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Subject: Final Journal Entry

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Radiographic Practice IV (2011) had a new and completely contrasting teaching strategy in comparison to all my previous years in tertiary education, as a diploma student. It took me some time to adapt and transform from the conventional lecture-to-student approach to a modern approach that allows a greater sense of responsibility and "power" onto the student. This would ultimately mean more work for students. The lecturer had now become the facilitator. I was extremely sceptical about whether this teaching strategy would be effective at B-Tech level, but only time will tell. I initially thought that it was a bold decision by Mrs Sunder to introduce this strategy to my B-Tech class, especially to many students (older) who were so used to the lecture-to-student approach. I think that younger students (like me) who attended DUT during diploma level were vividly exposed to this modern teaching strategy.

After perusing through the scheme of work at the commencement of this module, I noticed that a lot of emphasis (the entire course) was placed on MSCT. I have no doubt that this superb technology with its amazing advances (as we learnt throughout the year) plays a massive role in the radiography profession. It could even have the potential of becoming the future of radiology. However, I deemed it a bit "unfair" that other diagnostic imaging modalities like MRI, which also currently plays a huge role in radiology, was hardly touched on as the year progressed. Discussions pertaining to modalities like MRI did prevail in assignments but only through comparison and often conveyed how MSCT outweighs or is the better choice than MRI. I felt, this created biased discussions that sort of made student's feel they needed to state CT is generally superior to MRI which should not be the angle we are educated in.

From the acceptance of my application, the radiography department made it clear that all students need to be employed in a radiology department that utilizes a CT scanner. I was fortunate enough to be allowed the opportunity to study B-Tech after the presentation of a note from a radiology department that was willing to accommodate me (in my own time) as the hospital I was employed in did not possess a CT scanner. Inkosi Albert Luthuli Central Hospital (the CT department in specific) must be immensely thanked after they allowed me the opportunity to practice on their state of the art MSCT equipment without any hesitation. They must be commended.

I strongly feel that by DUT stipulating this requirement to study B-Tech; many individuals are being discouraged from applying for B-Tech, which is absolutely not the statement DUT Department of Radiography should be supporting. For instance, a radiographer from a rural hospital (with no CT in department or nearby hospitals) wanting to continue professional development or gain higher qualification in his/her profession in the form B-Tech radiography will be at a major disadvantage in being a potential candidate as he or she do not possess a CT scanner in his/her department. The radiography department at DUT should address this issue and develop fair selections regarding this so that "all" radiographers are have an equal chance of being successful in their application.

The online classroom was a great new concept, strongly supported and introduced by Mrs. Sunder. I was extremely excited after initially playing around with it and creating a profile. It was a really cool, catchy innovation that is well suited for the youth of today (once again I am unsure of how the older students coped and whether it appealed to them as much as it did to us). I think education is slowly moving towards this type of interface however a substantial cost factor is associated with the computers that are needed.

However, the online classroom is perfectly suited for part time studies such as B-Tech Radiography where students only meet once a month for lecturers. You can be a part of the classroom at any part of the day, or night, by simply logging in which is well suited for radiographers who often work "odd" hours. Learning is thus not restricted to certain hours of the day or month and is at the touch of a button. Facilitators or tutors can often be found online during the day and often at night - allowing the learner ample time to ask any questions or advice. The support of other learners online also helps. The blogs are great ways that force learners to think deeper especially after reading opinions and information from other learners.

Journal entries are something that has grown on me as the year progressed. At first I making an entry was lame and girly but as time progressed I realised its importance. It allows students to open up to facilitators, and its purpose is not a griping session. Facilitators have a better understanding of student needs. More importantly however, it allows students to critically think and analyse views, concepts and ideas. It slowly takes away the previous lazy way of thinking that is instilled in older qualified radiographers. I am confident that this style of thinking will have positive bearing on the profession of radiography. Journaling is not a lot of work and should be regularly completed to ensure its purpose.

I do feel however, there is room for improvement on blackboard regarding its interface. Inventors can work on it to make it more user friendly and appealing to all users without removing its core function explained above.

My course facilitator was superb throughout the year. She is perfectly suited for education. She is very understanding, and feels for students. She realises that she too was once a student and knows exactly what we experience. Not many lecturers have this level of understanding and approach which is a major shortfall. Mrs Sunder was forever approachable and could be so easily reached. This is one of the greatest advantages this year. Students were at the liberty of using telephone calls, e-mails, smses, social networks, online classroom in order to reach Mrs. Sunder. What amazed me were her prompt responses, which is vital at B-Tech level when you need to know an answer quickly so you can move on.

All in all Radiography Practice IV was great. A good lecturer introduced new concepts to us and a new teaching strategy. It worked well but as mentioned in previous journal entries, there are certain times when a good old fashion lecture provides greater value to learners than this strategy. The online classroom is a perfect innovation for the modern day learner and certainly looks to be the direction education for all professions are heading. We were fortunate enough to experience at a fairly early stage.

Comments

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