Empowering Educators Using the Innovative Five Tips Approach

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ABSTRACT

In the era of information bombardment, it is essential to adopt the ability to acquire new information and apply it in the respective context. Healthcare professionals continually face evolving challenges and advancements in their field. Traditional training methods often involve extensive theoretical content, which can be overwhelming and less practical. There is a growing need for concise, actionable guidance that can be easily implemented in daily practice to enhance skills and achieve professional goals. The Department of Educational Development, Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, Pakistan, developed the innovative five tips approach, comprising a series of brief, grounded, and helpful pointers on various topics in health professions education. The aim of developing these creative tips is to familiarise educators with diverse topics, thereby enhancing their knowledge and skills and supporting their professional development.

Key Words: *Educational material, Practical, Five tips, Brief.*

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Educational materials can be defined as didactically adapted materials used by educators during the teaching process. For students acquiring or revising their knowledge, these materials are learning resources.[1] They must be prepared in a way that supports both the teacher's effective planning and execution of the teaching process as well as the students' autonomous learning, which includes the acquisition, modification, reflection, and application of knowledge.[2]

Present-day healthcare professionals play a vital role in multidisciplinary healthcare settings involving diverse professions and disciplines. For this reason, they need to consistently update their knowledge and skills to address the challenges of the evolving healthcare environment.[3] In the era of information bombardment, it is essential to adopt the ability to acquire new information and apply it in the respective context. Besides training undergraduate and postgraduate learners, health professions educators are also facing obstacles in providing ongoing training to healthcare professionals to help them further upgrade themselves.

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Healthcare professionals continually face evolving challenges and advancements in their field. Traditional training methods often involve extensive theoretical content, which can be overwhelming and less practical. There is a growing need for concise, actionable guidance that can be easily implemented in daily practice to enhance skills and achieve professional goals.[4,5]

Through academic programmes, courses, and other faculty development activities, the Department of Educational Development (DED) at Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, Pakistan, aims to accomplish this by exposing philosophical underpinnings and fostering quality in undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate education. Innovative curricula, technology-enhanced learning, quality assessment, and a supportive learning environment are all promoted by the DED. Through quality assurance and regular evaluation, DED takes pride in fostering the ongoing improvement of educational programmes and systems. It also carries out, promotes, and disseminates health professions education (HPE) research. The DED has also contributed significantly to the creation of the Centre for Innovation in Medical Education (CIME), student assistance systems, and learning resources (such as standardised patient banks and image libraries).

The DED developed the innovative five tips approach, comprising a series of brief, grounded, and helpful pointers on various topics that can take place in different settings of HPE.

The main focus of developing these creative tips is to enable educators to become familiar with diverse topics, thereby enhancing their knowledge and skills and supporting their continuous professional growth (Table I).

Table I: List of the implemented and disseminated five tips.

Topics
Domain: Teaching and learning/curriculum
Teaching in an outpatient clinical setting
Conducting lectures for effective learning
Engaging learners through a flipped classroom
Developing effective session plans
Effective facilitation of problem-based learning
Effective feedback for learners
Conducting effective workshops
Inter-professional education (IPE): the key to collaborative practices in HPE
Assessment
Fit for purpose assessment
One of the best answers to MCQ (Multiple Choice Questions)
Developing extended matching questions (EMQs)
Developing valid OSCE stations
Writing an effective short answer question (SAQ)
Structured viva voce examination
COVID-related
Practicing and coping with social distancing
A little appreciation goes a long way.
Keep the spirit alive.
Work from home and stay productive
Stress management for the superheroes
Transitioning to e-learning during social distancing
Simulate clinical experience using virtual patients

In the fast-paced world of HPE, every educator needs to stay knowledgeable and skilled. Hence, busy faculty members can keep up with new medical advances by focusing on practical, concise information instead of dense theory. This guidance had to be clear, focused, and actionable. The DED at Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, Pakistan, aimed to address this challenge. The solution was to provide five key strategies on critical topics, carefully selected to make a meaningful impact on day-to-day practice. By delivering only what was needed–no more, no less–the DED's five tips series became a powerful tool for healthcare professionals striving to improve their skills efficiently.

The second step in developing the five tips approach was to identify core challenges faced by educators and learners. Through group discussions and faculty input, specific areas were highlighted where educators struggled to engage students and learners faced obstacles, such as effective communication, time management in clinical teaching, and interdisciplinary collaboration. These insights helped the team design concise, actionable tips to address pressing needs in healthcare education. Once the list was ready, educational experts in the relevant subject area were consulted. Each topic was assigned to a team of 2-3 health professions experts. Each team engaged independently to develop a draft version of the five tips for their assigned topic. After finishing the draft, it was reviewed, and suggestions for improvement were given. This was a collaborative activity with the committee and team members. The final five tips for each topic were developed in an iterative process to ensure that they were evidence-based, practical, and suitable for use in educational contexts.

As soon as the five tips were finalised, they were uploaded to the website to guarantee online accessibility. They were then distributed to every relevant department across Aga Khan University network and the HPE community. This extensive distribution ensured that the tips were seen by a large number of people, greatly increasing awareness and benefiting many educators within and outside the organisation. Various five tips have already been implemented successfully across several domains, as shown in Table I.

Some of the key benefits of this initiative are that by condensing material into targeted pieces, the method provides instructors and students with clear-cut, practical insights. The five tips approach ensured coherence across different educational contexts. Teachers can maintain a consistent approach to teaching, evaluation, and curriculum design by offering clear, succinct, and structured learning resources. These five creative tips have been developed to be adapted to all educational settings due to their built-in expandability. Teachers can easily adjust, modify, or even change them according to learners' level and the requirements of both students and teachers. These tips are used to standardise all the educational activities for the classroom. This approach is more effectively used in large programmes involving educators at various levels. Data-driven evidence highlights that directed, targeted, and structured delivery of substantial information increases the chances of retention of new information and skills. This form of learning is more likely to be retained by students, and they can further apply these tips in their own educational setting.

Considering the above benefits, the team plans to increase the scalability of these tips by including the latest trends, such as artificial intelligence, technology-driven teaching, gamification, and more. The authors also aim to develop these concise tips in the form of instructional videos to serve educators who prefer audiovisual learning aids.

COMPETING INTEREST:
The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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SS: Made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the study and to the acquisition, analysis, and interpretation of data.
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