

Medical Education

S-I-R approach to teach and learn Attitude, Ethics & Communication (AETCOM)

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ABSTRACT

AETCOM teaching and assessment have already become explicit part of MBBS curriculum in India. Obviously, medical faculties should now master effective appropriate teaching-learning methods for this domain also. Most fundamental teaching-learning methods are - Sensitization (S), followed by Immersion (I), which in turn is followed by Reflective writing (R). It can be remembered as S-I-R approach. Over and above, Immersion should be impactful and reflection should be effective, then and then, optimum learning outcome can be obtained. So, this is highly recommended.

Keywords: AETCOM, Immersion, Reflective writing, Sensitization

INTRODUCTION

As an important part of new MBBS curriculum, Attitude, Ethics & Communication (AETCOM) have been introduced in Indian of late.¹ The “Regulations on Graduate Medical Education (Amendment), 2019” mentions AETCOM which is now supposed to be taught and assessed like knowledge and skill domain. It’s certainly a welcome addition as physician’s interpersonal and communication skills have a significant impact on patient care which correlates with improved healthcare outcomes.² But this also necessitates faculties to master effective teaching-learning methods for AETCOM domain. This review article highlights S-I-R approach {that is Sensitization (S) followed by Immersion (I) which in turn is followed by Reflective writing (R)} for teaching AETCOM.

Understanding S-I-R approach to teach and learn AETCOM

To facilitate the implementation, AETCOM manual has been prepared by academic cell, NMC. AETCOM modules will be longitudinally taught across all the phases of MBBS.

The modules will automatically address 39 core and 15 non-core AETCOM competencies, which the students need to learn during their MBBS training. Conceptually, these modules, by and large, suggest following method to teach and learn AETCOM.

Theory part or Sensitization (S)

is conducted first. For example, if a faculty is teaching demonstration of empathy in patient’s encounter, then during sensitization part, meaning of empathy, apathy and sympathy, especially in relation to clinical practice, should be explained.



Immersion (I) or Experiential learning

Once theory part is done in sensitization, immersion should be done. For immersion, real or hypothetical

cases, role plays, oppressed theatres, problem-based learning (PBL), cinemeducation etc. can be used.

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Reflective writing (R)

Immersion should be followed by reflective writing. Here students should look back to the whole experience, analyze the learning holistically and should make the action plan (how to utilize this learning in future for benefit of patients). Model selected for Indian students to reflect upon has 3 headings - What happened, So what and What next.¹

Whole concept can be remembered by a mnemonic, S-I-R approach for AETCOM.

Recommendations and tips for effective implementation of S-I-R approach

Parts of the S-I-R approach	Recommendations and tips for effective implementation
Sensitization (S)	<p>Sensitization should effectively cover relevant theory part but at the same time, need to be brief enough, so that appropriate time for immersion can be allowed.</p> <p>Both large group (LGT) and small group (SGT) teaching learning methods are effective for sensitization. Although LGT can be selected for better feasibility.</p>
Immersion (I)	<p>Immersion actually requires lot of preparation in order to create and deliver strong experiential learning. Immersion should provoke thoughts and initiate changes in student's mind.</p> <p>Most likely, this part will acquire major part of AETCOM session. If sensitization continues too long, AETCOM learning may be adversely affected.</p>
Reflective writing (R)	<p>Students require time and opportunity for reflective writing, which should be provided.</p> <p>During initial years, guiding students for reflective writing should be considered.</p> <p>Reflective writing includes analysis and application of</p>

	<p>learning as well as expression of emotions, which may not be easy for students from the word go.</p> <p>Reflective writing can be used as a hybrid tool also, both for teaching-learning as well as for formative assessment.^{3,4}</p>
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Conclusion

S-I-R approach is fundamental for teaching-learning AETCOM. Brief sensitization, strong immersion and effective reflective writing are needed for optimum outcome.

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