

www.tasteofmedicine.com

Virtually There – information and support to aid transition into higher education study

Learning objectives covered in the following session:

- Students will gain knowledge about different ways of learning and will reflect on their own preferred ways of learning. Students will be encouraged to assess their own strengths and weaknesses objectively and to develop their sense of self-awareness.
- Students will be encouraged to utilize what they have learnt to improve their learning and study skills for the future. This involves planning, implementing and monitoring strategies for improvement and setting targets and goals.
- Students will learn about teaching and learning methods in higher education and gain an insight into the academic demands of university. They will be encouraged to plan and prepare for this transition by undertaking independent activities.
- Students will work as a member of a team and will be encouraged to discuss and debate with others before reaching an agreed outcome. This involves evaluating the contribution and viewpoints of others, collaboration, and utilizing listening and negotiation skills.

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Resources required: Computer with a projector and large screen or interactive whiteboard set up with internet access. Note: To view the website the following software and updates are required:

- Adobe Flash Player Version 8 or above
- Adobe Acrobat Reader to open documents in PDF format

Session Objectives:

- Introduce the tasteofmedicine.com website
- Gain information on higher education teaching and learning methods
- Students to use knowledge of learning styles to identify their own preferred methods and consider how they can develop or adapt these for best use
- Prepare students for the academic demands of higher education
- Give students informative support and guidance for transition to higher education
- Students to gain an insight into new ways of learning, for example virtual patients

Virtually There structure:

Virtually There opens with a welcome page. Beyond this the site is broken down into five different areas:

- *How Do I Learn?* introduces students to the concept of different learning styles. The difference between deep and superficial learning is discussed, and tips are provided on how to study and learn effectively.
- *Understanding your Timetable* provides information on learning and teaching environments and methods in higher education for example lectures, assessment and practical study.

- *What's Higher in Higher Education?* is an interactive exploration of various elements or skills within higher education. Some sections include activities (critical thinking, note taking, presentations, report writing, self reflection) with the remainder (referencing and essays) comprising text and video.
- *Virtual Patients* is a discussion and exploration of interactive learning tools used in medicine and healthcare courses, with the opportunity to try online patient cases yourself.
- *Sum It Up* is the summary page of the website which contains hints and tips from current university students on how to make the most of university life.

Lesson Plan (60 mins total)

Introduction (5 mins)

We would recommend starting this session by introducing the tasteofmedicine.com website, in particular the *Virtually There* section, and briefly explaining why students might find this site useful. Here are some key points which you may wish to cover:

- Teaching and learning methods in higher education can differ in many ways to those used in school or college
- *Virtually There* is designed to introduce and give information on university teaching and learning methods and offer support for the transition into higher education
- The site also contains top tips and hints from current students and professionals regarding both academic and general aspects of university life
- The *Virtually There* site is just one part of the tasteofmedicine.com website produced by St George's, University of London
- Students will gain most value from the site by working through it in pairs or small groups although individuals can also use the site, which is freely available to all through any internet enabled computer.

Main lesson (45 mins)

It is unlikely that classes would be able to explore all areas of *Virtually There* in a single lesson, so we would recommend focusing on a couple of areas in depth and covering the site in two or more lessons. We would suggest the following combinations, both of which include an interactive activity-based element:

Understanding your Timetable + *Virtual Patients* – this combination introduces higher education learning and teaching methods and gives students an opportunity to try out one of these methods for themselves. This may be most useful for students interested in pursuing medicine or healthcare at university level.

How Do I Learn? + What's Higher in Higher Education? – this combination focuses on how to learn and study effectively and introduces students to elements of higher education study such as critical thinking and note taking. The generalized focus means that this combination is ideal for all students intending to go on to higher education, regardless of their area of study.

Option 1 - Understanding your Timetable + Virtual Patients

1) (20 mins) Work through *Understanding your Timetable* with the class, watching the videos and reading the text about the different elements. *Note: the PBL and CBL element will be useful for the following work with *Virtual Patients*.* Before exploring an element, it may be useful to ask the students if they have heard of this teaching method before (more likely with some than others), and if so what they know about this and what their views on this are i.e. does it sound appealing? How do they think it will work in practice?

The text and video may challenge their preconceptions or assumptions. After viewing, ask the class what their thoughts are now – have they changed? Has this information raised any new questions or concerns? Encourage students to contact us at tasteofmedicine@sgul.ac.uk with any queries.

2) (20 mins) Move onto *Virtual Patients*, watching the introductory video first to give context. Choose a virtual patient case and work through it with the class. At each decision point, ask the class for their opinions and take a vote as to which pathway should be followed. It may be best to use one of the shorter cases – Jake or Marcus – when working with a larger class. This allows more time for discussion and debate. It should be noted that the time taken to work through a patient case varies depending on the pathways chosen. At the end of the virtual patient session it may be useful to facilitate feedback: what benefits are there to this learning method?

Note: If IT resources allow, an alternative option would be for students to work in small groups of 4-6 on virtual patient cases (one group to a computer). This small group work is more reflective of how university students work with virtual patients.

3) (5 mins) If there is enough time, end the session by moving to the *Sum It Up* section and watch the video hints and tips. Students can also benefit by watching this in their own time.

Option 2 - How Do I Learn? + What's Higher in Higher Education?

1) (15-20 mins) Start with *How Do I Learn?* and watch the Learning Styles video. Afterwards ask the students to consider their own working styles, and how best they work. Are there steps they could take to help themselves in certain environments? Then consider the top tips for effective study. Can the students come up with any more?

2) (20 mins) Move onto *What's Higher in Higher Education?* It may be that you are able to work through two or three areas in the allotted time, although students would benefit from working through the rest of their sections in their own time. You may wish to focus on the sections with activities (see site structure above). Activities can be worked through as a group. After completing each section ask the class to reflect on how important this element (e.g. note

taking) will be in their future study and to consider what they can do now to help prepare for this element of higher education study.

3) (5 mins) If there is enough time, end the session by moving to the *Sum It Up* section and watch the video hints and tips. Students can also benefit by watching this in their own time.

Closing (10 mins)

We would suggest starting with a whole group reflection including a discussion about what the students have learnt.

Here is a summary of what we intend this session to cover:

- An introduction to higher education teaching and learning methods, which can differ from those used in further education
- An introduction to different learning styles with a view to identifying personal preferences and the means to adapt these for best use
- Students to gain knowledge and insight into new ways of learning, for example virtual patients
- Although moving from school or college to university is a big transition, preparation and knowledge can ease this transition
- If students have any questions there is a 'contact us' section on the website – students should be encouraged to do this if they have any questions.
- **Very important:** Students can look at the site online anytime at **www.tasteofmedicine.com** and can work through the site on their own or with friends.