SO, YOU WANNA BE A LECTURER?

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INTRODUCTION

When I was a dental student one dozen years ago, I used to think that being a dental lecturer is not difficult. You just come to the clinic, and check everybody’s work. When you are not satisfied with the clinical work, just tell the student to repeat the work. I am sure some of you who graduated some time ago from the one and only dental faculty back then would have experienced this occasion.

However, my perception was proven once I got a taste of this job. For those who are interested to know what a lecturer does, this is the article for you. Here, I would like to give a personal account relating to things happening when I become a lecturer. My experience though not incredible, can be considered different in that I have worked as a lecturer at two different higher learning institutions. Hence, this article will be divided into two parts. Part I will enumerate my experience as a pioneer lecturer at the Faculty of Dentistry of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Part II will enumerate my experience following my return to my alma matter. Please note that each experience is different, so I wish readers will not compare one dental faculty with the other.

I. EXPERIENCE AS A PIONEER LECTURER AT THE FACULTY OF DENTISTRY, UNIVERSITI KEBANGSAAN MALAYSIA.

I was fortunate to be a pioneer lecturer when this dental faculty was newly established way back in the middle of 1996. For the record, prior to 1996, there was only one dental faculty in Malaysia, namely the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Malaya. In line with the need to produce more dentists to serve the ever-growing population, the government of Malaysia in 1996 established a new dental faculty at the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. This dental faculty was located at the Kuala Lumpur branch campus at Jalan Raja Muda Abdul Aziz, next to Kuala Lumpur Hospital. Since then, USM has also set up a dental school while more recently, a private dental college is being set up in Kedah. The first intake in UKM comprised of 24 students. The good news is that a majority of these students have since graduated and may be reading this very article now.

Academic work

My appointment was as a lecturer at the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. However, due to shortage of staff, I was required to wear a few hats. I was given the task to