

Academic Staff's View Points on the Implementation of Lesson Plan

Bazrafkan L, MSc¹; Shokrpour N, PhD²

¹ Faculty member, Educational Development Center, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences

² Associate professor, English Group, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences

Received: July 2005

Accepted: September 2005

Abstract

Background and purpose: Lesson plan is considered a vital component of the teacher training and successful teachers are in variably good planners and thinkers. The present study was conducted to survey the academic staff's views about lesson plan in Shiraz University of Medical Sciences in 2001. Moreover, considering the finding of the study there was an attempt to seek the experts' views on how to perform lesson plan practically through forming a focus group.

Methods: This is a descriptive study indicating the attitudes of 152 academic staff about lesson plan. The data were collected using a questionnaire. The findings of the first stage was followed by forming a focus group in the second stage. Ten authorities and experts in the field were selected. They were interviewed on how to perform lesson plans in Shiraz university of Medical Sciences in three sessions.. It was concluded that the main barrier for designing and performing the lesson plan is the academic staff's lack of awareness about its advantages.

Results: Of the population under the study, 30% were females and 70% males. The majority of the academic staff (126 individuals, 85.1%) believes that they need a lesson plan in their field and that the implementation of lesson plan contributes to the improvement of education. 70.9% (1.5) of them believe that lesson plan does not limit the educational process. Some of their coworkers (51.5%) consider lesson plan as necessary and are ready to cooperate in this way. 44.6% of them (42) state that designing a lesson plan somehow conforms to our country's educational system. The majority of them (75.8%) state that they know the "must learns" but believe that there is no sufficient education about lesson plan. The experts in the focus group presented their recommendations with regard to lesson plan as follows: 1- Continual education of the academic staff; 2- Compilations of logbook; 3- Application of those sections with lesson plan; 4- Compulsory regulations for using lesson in university.

Conclusion: The findings of this study reveal that the academic staffs have a positive view about lesson plan. However, their active participation in designing and implementing lesson plan requires educational programs to be compiled. This entails special managerial strategies.

Key words: LESSON PLAN, TEACHER TRAINING, MEDICAL EDUCATION.

Journal of Medical Education Fall 2005; 8(1);27-31

Introduction

Lesson plan is considered a vital component of the teacher's training in today's complex world;

Corresponding author: Mrs Leila Bazrafkanm, who has a master degree in medical education, is an instructor of Education Development Center of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences.
Shiraz Faculty of Medicine, Zand Street, Shiraz, Iran
Tel and Fax: +98 711 233 3064

everybody needs education and training. Scientific and academic activities are a large part of human's life today. it is no longer possible to look at the learner and his/her education as it was in the past.(1, 2) Therefore, education centers must base their programs and objectives on the community's needs and lead educational programs toward achievement of these goals and objectives . (3) The learners' learning ability

is limited. Knowledge and scientific information are expanding and it is known that learners cannot learn all that they are supposed to learn. Therefore, educators must study carefully what they are going to teach, and control and select them appropriately. As to the tendency toward improvement of effective learning through precise and systematic plans, it is proved that these are different approaches to presentation of educational courses to learners. A learning system can be designed in a way that it maximizes the learner's capacity and capability through defined aspects or that minimizes his/her capacities due to unexpected or unknown aspects. (4)

Due to the same reason, a survey of the academic staff's views can be of importance, aiming at improving the educational process and quality. One of the very important subjects in educational planning is preparation of lesson plan. In this study, there is an attempt to survey the attitudes of academic staff on lesson plan and its implementation in order to do something about this significant act.

Materials and Methods

This is descriptive and qualitative study and the population under the study consists of the academic staff of medical universities participating in educational planning, methodology and assessment workshops. The data were collected through a valid and reliable questionnaire. Questionnaire containing 20 questions the response to which was yes, no or somehow. Each questionnaire was sent to the academic staff together with a pamphlet containing information about the objective of the study, lesson plan and its advantages. A total of 149 academic staff of medical, nursing and midwifery, health, dentistry and paramedical sciences faculties filled the questionnaires.

To determine the face validity and content validity, some experts commented on them. In order to test the reliability, test-retest method was used. After the questionnaires were filled, the data were analyzed using SPSS statistical package. The Lecturers' views were collected

and discussed. The criterion for positive views was determined to be 70% and more. To compare the questions, Chi-square test was used. The findings of the first stage were followed by forming a focus group with criteria rating technique in the second stage. The second stage of study aimed to explore the connection between participants' beliefs about implementation of Lesson Plan through their representations, and what is actually realized in practice. sampling was purposeful and Ten authorities and experts in the field were selected. They were interviewed on how to perform lesson plans in Shiraz university of Medical Sciences in three sessions.

Results

Of 189 questionnaires which were sent to the academic staff, 152 were filled (response rate, 80%). Based on the findings of this study, many of the academic staff stated the necessity of lesson plan and considered it as an effective contribution to teaching process (planning, implementation, assessment). They also believed that they have facilities at hand in their departments in this regard. They believed that implementing lesson plan somehow is in the same line with our country's educational system and the large number of students prevent them from implementing it. They would like to familiarize the students with syllabuses and objectives. They state that they know the "must learns".

Due to focus group's view points it was concluded that the main barrier for designing and performing the lesson plan is the academic staff's lack of awareness about its advantages.

The majority of the study population believes that there is not enough education or training on lesson plan and they need the guidance of EDC in this regard. They are able to cooperate with university's lesson plan committee. Most of them admit that they are not using lesson plan at the moment. (Table 1)

Table 1: Frequency distribution and the percentage of the yes-no responses of faculty members

QUESTION	YES Frequency percentage	NO Frequency percentage	SOMEHOW Frequency percentage
1- Does your subject to be taught need a lesson plan?	126 85/1%	3 2%	19 12/8%
2- Does preparing a lesson plan help your teaching process (planning, performing and testing)?	105 70/9%	18 12/2%	25 16/9%
3- Do you like your colleagues and educational authorities known your lesson plan?	83 57/2%	15 10/3%	47 32/4%
4- Does your lesson plan limit your teaching process?	13 8/8%	75 50/7%	60 40/5%
5- Do you think the lesson plan prepared by you might be copied or used inappropriately?	30 21/3%	72 51/1%	39 27/7%
6- Does your educational group members cooperate with you in preparing the lesson plan?	54 38/8%	23 15/1%	62 44/6%
7- Do you think that a lecturer is morally obliged to teach all scientific and professional matters to the students?	100 68%	21 14/3%	26 17/7%
8- Do you think the large number of students will hinder the performance of the lesson plan?	73 49%	36 24/2%	40 26/8%
9- Do you like the students to be aware of the lesson plan (outlines and objectives)?	116 80%	10 6/9%	19 13/1%
10- Are you aware of the educational "must-learns" involved in the lesson plan?	78 52%	26 17/3%	46 30/7%
11- Do you like to have a close cooperation with lesson plan committee of your faculty?	63 42%	17 11/3%	70 46/7%
12- Do you need counseling services and cooperation of EDC in your University to prepare a lesson plan?	70 46/7%	18 12%	62 41/3%

Discussion

One of the most important duties of education development centers in universities is to familiarize the academic staff with principles of education and teaching,⁵ since they have not been instructed specifically as an instructor. (5) A study suggests that targeting preserves teachers' prior beliefs in instruction has a significant impact on their beliefs about learning and teaching. (6)

One of the basics emphasized in planning and methodology workshops is preparation of lesson plan. In case the instructors' lesson plan is compiled based on educational objectives and

aiming at certainty about the acquisition of specific skills. Therefore, instructors must answer the following ten questions in their lesson plans:

- 1- What are the community's requirements as to the trained product?
- 2- What are the educational objectives?
- 3- What are the contents?
- 4- How are the contents organized?
- 5- What are the educational strategies to be considered?
- 6- What is the teaching method?
- 7- How is assessment carried out?
- 8- How are the specific parts related together?

- 9- Where is an appropriate educational setting?
 10- How is this process managed?(7)

The results of this study indicate that the academic staff consider educational planning or education based on planning as an important act and agree with lesson plan and its advantage and effect on the process of education (94%). In another study conducted in the other medical universities, a positive attitude toward lesson plan was reported. (8, 9, 10,) In this study the researches and expert's focus group stated that the academic staff using lesson plan were satisfied with it and in spite of some difficulties in its performance, they considered it as beneficial.

According to the findings of this study, the academic staffs believe that although there are some facilities to implement lesson plan, the large number of students prevents them from performing it. The authors believe that this problem can be overcome by increasing educational facilities, conducting educational and research studies to arrange lesson plans appropriate to the educational system and slight modifications in the educational system. Medical instructors suffer a double burden in relation to their educational and research responsibilities. (6) Innovative programs necessitate devoting more time to education on the part of the instructors. On the other hand, there is a pressure in universities for promoting research. The academic staff must recognize the most important responsibilities put upon them by the university and in spite of the pressures; they must use the needs positively.

However, the results of this study indicate that there is no significant relationship between the credits given and the implementation of lesson plan. That is, even if credits are given to them, implementing lesson plans is not possible until requisites are provided. 38.5% of the academic staff participating in this study would like to receive a credit for using lesson plan and 26.6% of them would like to receive credits to some extent. In a study conducted in one of the medical universities in our country, the academic staff agreed with lesson plan and believed that the most important part of the lesson plan was behavioral objectives while teaching method, educational

aides and method of assessment were next in importance as in other studies (5,10)

Lack of follow-up and sufficient supervision about the continuity of programs are among the essential problems in university education. Most of the academic staff do not oblige themselves to continue the educational programs and projects, and usually do not use what they have learned in practice. Some of them consider such activities as a waste of time. Of course, determining educational objectives takes a long time, but if we have a look at training programs based on objectives in industry, commerce and army, we will see that instruction based on objectives leads to saving of time, reduction of errors after training and reduction of shortage of manpower.

Of course, it must be taken into account that the reason for not using the objectives in teaching is that the instructors have neither time nor tendency for determining their goals and also do not like to use the goal assigned to them by others. Sometimes this attitude is due to their fear of being assessed, fear of extra work load and their belief in freedom in their acts. Therefore, it is necessary for the teachers to know "must learns" first and be aware of the objectives and basics of an effective planning. In this study, 87 (52%) academic staff stated their awareness of "must learn". Of course, there is controversy about who should determine the "musts" in education. Some of them suggested that these "musts" should be determined by themselves. Also, some others believed that these "must" should be determined by the ministry.

Most of the academic staff would like to make the students aware of the syllabuses. It is great that the expert's group and academic staff believes in the important role of the students in education and can promote their relationship with the students as a means to promote education. In this regard, we recommend compiling a Log-book to the instructors in different departments. Logbook is considered as a necessity in educational programs. Unfortunately, in our present educational system, the students are not only unaware of the objectives and educational programs, but also they avoid questioning due to

the strict and inflexible relationship between them and their instructors. In spite of the positive attitude of the academic staff about lesson plan, they still think that instructions about lesson plan are not sufficient. Education development centers in universities offer courses on the stages and preparation of lesson plan for the academic staff as a part of their duties, but deficiencies in the performance of responsibilities of development centers and lack of follow up mechanisms and assessment of what the academic staff has been instructed are the problems revealed in this study.

The main problem is lack of sufficient instruction and support from those who cooperate in such programs. Teaching as a science and skill involves principles that must be taken into account and without learning the skill of teaching, it would be impossible to teach appropriately. The most important aspect in this process is determination of objectives and the appropriate method of teaching, recognition of requisite skills to reach the objectives and assessment of educational process, instructors, students and educational aids. In today's world, these subjects are of known scientific basis, so everybody is not expected to acquire all these skills and knowledge through experience and self-instruction.

Therefore, it is suggested that education development centers offer workshops on lesson plan actively and all the instructors be asked to participate in these workshops at least once. Moreover, all the academic staff must be asked to prepare lesson plans and use them in their education. Lesson plan committee is suggested to be made within education development centers. Instructors should take part in in-service educational courses in this regard. Holding seminars and workshops using national and international experts, finding the experts interested in education and using them as educators of education development centers are among the actions that must be taken. As stated by experts, attending the focus group, compiling a log book and forcing the academic staff to implement lesson plan lead to the promotion of medical education.

References

1. Fernandez C. Learning from Japanese approaches to professional development the case of lesson study. *J Teacher Educ* 2002;3:5-12
2. Bligh J, Curriculum design revisited. *Med Edu.* 1999; 33.
3. Soltani Arabshahi K. Assessment of the relationship between education objectives and testing. *Ghazvin University of Medical Sciences Journal*, 2002;3.
4. Fraser SW, Greenbalgh T, Coping with complexity: educating for capability. *BMJ* 2001; 323: 799- 803
5. Hannon FB, A national medical education needs assessment of interns and the development of an intern education and training program. *Med Educ* 2000 ; 34 : 275-84
6. Elana J, Gabriele AJ. Preserve teachers' prior beliefs: Transforming obstacles into opportunities. *Teaching Teacher Educ* February, 1998:175-191
7. Harden R: Ten questions to ask when planning a course or curriculum. *Med Edu.* 1986; 20: 356-365
8. Majidi S, Asadi L, Nemati MB. A survey of the academic staff's views on lesson plan and its implication. *Ghazvin University of Medical Sciences.* 2000;1:32-8
9. Amininik, S. A survey of the implementation of lesson plan in Bushehr University of Medical Sciences. Presented in the 4th national medical education conference in Bushehr, 2000.
10. Saberian M, Aghajani S, Ghorbani R. Medical faculty member's attitude on lesson planning, Semnan University of medical sciences. *J Med Edu* 2003; 2(2):