

Bridging an Integrated Course: Evaluation and Outcomes

At the University of Western Australia, students studying medicine enrol in a six year undergraduate course. In 2000, curriculum change saw the introduction of a new three year problem based learning (PBL) course, integrating material originally taught by four separate disciplines. Though enhancing student learning, these changes created problems for students transferring from other national and international universities. The issue of prior learning and granting of credits became complex.

The dilemma for us was how to recognise previous learning and enrol the students beyond the first year when they had not completed the integrated course. Credits could only be granted for discipline specific units. Equally difficult was how to enrol a student in year one, after he or she had been studying medicine for three years in a university overseas.

The solution was to permit students to enter medical school at a level that recognises most of their prior learning and provide them with a parallel bridging course to allow them to acquire the knowledge, skills and learning practices they did not possess.

In 2003, eight students from diverse countries and backgrounds and three different years of study completed the parallel bridging course. During this presentation we will discuss the reasons for the course, the challenges of development and implementation and its evaluation. Student outcomes and feedback will be included.

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Presenter: Sally Reagan
Senior Lecturer, Undergraduate Course Coordinator
The University of Western Australia
School of Population Health
Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry
35 Stirling Hwy
Crawley WA 6009
Tel: 9380-1224
Email: sally@sph.uwa.edu.au
Other presenter: Gina Arena