

Project-Based Learning as a Strategy to Stimulate Active Learning among Pharmacy Students

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INTRODUCTION

The ability of active learning is vital to future pharmacists, particularly when the field is advancing rapidly and they have to keep their professional knowledge up-to-date. The aim of this study is to examine the possible use of project-based learning as a strategy to stimulate active learning among pharmacy students.

METHODS

To stimulate active and mutual learning among pharmacy students, we have adopted the approach of project-based learning by putting miniprojects as part of the continuous assessment in a core course in the curriculum for the BSc degree in pharmacy at Shenzhen University. Students are requested to fully involve in different stages of the project development, from literature search to final presentation. The feedbacks and sharing from 12 randomly selected students have been collected and analyzed at the end of the course.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Over 80% of the students have mentioned that project-based learning improves their abilities to take initiative and responsibility, to solve problems, to build confidence, and to communicate ideas. Some students have also stated that they have underestimated their potential, but their involvement in the project as a team has helped them to recognize their capacities and has made their learning more rewarding. Although our observations made on project-based learning are confined to the context of pharmacy education, due to the similarities in the nature of different medical disciplines (ranging from pharmacy to medical laboratory sciences), we expect that our findings can be generalized to other streams of medical and health sciences education.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on our observations, project-based learning is an effective approach not only to stimulate students' active learning, but also to make their learning in health sciences more enjoyable.

