‘The burden was less’: an integrated research and writing skills workshop delivered in the Philippines

Presented by
Dr Jo Lander, Assoc Prof Kirsty Foster and Dr Sean Seeho
Sydney Medical School
Research capacity building

- Research training skills – what is needed, how to teach
- Writing for publication: NESB researchers

- The Philippines:
  - Universities ‘at a critical stage in their efforts to enhance research and improve research training … interest, motivation and required competence’ (Calma 2010 p 223)

- English from primary school onwards
- Formal teaching of academic writing? Of research paper writing?
- Anecdotally: taught separately, theoretically, no application
- Self-identified need: research skills and research writing
- SSEAC grant – Research capacity workshop
The workshop

- To build research capacity by encouraging participants to undertake feasible research projects in a group
- To develop skills in research protocol writing
- To equip participants with skills to write a manuscript about their research for publication in a journal

- 3 days Feb-March 2016
- 2 @ clinical research and research teaching/ 1 @ academic writing
- Research capacity building based on extensive program in Vietnam
- Writing component piloted 2015
Principles

- Collaborative group experience emulating collaborative, interdisciplinary nature of research
- Practical application of skills, not theoretical
- Authentic: design feasible research project in group: professionally relevant problem
- Writing and research tightly integrated
Structure

- Research paper as framework
- Scaffolded cf genre teaching cycle
- Assumed IMRD structure, clinical or lab-based research
- CARS model, adapted
- Model: Patient safety in pediatric settings
- Detailed participant guide
## Structure: Topic #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic No</th>
<th>Research skills</th>
<th>RA writing</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Groupwork</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Brainstorm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying a researchable problem</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Brainstorm and come to consensus within group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Structure: Topics #2, 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RA overall structure</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Deconstruct model introduction. Collaboratively write introduction for group’s topic and share with larger group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Formulating the research question</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Research question formulated, shared. Added to introduction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Structure: Topics #4, 5, 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Research ethics</th>
<th>Methods section</th>
<th>✓ Case studies</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Research methods</th>
<th>Methods section</th>
<th>✓ Theory</th>
<th>Collaboratively write methods section for group’s topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Literature review</th>
<th>Introduction, discussion</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Topics #7- 10

- Writing a research protocol for the proposed study
- Results and discussion (unrelated data)
- Writing an abstract
- Alternative structures
- Peer review process
- The way forward
Evaluation

- Pre and post survey
- Focus groups
  - Thematic analysis
Integration, application, collaboration

- Research and writing ‘go hand in hand … [it is] closer to what we do rather than learning everything from introduction to recommendations and then write everything from there … the burden was less’

- ‘.. Practicality of activities, unlike the first one I attended which was all lectures … compelled me to practise the skills … it’s better to recall things if you get to apply it already’

- Integrated writing ‘novel … the fact we had to write … lends itself to cutting things out, saying it in simpler terms’
Collaborative group work: ‘it’s very helpful because teamwork is very important... work with people from other disciplines.’

‘... helps to minimise fear...’

Becoming more comfortable with group work over time: by day 3 ‘absolutely no fear of embarrassing yourself anymore’ presenting to the larger group.

‘.. I ... like also the experience of just watching and seeing how people analyse – that’s also a learning experience for me’
For improvement

- Include more on qualitative methods, so approach is balanced
- Need more time to process though danger of overthinking…
- 2 sessions, 1 before and 1 after data collection and analysis
- Writing in group environment difficult for a small number – argument for individual writing
- More on ethics
- Some examples too technical
- Notification before workshop to consider problem to research
- Sharing best practice re collaborative research
Questions?