
Multimed 2025; 29: e3153

Teaching support material

Proposal for a seminar as an Instructive Methodological Class in Psychiatry

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Proposal for a seminar as an Instructional Methodological Classroom in
Psychiatry

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SUMMARY

Introduction: The importance of methodological work in higher education demands continuous improvement by the respective faculty, hence the importance of the methodological class. The particular characteristics of the Psychiatry course in the 5th year of the Medical degree program can complicate its teaching.

Objectives: to design an instructive methodological class for the implementation of the Psychiatric Semiology seminar. The resolutions of the Ministry of Higher Education in force in Cuba related to these concepts were reviewed, as well as their practical application by some authors. The proposed seminar is a noteworthy innovation that guarantees the motivation and participation of the group of students, as well as a deeper understanding of the content. A seminar is proposed as an instructive methodological class in the



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Psychiatry course, incorporating problem-based learning with the use of simulated interviews to deepen the knowledge of semiology in the specialty.

Keywords: Methodological instruction class; Seminar; Psychiatry; Undergraduate teaching.

ABSTRACT

Introduction:the importance of methodological work in higher education requires continuous improvement by academic staff, which highlights the value of methodological classes. The particular characteristics of the Psychiatry subject in the 5th year of the Medicine program may complicate its teaching.

Objectives:to design an instructive methodological class for the implementation of the Psychiatric Semiology seminar. Resolutions from the Cuban Ministry of Higher Education related to these concepts were reviewed, along with their practical application by some authors. The seminar proposal is noteworthy for promoting student motivation and participation, as well as deeper content understanding. A seminar is proposed as an instructive methodological class in the Psychiatry subject, using problem-based learning and simulated interviews to deepen knowledge of semiology in the specialty.

Keywords:Instructive methodological class; Seminar; Psychiatry; Undergraduate teaching.

SUMMARY

Introduction: The importance of methodological work in higher education requires continuous improvement by the teaching staff, which highlights the value of the methodological classroom. The particular characteristics of the discipline of Psychiatry in the 5th year of the Medicine course may make it difficult to teach.

Goals: to develop an instructive methodological classroom for the realization of the Psychiatric Semiology seminar. Forum reviewed the current resolutions of the Ministry of Higher Education of Cuba related to these concepts, as well as their practical application



by some authors. The proposal of the seminar is a relevant novelty to guarantee the motivation and participation of students, as well as to deepen the contents. A seminar is proposed as an instructive methodological classroom in the discipline of Psychiatry, considering the problematizing teaching with the use of simulated interviews to deepen the knowledge of semiology in the specialty.

Key words: Instructional methodological classroom; Seminar; Psychiatry; Graduation message.

Received: 26/03/2025

Approved: 19/06/2025

Introduction

The preparation of teaching staff in universities demands a high level of scientific knowledge and pedagogical expertise. Methodological work is one of the most important ways to increase its efficiency, with different directions and specific forms of organization.

(1) According to the definition of the Cuban Ministry of Higher Education (MES), methodological work is the work carried out by those involved in the teaching and learning process, supported by didactics, to achieve optimal results by prioritizing their activity from instruction to fully satisfy the objectives formulated in the curricula. (2)

Meticulous methodological work guarantees the planning, organization, regulation, and control of the teaching and learning process. The teacher is primarily responsible for ensuring that the subject is taught with the required quality; for this, adequate pedagogical preparation is essential. (3)

Within the system of methodological work at different organizational levels of universities is the methodological class. Resolution No. 02/18, Regulations for Teaching and



Methodological Work in Higher Education, in its article 53, recognizes it as one of the ways to transmit didactic experiences and knowledge. Through demonstration, argumentation, and analysis, it aims to guide professors on methodological aspects that contribute to their preparation for carrying out the teaching and learning process. A methodological class can be demonstrative or instructional and must respond to the formulated methodological objectives. (4,5)

In the case of the instructional methodological class (CMI), according to the regulations, the guidance is carried out through argumentation and analysis of the aspects of the content that is the subject of the activity, and is carried out by the heads of each level of management or methodological collective, as well as by teachers with vast experience and high pedagogical mastery.

The CMI is intertwined with the other forms of methodological work and is conceived with a systems approach, from its planning to its execution, in accordance with the deficiencies detected through the advisory and control work carried out at the existing organizational levels, from which the priorities of said methodological work are determined in each course. Therefore, it plays an important role in proposing didactic solutions to such shortcomings. (6)

In the CMI, the methodological treatment explained should not be disconnected from the conceptual basis of the subject or scientific aspect being addressed. Therefore, the didactic problem under analysis is identified with the general term "methodological conceptual problem." This contains a didactic contradiction between the subject content and the optimal way to teach it within the teaching-learning process; that is, between the content and its methodological orientation, between what to teach and how to teach it to enhance learning. (7)

A CMI (Continuous Improvement Method) guides the delivery of lectures, seminars, practical classes, workshops, etc., to achieve greater effectiveness. It can also focus on improving the way a topic or a system of classes is taught, or on didactic components such

as objectives, skills knowledge systems, teaching methods, assessment, independent work, etc. Structurally, this type of class consists of three parts: introduction, development, and conclusions. (8)

One of the most widely used forms of teaching organization (FOE) is the seminar. According to the Regulations for Methodological Teaching Work of the MES, (9) its fundamental instructional objectives include that students consolidate, expand, deepen, discuss, integrate and generalize the oriented content; undertake the solution of problems through the use of the methods specific to the branch of knowledge and of scientific research, and also guarantee the logical ordering of the content and the skills in the use of the different sources of knowledge.

In this sense, the seminar encourages students to develop their oral expression through dialogue and debate, link theory with practice, and develop communicative skills that foster qualities such as firmness, depth, and solidity of initial positions, as well as respect for peers, among others. (10)

The specific format of the seminar depends on the professor's experience, the characteristics of the content and the students, and the conditions of the teaching environment, but it should always encourage active participation and provide feedback on its results. As has been pointed out, the seminar is not, as is often assumed, an activity designed solely to evaluate student learning; its main didactic function is oriented towards the deepening and systematization of content through debate, the exchange of opinions, and the exercise of heuristics in its broadest sense—all characteristics appropriate for the professor to make value judgments about the progress of their students. (11)

Today, university students approach learning differently; they think and process information differently, enjoy multitasking, and operate in a dynamic and fast-paced environment where change is constant. This demands that professors use active methodologies that help train new generations, prepared to successfully face the

challenges of modernity, which requires abandoning traditional teaching methods in favor of new learning strategies. (12)

The teaching-learning-assessment process (TLAP) should encourage students to discover for themselves, question when they disagree, seek new alternatives, review past achievements, and learn from them. University teaching methods for developing generic and specific competencies can employ approaches such as problem-based learning (PBL), small group teaching, the tutorial system, laboratory teaching, independent research with supervision, debate, case studies, projects, etc. (13)

Assessment should raise the quality of learning and increase student performance; therefore, teachers must select assessment techniques and instruments that contribute to ensuring the ongoing construction of such learning and provide feedback to both. In short, assessment is meaningful when it improves the educational process. (14)

After reviewing the MES resolutions related to the matter and some authors who have delved into it, the objective of this article is the execution of a seminar proposal as an instructive methodological class in the subject of Psychiatry.

Development

The expertise in developing typical modes of action for different professions involves creating skills and habits to solve essential problems that arise in the professional's field of action, in an active, independent, and creative manner. Achieving this requires substantial changes in the direction of the teaching-learning process. (15)

The subject of Psychiatry presents a challenge for fifth-year medical students, who are accustomed to obtaining syndromic and nosological approximations or conclusions through physical examination, interviews, and complementary tests, as is the case in most medical specialties. With the exception of what is learned in Psychology, students must confront, for the first time, the exploration of mental disorders through psychiatric



examinations. This involves learning and identifying new symptoms and signs, unfamiliar syndromes and entities, in a short time and solely through observation and interviews, exploring the patient's subjectivity through their own. In Medicine, many syndromes are common to various specialties; however, syndromes such as delusional, manic, or depressive disorders belong exclusively to the field of Psychiatry.

Propaedeutics is essential for understanding any specialty, and in Psychiatry, it presents varying degrees of difficulty for the student. Therefore, the first seminar of the course, Psychiatric Semiology, is of paramount importance because, in addition to being innovative, it lays the foundation for subsequent content. The authors believe it should be conducted as closely as possible to real-world medical practice, with symptom assessment and accurate syndromic diagnosis through a simulated psychiatric interview; thus, they propose the following methodological approach. (8) Its methodological objective is to instruct on the professor's role in utilizing the theoretical-practical link during the aforementioned seminar.

Career: Medicine

Year: 5th

Subject: Psychiatry

Topic II: Psychiatric Semiology

FOE: Seminar. Duration: 120 minutes

Basic Bibliography:

- González Menéndez R. and Sandoval Ferrer JE. Manual of Psychiatry. Editorial Ciencias Médicas, 2019.

Supplementary:

- Rodríguez Méndez O. Child and Adolescent Mental Health. Editorial Ciencias Médicas. Havana, 2006.

Title of the Methodological Class: Proposal for an instructive methodological class to take on the first seminar of the subject Psychiatry (Psychiatric Semiology).



I. Introduction to the CMI

a) Deficiencies identified: difficulties in understanding certain symptoms and syndromes, and consequently, deficiencies in their appropriation and identification. Often, concepts are reproduced without knowledge of how they should be explored, their usefulness, and practical application.

Among the causes that contribute to the problem are the incorrect application of the teaching of the clinical method - content and teaching method - and deficiencies in the pedagogical preparation of some teachers with short experience to assume the task with the required quality.

b) Conceptual and methodological problem in PCM: insufficient methodological treatment for understanding and exploring symptoms and signs, due to a didactic contradiction between concepts and the optimal way to explore and incorporate them. It is essential to integrate symptoms and syndromes to solve problems by linking theory and practice using the clinical method; the seminar format is ideal for this purpose, as it enhances learning and corrects the aforementioned didactic contradiction.

c) Importance of the treatment of the formulated PCM: the proposed seminar allows solving such contradiction by promoting problem-based learning, essential for the consolidation of the aforementioned contents and the subsequent development of the subject.

d) Objective of the CMI: to instruct the professors of Psychiatry on how to proceed in the first seminar and the use of problem situations, with the purpose of articulating and contextualizing the semiological contents in a simulated interview situation very close to reality.

e) Prior knowledge: after the introductory lecture, on-the-job training and individual study, it is necessary to delve deeper into the identification of symptoms and syndromes in Psychiatry.



f) Summary of the CMI: symptoms and syndromes in Psychiatry from a theoretical and practical point of view. Development of the seminar. Conclusions.

II. Development of the CMI

a) Location of the topic or content to be analyzed: In the Thematic Plan, psychiatric semiology has 21 hours. The seminar will delve deeper into the theoretical content for its better practical application.

b) Analysis, explanation, and justification of methodological solutions: This section addresses the difficulties and shortcomings students have observed in identifying symptoms and syndromes in Psychiatry. From a methodological perspective, problem-based learning allows for deeper exploration through case simulations. The following seminar format is proposed to the instructors.

During the introductory session, student attendance and punctuality should be monitored, and educational activities should be conducted, including a review of their demeanor, appearance, and proper use of the uniform. The importance of this preparatory work for the subsequent development of basic knowledge in the subject of Psychiatry should be emphasized. Its objectives will be to explore psychiatric symptoms and their identification during a simulated interview, and to arrive at a syndromic diagnosis.

The seminar guide and the instructor's plan for the activity are presented beforehand. The instructor has prepared a number of cards according to the size of the group. Half of the cards will have the word "psychiatrist" written on them, and the other half will have the word "patient" with an additional psychiatric syndrome written on them. These cards are placed face down on the desk so their contents are not visible, and each student is invited to choose one. The group is then divided in two according to roles: psychiatrists or patients. Next, the students are paired up as patients and psychiatrists, and the exercise begins.

The student acting as the psychiatrist conducts the interview, and the student acting as the patient must represent the group of symptoms corresponding to the syndrome



written on their card. The "psychiatrist," without access to the card, must name the symptoms they identified at the end of the interview and arrive at the syndromic diagnosis.

Each mock interview is conducted in the presence of the other students, who must remain completely silent throughout. The way questions are asked, symptoms are identified, and the syndromic approach is observed. Then, the name of the syndrome written on the card is revealed, and the students' accuracy in their respective roles is assessed. The rest of the group can then enrich the descriptions of symptoms or the way questions are asked (See examples in Table 1).

The teacher then provides feedback to each student and conducts an individual evaluation. This procedure is repeated with pairs of students until everyone has participated. If there is an odd number of students, the teacher can take on the role of the student who is left alone.

If the student playing the patient makes mistakes in representing the syndrome, and the student playing the psychiatrist correctly identifies the symptoms and syndrome as represented, the patient will receive the highest possible grade, but the patient will not.

The seminar, conducted in this way, allows students to be assessed practically, as they must demonstrate how they would apply what they have learned in a simulated situation similar to those they will later encounter in their medical roles. This type of approach helps students deepen and integrate the course's characteristic working methods through psychiatric interviews, enabling them to develop useful skills as they interact with real-world scenarios.

Table 1. Examples of possible student representations in the seminar

Card 1_ Patient. Schizophrenic Syndrome	Card 2_ Patient. Asthenic Syndrome
The student must portray a person with a marked disorganization of psychic functions. This is characterized by isolation, communication difficulties, hallucinations, delusional or autistic thinking, emotional blocking, disintegration, ideo-affective dissociation, ambivalence,	The student must represent a person who reflects easy exhaustion or tiredness, irritability leading to dysphoria and explosiveness, intolerance to noises, distractibility, hypomnesia of fixation and evocation, hyperesthesia, cenestopathies, associative clumsiness, phasic sleep,



abulia, and incomprehensible behavior.	sexual dysfunctions, and a tired face.
Card 3_ Patient. Characteropathic syndrome	Card_ 4 Patient. Manic Syndrome
The student must portray a person with a personality disorder characterized by stubbornness, methodicalness, scrupulousness, thrift, greed, and obstinateness. These individuals are often unaware of their condition; it is those around them who discover it through their behavior.	The student must represent a person with exaggerated joy, accelerated thinking, motor hyperactivity, increased vigilance, hypervigilant attention, hyperbulia, unproductive hyperkinesia, and increased needs.
Card 5. Patient. Depressive Syndrome	Card 6. Patient. Anxiety syndrome
The student must portray a person exhibiting sadness, decreased motor and verbal activity, hyperfocused attention, withdrawal, reduced interest and thought processes, hypobulia, insomnia, anorexia, social isolation, and diminished needs. They should be aware that this has two levels: a more superficial, neurotic level, and a deeper, psychotic level with more severe symptoms.	The student should portray a person with anxiety, neurovegetative symptoms, increased motor activity (small movements), mildly hypervigilant attention, somewhat diminished memory, racing thoughts, anticipation of unpleasant news, evening insomnia, and hyperbulia. Examples: Anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders.

c) Exchange with the audience: after the presentation of the proposal, it is necessary to encourage its discussion with the group of teachers, who should enrich the procedure and their suggestions will be used.

III. Conclusions of the methodological class

The methodological guidelines are reiterated in a concise and specific manner. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on how the proposed seminar is expected to contribute to solving the conceptual and methodological problem posed.

The authors have used this approach to the seminar with successive groups of fifth-year students, and the results have been very satisfactory. The innovative proposal is well-received by the students, as they find it engaging and it allows them to delve deeper into the practical application of the content. Moreover, it stimulates their imagination and creativity. For their part, the teachers find this positive feedback very rewarding.

Conclusions

The proposed seminar format is a useful tool for teaching Psychiatry to fifth-year medical students. Its structure and evaluation methods allow for the achievement of the proposed



objectives, foster creativity in both students and professors, and ensure better understanding and application of the content by future physicians.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Authorship contribution

Conceptualization, research, methodology and writing: Pablo Hernández Figaredo, Laureano García Gutiérrez.

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