

**RECIPROCAL PEER TEACHING:
From Boring Lectures to Buzzing Groups - Was it worth it?
Preliminary Report**

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Background

- Lecture-based, didactic teaching was transformed into reciprocal peer teaching in small groups in a 5-week block, Health and Health Care, in Yr 5 of the University of Pretoria 6-yr MBChB programme.
- The class of 210 students was divided into eight groups.
- Each group became “experts” in one of eight themes under the guidance of a faculty facilitator:

1. Chronic diseases	5. Managed Care
2. Pain Management	6. Clinical Forensics
3. Palliative Care	7. Emergency Medicine
4. Mental health	8. AIDS, STIs & TB.

- Each group was sub-divided into 3 or 4 who taught a group of 26 peers.

Structure of the Block

Week 1	Orientation to the block Introduction to each theme by faculty facilitator (Two presentations per afternoon)
Weeks 2 & 3	Group preparation of lesson plan and teaching. Two scheduled contact sessions with faculty facilitator.
Weeks 4 & 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One theme presented per afternoon. • Group discussion of a case study • 10 question MCQ test.
Last day of week 5	Block Test (Computer based case studies with MCQ type questions.)

Resource material

Objectives and all study material were available to all students via WebCT at the start of the block.

Each student also received a block book setting out the time table & assessment methods.

Was it worthwhile?

1. This was assessed by considering feasibility, effectiveness and acceptability to students, facilitators and administrative support staff.

	Feasibility	Effectiveness	Acceptability
Students	Time allocated: Poor management of time was reported by some students	Marks: Same proportion passed as last year	Student feedback: Some positive but many hostile responses
Faculty	1. Inventory of Attitudes to	Analysis of facilitation of video-recordings of	Facilitator feedback:

Facilitators	Teaching 2. Planning meetings 3. Student Block Book	preparation and teaching sessions: Still awaited	Largely positive with some reservations
Administrative Support Staff.	Pre-block meeting to check preparations: Satisfactory	Feedback regarding on facilities and resources: Some venues were too small. The end of block computer test malfunctioned initially.	Support staff feedback Far more complex than previous years

2. **Feedback from External Educational Evaluator:** Still awaited

3. **Reflection by the innovators:** Worth it despite the pain.

Preliminary Conclusions:

1. **Logistically** far more complex than didactic lectures but preliminary findings indicate that it was **feasible**.
2. It was **acceptable** to all facilitators with some reservations.
3. It was **acceptable** to some students
4. It generated **many heated and hostile responses** and the overall rating of the block dropped from 5.2 to 2.7 on a 10 point scale.
5. **Effectiveness:** The same proportion of student passed this year as in the previous year.
6. Multi-faceted evaluation provides specific data on which to base change.