

Conduct of an Elective: A First Time Experience from Faculty Perspective

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Dear Editor

The National Medical Commission introduced elective programs into medical undergraduate (MBBS), 2–3 years ago although serious implementation started just now. It starts from basic work and enhances to higher topics as students develop.^[1]

I had the privilege in the last fortnight to be a preceptor of a block-1 elective. It was my first experience. I was understandably a little circumspect and understandably so. The preparations began a month before. Finding a topic was not challenging as I always had this weakness for the topic of “publications.” Having worked in this field for 5 years closely, I have learned a few things. I just wanted to dissipate this to undergraduate students. I started making the schedules for 12 working-day sessions. [As suggested in Figure 1] Took guidance from colleagues as well.

Before we could start the sessions, I had a butterfly in my stomach. The issue was, how much I would be able to generate interest in the students related to publications. An area where even faculties do not want

to go much. Many of the faculties thought this topic is for postgraduate students and above category though for MBBS students, it will be either a higher level or burden.^[2]

It took almost 3 days to get their confidence. The sessions were ensured to be light, with participation from both sides and some banter. We conducted a few small tasks like writing a reference in Vancouver style, presenting and doing homework on citations, H-index, Google Scholar, etc. Furthermore, they were asked to find and present an original article as Journal Club. To our surprise, they were terrific. The presentation part also was their post-test assessment. We encouraged writing correspondence to the article selected as well so that they learned how to become a corresponding author. We also managed to cover important ethical aspects encountered in writing and publishing. Indexing of journals, predatory journals, plagiarism, etc. was also touched upon.^[3]

By the time we came to the end of block-1, we were loving the company and did not want it to finish. The log books were corrected on the last day. In all this time, we also studied and learned new things.^[4]

As someone who has always questioned about the importance of electives in MBBS, I genuinely enjoyed the sessions and managed to teach students some things that I learned so late. However, the real application of all these will happen, when the students start writing manuscripts without the fear of unknown and contribute to nation's research.^[5]

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Figure 1: Sessions conducted during the electives for research publication electives

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