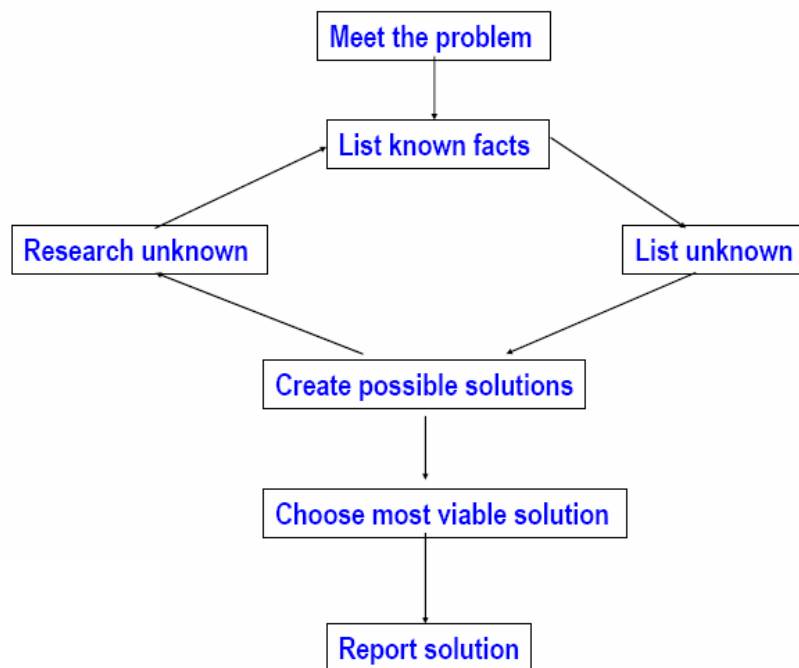


## 7. PBL tutorial process

- There are five basic steps in PBL process
  - Read the problem in PBL process
    - Clear up any uncertainty in the text/ difficult words/ jargons
  - Brainstorm on the problem
    - Generate ideas from all members based on their knowledge and order these ideas systematically and hypothesized how they are related
  - Identify and prioritize learning issues
    - Identify learning objectives, set priorities and agree of division of tasks
  - Search and gather information
  - Share and synthesize information
    - Try to establish a common link between aspects found individually in the literature and other resources

## 8. Unique aspects of PBL

- Students do not receive a standard body of information in a defined sequence
  - No uniformity of learning, it is totally individual
  - Information acquired totally on the basis of self directed learning
  - Each problem has multiple facets
  - The learning resources are thus need to be varied and integrated
- Students need to develop skills in self directed study utilizing the kind of resources for continued learning
  - Need assess to a wide range of resources
  - Ability to critique various learning materials/resources
  - Need to apply acquired learning from resources to similar patient problem



## 9. Roles of PBL tutor/facilitator

- The important role is to scaffold student learning (De Grave et al., 1999)
  - Understand the PBL process
  - Treat the student as adult learner
  - Get to know the students

- Create an environment that is friendly and non-threatening condition
- Foster cooperation rather than competition
- Stimulates elaboration of information and ideas
- Directs the learning process
- Stimulates integration of knowledge
- Stimulates students interaction and individual accountability

#### 10. Roles of student

- Treat all members of the group with respect
- Be punctual in attending all sessions
- Openly express his/her thoughts and ideas
- Clarify and question his/her thoughts and contributions
- Offer feedback to group members and tutors
- Complete assignment thoroughly and on time
- Be sensitive to learning needs of other group members
- Interact with group members
- Take responsibility for learning process

#### 11. Evaluation

- Formative
  - Supports learning and allows adjustment during the learning process
- Summative
  - Is the process to determine the degree to which competencies have been acquired and usually carried out at the end of the cycle
- Product evaluation
- Tutor- student evaluates tutor as to
  - Success in guiding the group
  - Success in probing students knowledge/reasoning
  - Success in involving all students in the process
  - Success in managing the flow of information and the dynamic of the group

## 12. Summary of the process of PBL

- Encouraging and defining the problem
- The problem situation is presented as in reality
- The students works in a manner that permits their ability to reason and apply knowledge
- Needed areas of learning are identified
- The skills and knowledge acquired are applied back to the problem
- The learning that has occurred is summarized and integrated into existing knowledge and skills