

LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE :HANDS-ON SOAP-MAKING SESSION AT MA'AHAD TAHFIZ ISMAIL PUNCAK ALAM (MTI) SCIENCE WEEK 2023



Experiential learning manifested through hands-on experiments and problem-solving activities, plays a pivotal role in elevating cognitive engagement and facilitating the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practical application. In the spirit of fostering a love for science and hands-on learning, the Faculty of Pharmacy Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) has been invited to Maahad Tahfiz Ismail (MTI) Puncak Alam in conjunction with the school's Science Week Programme held on the 30th of November 2023. The programme was officiated by MTI Deputy Principal of Academic, Associate Professor Dr Zaini Affandi, and attended by school top management; Deputy Principal of Hafazan, Syeikh Abdul Rahman Mohamed Amin Abdel Salam, director of the programme; Mdm. Khadijah Abdul Hamid, teachers, all students (Form 1 to Form 5) and delegates from Department of Pharmaceutics, Faculty of Pharmacy UiTM led by Mdm. Nor Zaleha Ishak; director of Soap-making Committee at Faculty of Pharmacy. This programme aimed to instil scientific knowledge and foster interest in science-related subjects as well as create a platform for interactive learning.

The programme then proceeded with an introductory lecture by Dr Khuriah Abdul Hamid on the saponification process, which helped students gained a deeper understanding of the science behind soap-making and its relevance to their science subject. There were 64 students involved in the practical session consisting of Form 3 to Form 5 students. Following the engaging lecture, students were grouped into three categories, each participating in activities designed to enhance their overall learning experience. In a unique and immersive approach, each group rotated through all three activities throughout the event.

The first activity involved the Rubik's Cube challenge, testing the students' prowess in problem-solving. This activity contributes significantly to enhancing educational value in visual-spatial intelligence which aids in the development of strategic thinking, memory retention, and logistical skills, fostering heightened concentration and persistent problem-solving abilities across all age groups. The second activity was conducted by Mr. Ahmad Assakir bin Ahmad Shukri who engaged the students in a Jeopardy group quiz that covers general knowledge, science, and English.

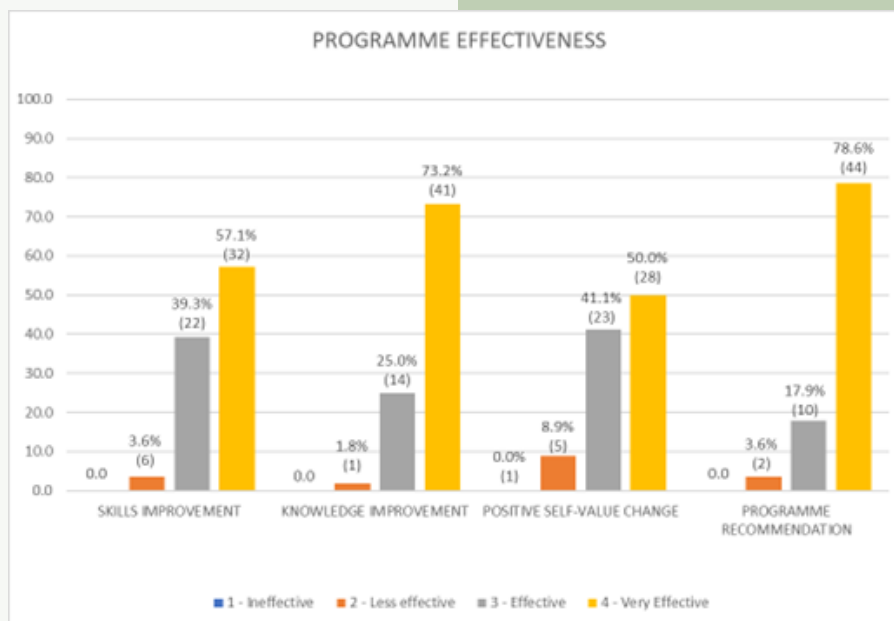
The purpose of the activity is not only to assess knowledge but also to infuse an element of fun into the learning process. The third activity was the highlight of the event, which was the hands-on soap-making practical session. It applied theoretical knowledge to real-world applications, which strengthened the students' understanding of the subject matter. The students experienced experimental skills such as using analytical balance to weigh the soap base, heating and stirring to homogenize the mixture of ingredients, adding the choice of colouring agent and fragrance to the soap mixture, and finally pouring the soap mixture into the soap mould. Then the students were taught to check the pH of the soap by using pH strip to ensure it is within the acceptable limit for skin use. All activities were skilfully managed by the members of the Department of Pharmaceutics, Faculty of Pharmacy UiTM, spearheaded by the programme director; Mdm. Nor Zaleha Ishak.

Overall, the programme was executed smoothly and achieved its objectives successfully, as evidenced by the positive feedback from the students. This initiative not only contributed to the academic development of the students but also sparked a passion for science that will undoubtedly continue to grow.

Furthermore, the programme helped bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life applications, thereby enhancing the students' overall learning experience.

Participants' feedback on the programme's impact (Figure 1) exhibits a highly positive outcome across various dimensions. A significant majority of participants acknowledged substantial benefits, with over half and nearly all of them expressing that the programme was effective (Effective - Very Effective) in improving their skills (95.4%), knowledge (98.2%), and positive change in self-value (91.1%), reflecting the programme's impact on personal development. Most compellingly, a vast majority of participants (78.6%) highly recommended the programme, highlighting its effectiveness and positive influence. This collective response underscores the program's success in delivering meaningful outcomes, resonating positively with participants in terms of skills improvement, knowledge enrichment, and personal value development.

We extend our gratitude to Ma'ahad Tahfiz Ismail Puncak Alam for inviting us to be part of this educational journey and to committee members of the Soap-making practical from Faculty of Pharmacy UiTM; Mdm. Nor Zaleha Ishak (director), Mdm. Nor Hidayah Mohamed Mobin (secretary), Mdm. Siti Hanim Mohd Noor (treasurer), Mr. Muhammad 'Izzuddin Zamery, Mr. Ahmad Assakir bin Ahmad Shukri, Mr. Muhammad Aliff Shahkirin Hamdan, Mr. Norzaharin Mohd Nor, Mr. Mohamad Fikrey Bin Ramli and Dr Khuriah Abdul Hamid for making the event a success.



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