

Online Surgical Teaching & Learning: Our Experience During The Pandemic

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During the pandemic and the implementation of Movement Control Order, the medical programme teaching and learning activities were significantly affected. Not only were the students not able to enter hospital facilities for clinical teaching, there have been no face-to-face lectures, seminar presentations nor Problem Based Learning (PBL) activities due to the restriction. For this reason, Year 3 MDP 30309 Surgery Posting theory teaching sessions were replaced with three weeks' online teaching program for the total of 78 students (combined classes of two postings) starting from 9th June until 25th June 2020 and followed by the End of Posting Online Theory Exam through eLEAP platform. The format of theory papers was 20 Multiple Choice Questions, 10 Best Answer Questions and lastly, 8 Short Essay Questions. At the end of this posting, students were requested to respond to Feedback Questionnaire in the eLEAP page and allowed to express their comments and suggestions on this online teaching programme anonymously. In this article, we would like to share our online teaching experience and review of the students' feedback.

The Challenge Begins

This was the first time the lecturers from Department of Surgery needed to deliver their lectures

fully online. Surgical online teaching has been practiced in few institutes and thought to be useful, but still not widely practiced in our medical school. Although our Department has adopted blended learning for the past few years, this remained a big challenge to the Department since not all lecturers were familiar with online teaching and might have difficulties to deliver the content of lectures effectively without direct interaction with the students. After finalizing the teaching plan and time table, the Department conducted an online Departmental Meeting to brief the lecturers and have them familiarized with the online teaching platform. The lecturers were free to choose any platform (Zoom, Microsoft Team, Webex) they were comfortable with, and encouraged them to have both synchronous and asynchronous teaching activities together. The MDP 30309 theory teaching sessions composed of five Lectures, seven Seminar Presentations, and eight PBL sessions. We have tried to keep the learning sessions as interactive as possible by providing chances for the students to present their slides online to the lecturers and other students.

The Delivery Methods

Every lecturer has their unique way of delivering lectures. One of

the favorite ways, as responded by the students in their feedback, was inter-session quiz between the asynchronous and synchronous teaching activities. The students needed to access the learning materials in eLEAP page and performed self-learning a few days before the online session. On the day of online teaching, the students needed to answer a set of quiz through eLEAP, and the lecturer would read through their answers immediately after the quiz was finished. And during the online teaching session, the lecturer would focus on the students' weakest part and gave them guidance accordingly. Regarding the delivery platform, about 75% of the students preferred Microsoft Team as it was more user friendly. Hopefully, some other more reliable and established software emerges in the near future making it a real possibility towards satisfaction of both the students and lecturers.

The Challenges Faced by Students

As one can normally expect, students staying at home were still in their domestic environment and their normal life at home still going around them and this can sometimes be a bit distracting. Everything about the remote teaching depends on the internet signal which comes with a cost. And, the cost incurred, can be