

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

**David Cameron, Julia Blitz, Glynis Pickworth, Marietjie van Rooyen, Anne-Marie Bergh  
University of Pretoria**

**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"> <li>• One theme presented per afternoon.</li> <li>• Group discussion of a case study</li> <li>• 10 question MCQ test.</li> </ul>
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	<b>Time allocated:</b> Poor management of time was reported by some students	<b>Marks:</b> Same proportion passed as last year	<b>Student feedback:</b> Some positive but many hostile responses
Faculty	<b>1. Inventory of Attitudes to</b>	<b>Analysis of facilitation of video-recordings of</b>	<b>Facilitator feedback:</b>

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