



Holistic activity: to motivate premedical students a self-directed action plan

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On September 1, 1946, the US Military Government in Republic of Korea introduced a 6-year medical curriculum, as recommended by the National Committee on Educational Planning. The reason for the 2-year premedical addition to the 4-year curriculum was due to the lack of collegiate students and the Japanese imperial college model was also a 6-year curriculum [1]. However, until 1994, few were interested in premedical education [2]. In the 2000s, a medical graduate school system was introduced in addition to medical schools, and in the 2010s, interests for premedical course began to grow as medical schools had a tendency to return to medical school [3].

It was noticeable that most of the students admitted to medical school were those with high grades in high school. However, with the increase in the number of students who waste time during premedical course, those without a goal and motivation, medical schools were challenged to have a good 2-year education. The most urgent task is to set students self-directed goals and coach them to achieve them.

Yonsei University Wonju College of Medicine has been running 'Holistic Activity' courses for premedical students since 2010. In the fall of 2009, students were very satisfied with the participation in the International Walking event held in Wonju on the weekend of mid-term exams. This led to the opening of the 'Holistic Activity,' a subject that can coach students to autonomously search for new activities and feel enjoyment and compensated simultaneously.

1. Character of 'Holistic Activity'

The class is only one credit for the first and second semesters, and the purpose of the subject is to grow oneself through various experiences in society. To get scores, students have to do something and submit a report about one of the followings.

- 1) Learning a life lesson by participating in various activities such as voluntary service, part-time jobs, etc.
- 2) Establishing something to spread the name of themselves and the school to the community, the Republic of Korea, and even the world.

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3) Trying to know the community (Wonju, Gangwon-do, Republic of Korea) and the World.

4) Advancing their character, maturing their personality and developing themselves as human beings.

Students have to show what they have learned, studied, and have developed rather than what they have done so that the assessor can understand it. Even if they did the same activity, their score may vary depending on the contents of the report.

2. Grades

1) Students must accumulate scores through their activity reports for two semesters: 120 or more, students get A+, less than 36, F is given.

2) The score varies depending on the contents of the report for volunteer work and students can usually get one point every 2 hours. For other activities in society, the contents of the report are more important. In general, at least 2 hours of activity is needed to get 1 point.

3) Receiving an assessment, such as a contest challenge, earns them more points when they win a prize. And they can get higher scores when it comes to public relations.

4) Getting to know the community has a larger score depending on the proximity of the area. The ones closer to the community gets higher scores than those of foreign origin.

5) Efforts to improve one's competency in a particular field may earn points, but those excel in the field do not receive points. The score of the reports depend on how well one's experience is described and how well a reader can sympathize with its content.

6) Score will be deducted for repetitive activities and reports must be handed in within 2 weeks of the activity. The deduction of points in a tardy report is due to distortion of memory while writing the report.

Since the scores can vary depending on the evaluator's supervision, many students complained about the method of scoring. By individually discussing and communicating with students' complaints about their dissatisfied scores, some scores were upgraded. With time the evaluator gains faith with the students and the number of complaints decreased drastically.

Receiving an F grade is penalized by not advancing to the next grade in medical school. Thus, every student should try their best to avoid an F by doing at least some of the six listed items above.

3. The results of the last 10 years

As Korean society changes, students' personalities and preferences have also changed a lot over the decade. Self-directed students have decreased than before. Overachievers, with A+ grade were initially more than 10%, but recently overachievers are just over 5% of the participants. In addition, more students are tardy with reports and has difficulty in writing reports. Some dissatisfied students complained "Why you don't trust us to open these subjects?" However, we can keep this course running because some students say it was worthwhile after it was over [4]. In particular, past disciples who took this course 10 years ago and work as doctors now, say either "Holistic activity is the most memorable subjects of my school days," or "The experience of doing 'something' at that time was very helped me a lot." Through these support we feel the value of this subject and get the power to keep up.

How to spend premedical course is a matter for students to decide. In medical schools, constant communication with students is essential. Hidden or regular curriculum for students to experience society and develop themselves should be provided.

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