

Evaluation of the Effects of Discussion Groups As Learning Method On The Test Performance Of Student Nurses

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Abstract. This study aimed at determining the effect of note taking in the test performance of student nurses conducted in two schools of nursing from Enugu and Ebonyi States of Nigeria. An experimental research design was used. 32 students in their second year were selected using random sampling from each of the schools that were also selected randomly from the two states. The schools were School of Nursing, University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Enugu and School of Nursing, Mater mesiricodea Hospital Afikpo, Ebonyi State. A training package on discussion group was constructed followed by an evaluation pre-test and post-test construction. The experiment was conducted in three steps of pre-test to both groups, execution of the teaching package to the experimental group only and then a post- test to both groups. The results show that there is no significant difference ($P < 0.05$) between the pre-test score of the group discussion and the control. (T-test = 0.048, and $P = 0.001$). The results also show that there is no significant difference is no significance ($P < 0.05$) in the performance of those who used discussion method and the control group ($t = 1.448$, $P = 0.001$). It was concluded that discussion group as a method of learning may help the student to recall learnt material but may not add to the student test performance. So, the student should lay emphasis on the study material rather than on discussion group as studying method.

Keywords: Discussion group, Learning method, Test performance, Student nurses.

INTRODUCTION

Learning is intelligent development of all the possibilities inherent in experience. The ability to acquire and utilize these experiences can be improved upon through different ways and anything that can improve learning can improve academic performance. (Dewey 2005).

Group discussion is a study habit in which the students organise reading buddies which allows them to rehearse or code the learning materials for more effective storage in the memory Eisner and Rohde 2001, Hebb 2006). This group discussion as a study method enables the student to present the ideas learnt sequentially. It favours efficient recall or retrieval especially over a long time. Learning as

the acquisition of disposition and behaviour potential which specifies what the learner is capable of doing. Though performance is not an absolute measure of learning, but one of the factors which influence performance (Seading 1996). According to Klein (2001), leaning is an experiential process resulting in a relative paramount change in behaviour that cannot be explained by temporary state, maturation or innate response tendency but refers to changes in one's behavioural repertoire. Group discussion method is a very helpful study style for some students. It is a round table tutorial class in which ideas, views and impressions are showed

Table1: T-test analysis of pre-test score of discussing group method and the control group.

| Variable | Group discussion | | | Control group | | | t | P |
|----------------|------------------|-----------|----------|---------------|-----------|--------|-------|-------|
| | N | \bar{X} | SD | N | \bar{X} | SD | | |
| Pre-test score | 32 | 56.7500 | 11.77751 | 32 | 55.3750 | 9.8139 | 10.45 | 0.001 |

Table 2: Multiple t-test comparison of student’s post-test score in group discussion method and control group.

| Variable | Group discussion | | | Control group | | | t | P |
|----------------|------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|-----------|---------|-------|-------|
| | N | \bar{X} | SD | N | \bar{X} | SD | | |
| Pre-test score | 32 | 60.7600 | 11.7775 | 32 | 59.6040 | 9.81359 | 1.448 | 0.001 |

among the groups. It creates avenue for collective problem solving within the group. Over the years, teachers, counsellors, and even parents used advising students to engage in group study as a way to improve their academic performance. This study aims at assessing the difference in academic performance of students exposed to group discussion study method and those of the control group.

METHODOLOGY

An experimental research design was used to compare the academic performance of the two groups that consist of note taking group, and the control group.

Two schools of Nursing were purposively selected and the school of Nursing Mater Mesirilodea Mater Mesiricodea Hospital Afikpo, Ebonyi State.

32 students were randomly selected from each 312 students from UNTH (University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital) and 165 students in Mater Mesiricodea hospital. The allocation of the schools into experimental groups was through balloting. 32 students from ESUTH (Enugu State University Teaching Hospital) were used as experimental group I (Note-taking).

32 students from Mater Mesiricodea Hospital served as control group. Permission were obtained from the school principals for their students to participate in the study. Each of the students gave their concert and willingly participated. The instrument for data collection was a fifth test questions constructed by the researchers on the personal and environmental hygiene. It comprised of multiple choice questions, fill in questions and true or false questions. The blue print questions served as pre-test and post-test instrument.

Training package was Note taking package and the note taking technique involved survey, question, read, reflect and review formula.

The reliability of the instrument was determined using a test-retest method from the result of pilot study conducted in school of Nursing in Abia State. The two scores were correlated using Pearson moment correlation that was found to be 0.745.

The experimental procedure was done in three steps:

Step I: This is the pre-treatment assessment (pre-test) of all, the subjects in the two groups from where pre-test scores were generated.

Step II: Execution of the teaching sessions to the – Note taking group only.

Step III: Post treatment assessment (post-test) involving all the subjects in the three groups from where post-test scores were derived after the experimental manipulations.

The data obtained were analyzed to determine the difference between the mean of pre-test and post-test scores of the experiment categories using the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The null hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance is: There is no significance in the academic performance of students who are exposed to note taking study method and those in the control group.

RESULTS

The result of t-test analysis of the pre-test score of the discussion group and control is shown on table 1. The results show that there is no significant difference (P<0.05) between the pre-test score of the group discussion and the control. (T-test 0.048, and P 0.001). This shows that the two groups were on the same footing before the experimental manipulation.

The multiple t-test comprising of students post-test score in group discussion method and control group is shown on table 2. The results show that there is no significant difference is no significance ($P < 0.05$) in the performance of those who used discussion method and the control group ($t = 1.448$, $P = 0.001$)

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis of the study which stated that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of the students exposed to group discussion study method and those in the control was rejected. This result is in line with Klein (2001), who stated that learning is an experimental process resulting in relative permanent change behaviour that cannot be explained by temporary state. That means that a temporary measure like group discussion be used alone to explain the academic performance of a student.

This result do not rule out that group discussion may help the student present the ideas learnt sequentially and favour recall of learnt material as highlighted by Seading (1996), yet it cannot be used alone to explain the student performance.

It can then be concluded that group discussion can be of help to the student but it is not a sole determinant of the student performance.

It can be recommended that teachers should apply all the principles needed for the teaching and learning to enhance the performance of their students.

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