



## MONITORED SYNDICATE GROUP – AN APPEALING INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL

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**R**adiology is a dry subject and arousing interest in learners is a constant challenge to the teachers. The traditional learning considers students as passive receptors of information, without taking into consideration the necessity to enthusiastically participate in the learning process. The learning gain in such type of teaching does not provide long term recall of learned knowledge. The teachers struggle to teach them repeatedly to impart the knowledge. Thus there is a need to incorporate learner centered method of teaching-learning.

The Monitored syndicate group learning is a student centered learning so that the students develop a maximum capacity to adopt a deep approach to learning. It is a type of peer learning which involves small tutor-less group of 5 to 6 participants. All the group members have the same goal and work towards the achievement of a collective task. In this method, the students require to take up an esquiring, problem-solving approach to the task that has been set for them. There is high level of participation by the group members. This type of learning generates many opportunities for creative exchange of ideas and significant interactions occur among the participants. Syndicate group promote debate among syndicates wherein students work together, interact with learning materials,

relate ideas to everyday activities, and improve their understanding. During the actual working, the tutor is not present in that room and there is a nonthreatening environment. After finishing the task the group presents the findings or results to the teacher for feedback and further interaction.<sup>1</sup>

For teaching the skills of interpretation to final BDS students this method proves to be fruitful. One of the objectives of the final BDS clinical posting of second term is to develop the skills of step-by-step analytical interpretation of extra-oral radiographs, after completing the theory part on the given topic.<sup>2</sup> In the traditional method this task is accomplished by direct demonstrating the students about the interpretation process and writing the report. This is comparatively passive process of learning and lacks critical thinking and long time retention of the gained knowledge. In monitored syndicate group, the students are briefed about the task, the background information and useful resources are also given. At the same time they are often given freedom to structure the allocated time and group meetings in whatever way they choose to achieve the set task.<sup>3</sup> During the posting hours, the group of students are given the radiographs to carry out the interpretation in the demonstrated manner. In this method the students are left alone for stipulated time to develop



their own ways of approaching the task of interpretation of the given radiographs. Tutor is available nearby so that students can seek expert advice when they need it but the group is tutor-less. After finishing the task, the students present their work to the tutor/teacher. The tutor then gives the constructive feed back to them.

Syndicate groups share some characteristics of problem-based learning, and the students need to adopt an esquiring, problem-solving approach to collaboratively achieve the set task. However, the groups are focused on achieving a shared task rather than necessarily solving a problem. Syndicate group per se include all the steps involved in small group methods.<sup>4</sup>  
<sup>5</sup> The major challenges of the monitored

syndicate group learning are that as, lot of active conversation and debate take place during working, at times it can be a little chaotic activity. Further it is more time consuming activity than the conventional one.<sup>6</sup>

At graduation, a dental graduate has to display the competencies like knowledge, skills and attitudes. In clinical settings, to augment radiographic interpretation skills in final BDS students of Oral Radiology, it is valuable to introduce some innovative instructional methodology. Thus, for improving radiographic interpretation skills of Dental Undergraduates, “Monitored syndicate group” proves to be a promising tool.

### References

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