



Students Viewpoint on Teaching Methods for Effective Learning

KEYWORDS

Digital aids, lecture, blackboard teaching, Group discussion, Seminars

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ABSTRACT *Introduction:* Didactic lectures which is considered to be the standard form of teaching is now being supplemented by various techniques. Students' views on the effectiveness of various strategies will help the teacher plan their lectures and make it more students friendly.

Aim: To evaluate the role of various teaching methods to increase the effectiveness of learning.

Materials and methods: A prepared questionnaire was randomly distributed to 220 Pre-final and Final semester students of SUT academy of medical sciences, Trivandrum, Kerala. They were asked to tick the preferred method of teaching.

Result: Analysis of data showed that 62% of students prefer both conventional blackboard teaching and digital aids. 70% view group discussions to be more interactive and helped in recall. 45% prefer charts and models for simplifying concepts.

Conclusion: Evolving new ways of delivering a lecture is an ongoing process and fellowships and training in medical education should be made mandatory to improve the effectiveness of teaching.

Introduction

Students joining a medical college are highly diverse as they come from different socio economic strata. A successful teacher should have in focus all these categories of students when preparing a lesson plan so that even the weakest student gains some information from the lecture (1). A well-organized lecture remains one of the most effective ways to integrate and organize information from multiple sources on complex topics (2) and to convey large volumes of information to a wide audience. But for a student to perceive, process, recall and learn whatever is told and to motivate them for further reading information must reach them through visual, hearing, reading, writing and kinesthetic senses (3). In this study our aim was to compare the various conventional teaching methodologies like black board teaching, explanation using charts, functional models, use of digital aids like power point presentations and over head projectors along with student interactive sessions like group discussions and seminars.

Materials and method

A cross sectional study was conducted on pre-final and final year students of SUT Academy of Medical Sciences, Trivandrum, Kerala. Students were doing their clinical postings and had lectures in afternoon. Sample size of 220 was taken and questionnaires distributed randomly. Completed forms of 200 students were taken for analysis. The questionnaire was prepared (Annexure) taking into consideration important attributes of a good lecture. The sample had 63% girls and 37% boys. The students were instructed to pick the option to each question which they felt was most appropriate. They were also encouraged to furnish their independent and unbiased opinion regarding certain other aspects of teaching methods, suggestions for improvement and any other write their remarks at the end of the questionnaire. No personal information was asked. Further, the students were discouraged to put in writing any individualized comment about the faculty members or their

way of teaching. The data was used to compare students' preference for conventional methods of teaching and other electronic teaching aids. They were asked to state the preferred method which involves students like group discussions and seminars. The number of students who preferred each mode of teaching was divided by the total number of responses to determine the percentage of students in each category. Data was entered in excel and average was calculated using filter analysis.

Results

The results show that 32% students felt that lectures using blackboard made a class very lively (Table 1) and helped in better understanding (24%). But effective recall (41%) and continuity of topic (55%) was good with digital aids. Students prefer power point presentations for understanding concepts (46%) supplemented with didactic lectures (24%).

Table 1

Attributes	Teaching Method for Effective Learning					
	Conventional		Digital		Interactive	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Lively	65	32%	60	30%	77	38%
Notes	55	28%	135	68%	9	5%
Continuity of topic	54	27%	110	55%	37	18%
good diagrams	79	40%	92	46%	29	15%
Under-standing	49	24%	92	46%	61	30%
Recall	51	26%	82	41%	67	34%
Interactive	41	23%	58	33%	79	44%

Digital aids were good for notes taking (68%) and student interactive sessions was least preferred for notes taking (5%). A comparison of various aspects (Figure1) of lecture with teaching methods shows 80% prefer power point for continuity of topic and 70% for notes taking. Only 20% preferred OHP as an aid which helps in recall. 70% students found group discussions and seminars to be highly interactive (Fig 2) Models and charts were preferred to understand diagrams (40%). 25% felt the class to be lively when models and charts were used. Student involvement in teaching and learning in the form of group discussions, seminars and buzz sessions was preferred and 40% found it to be lively and 35% felt it helped in recall. Participation of students in a lecture and later recall are excellent ways of learning. Students' suggestion was to have topics in advance and questions to be asked before start of a class.

Fig 1 – Comparison of black board with digital aids

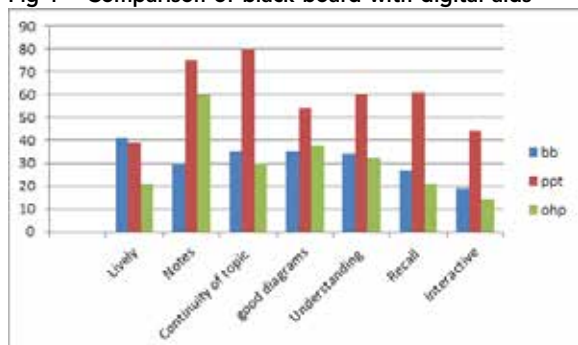
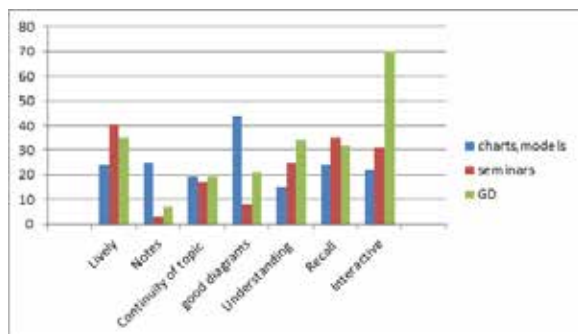


Fig 2- Comparison of Charts, Functional models with Group discussions and Seminar



Discussion

Medical college teachers are asked to perform academic duties for which no formal training is imparted. Various strategies to improve teaching and provide academic excellence has been followed in the past decade (4). An evaluation made by students can provide the teacher with useful feedback. The bias seen in students' evaluation on teachers effectiveness has proved to be negligible (5). In our study preference for digital audiovisual aids to blackboard can be due to the various color schemes and video recordings that were used to make a lecture very interesting. Also recall of topics is easier because of involvement of vision and hearing. OHP was least preferred and this can be either due to faulty instrument or not using it correctly. Font size and lot of information in one slide are disadvantages in both power point presentations and OHPs. Continuity of notes was good in lectures using AV aids than with a blackboard. Notes taking is another tool students prefer as it helps in recall. Recall helps in reinforcement. Conventional teaching aids like Black board, charts and models were preferred for notes taking as it gives stu-

dents sufficient time to understand and take down notes (6). The interaction between students and teacher was much better in sessions like group discussions and seminars. The encouragement among students for group discussions, seminars and buzz sessions show that present generation expect their teachers to guide them for self learning. Questions asked before start of each class motivated them to be prepared and helped them to clarify difficult concepts. Pretest was also a suggestion given by students to mentally prepare them for each lecture.

Conclusion:

Teachers' roles in teaching and learning has become one of the most important domains of research during the past three decades (7). Some effective techniques are underutilized—many teachers do not learn about them, and hence many students do not use them, despite evidence suggesting that the techniques could benefit student with little added effort (8). Also, techniques that are popular and often used are relatively ineffective. Effective teaching techniques are now a requirement for doctors, as highlighted by the General Medical council (9) and can be learnt and perfected like any other medical skill. Taking into consideration students opinion on different strategies of teaching and including them in the lesson plan will go a long way in mentoring medical students to graduate into qualified professionals.

Annexure

Dear Student,
Please give honest opinion on the teaching style you prefer.

Do not write your name or mention any teacher.

Suggestions are welcome.

QUESTIONNAIRE

S.No	Opinion of student	Conventional (lectures, chart, mod-els)	Digital aids (power-point, OHP)	Interactive sessions (GD, seminars)
1	lively			
2	Notes taking			
3	Continuity of topic			
4	Diagrams			
5	Under-standing			
6	Recall			
7	Interactive			

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