Learning Via Just-In-Time(jitt) Education: A Must For All Medical Schools In The Global Information Age

Corresponding Author:
Prof. Sachchithanantham Kanagasabai,
Professor, Department of Obstetrics and gynaecology, Melaka Manipal Medical CollegenMalaysia, 75150 - Malaysia

Submitting Author:
Mr. Mohamed Najimudeen,
Associate Professor, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Melaka Manipal Medical College, 75150 - Malaysia

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Author(s): Kanagasabai S, Najimudeen M, De S

My opinion

What is Just –In –Time Teaching?

The conventional lecture has only 5% retention. Whereas the discussion has 50% and teaching to others has 90% retention. Lecture is an art of transferring information from the notes of the Lecturer to the notes of the students without passing through “the minds of either”.

Therefore the learning method should be shifted to teaching by students and discussion among students under the supervision of a teacher. Just-in-Time Teaching (JiTT) is a way of learning where the students take a major role.

Gregor Novak, a physics teacher from Purdue University Indianapolis campus in 1964 developed JiTT after the culmination of thirty years of experience and research is a Web-based, classroom-linked strategy termed “JiTT” or Just-in-Time Teaching.

JiTT improves the efficacy of the class room by the interaction between the teacher and student. There is a team spirit. The teacher and students work as a team. This will help to maximise the retainable knowledge.

As Alexander Astin mentioned the JiTT increased amounts and quality of student-student interaction, student-faculty interaction and student study outside of class.

As Novak points out, much of the dialogue whether student-student or student teacher, can occur outside the classroom, thanks to the maturation of electronic technologies. Interaction is not simply electronic, but also occurs in the classroom with fellow students and with instructors. Student feedback shows the approach meets its primary goal: engaging students by allowing them to control the learning process.

Novak believes that the core element of JiTT is the interactive lecture. Instructors in the interactive lecture then adjust and organize lessons based on those student responses. The students largely determine the way the lecture is presented in the classroom. The student input is “Just in Time” for the lesson, hence the name. With knowledge of those responses to the subject matter, instructors engage the students at their level of background knowledge and use their answers as input for class discussion. Most importantly, students find the JiTT approach helps learning. Of those surveyed after two semesters of JiTT courses, 92 percent preferred the approach to a standard course.

How is Just-In-Time different from the traditional education model?

According to Jerry Wind and David Rubenstein, the traditional lecture model delivers standardized content in a discrete time and place, usually in passive setting. In other words, a teacher in a lecture room imparts knowledge to a large number of students. The students may be briefly engage in discussions but remain mostly passive. Apparently this model has worked well for centuries, because it is efficient for teachers. It focuses on teaching rather than learning. The newer model however focuses on learning rather on teaching and passing some controls of the learning process over to the students.

The newer model pursues three major goals and objectives:

First and foremost it maximizes the efficacy of the classroom sessions. The teacher discusses a prelearned chapter interactively with the students and difficulties in comprehending the subject are further clarified.

Secondly to structure the out of the class time for maximum benefit.

The third objective is to create and sustain a team spirit. Here students and instructors work as a team towards the same objective to help students pass the course with the maximum amount of retainable knowledge.
Our Experience with JiTT.

Since the beginning of the last semester, the traditional lectures for semester 6, 7 and 8 have been replaced with JiTT in the Department of Obstetrics and gynaecology. The faculties from the respective semester post a power point slides of the respective topic to be discussed on the web accompanied with twenty questions based on the lecture, a week prior to the scheduled lecture. The students are expected to study the slides and subsequently seek answers for the posted questions from all available resources.

On the day of the scheduled lecture the doubts are discussed followed by the students answering the questions posted on the web. Marks are given according to their answer. These marks are included in their continuous assessment. Evaluation of this current model of teaching is ongoing in the department. However preliminary reports suggest that the students are overwhelmed by this new method as they have to seek answers from various sources. This method help them to be critique and comprehensive. It helps them to improve their retention of knowledge of the topic discussed, thus performing well in the subsequent exams.

Active learning will certainly yield a better results. It also make the student to search and learn more. There is increased time for student to study. There will be more interaction with the teachers. However it involves more work to the students and the teacher than the conventional lecture method. Learning technologies should be designed to increase, and not to reduce, the amount of personal contact between students and faculty on intellectual issues.
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