

## A Study on Student Perspective on Seminar and Group Discussion as Teaching Methods



### Pharmacology

**KEYWORDS :** Group Discussion  
Questionnaire, Seminar, Teaching methods.

**Dr.A.Meena kumari**

Department of Pharmacology, Guntur Medical College, Kannavari thota 4th lane, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India

**Dr.M.Usha Rani**

Department of Pharmacology, Guntur Medical College, Kannavari thota 4th lane, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India

### ABSTRACT

*Seminars and group discussion are integral parts of teaching methods along with lectures and tutorials. Whether it is a seminar or group discussion, the ultimate aim in teaching students is to improve their knowledge and performance in the examination. A questionnaire based study containing 8 questions was conducted among 124 medical students of 5th semester. Out of 124, only 108 returned completely filled forms. So, only 100 were considered for analysis. More students felt group discussion is the best thought provoking method and it has more depth in attaining knowledge. Majority reported that group discussion is better learning mode, more interactive and gives a better understanding of subject. Students commented their views by requesting for at least one seminar per student in their semester period to remove stage fear and some commented that group discussion creates more interest.*

### INTRODUCTION

Seminars and group discussion are integral parts of teaching methods along with lectures and tutorials.

The word *seminar* is derived from the Latin word *seminarium*, meaning "seed plot". In scientific field, the term "preceptorial" is used interchangeably with "seminar".<sup>2,3</sup>

It is a form of academic instruction, either at an academic institution or offered by a commercial or professional organization. It has the function of bringing together small groups for recurring meetings, focusing each time on some particular subject, in which everyone present is requested to actively participate. A group of college or university students who are involved in advanced study or research under the guidance of a professor or tutor meet regularly for discussions or exchange of findings in a seminar, leading to an in depth study of a subject / problem. There is no audience usually.

A seminar is a teaching session for a group of approximately ten to twenty five students who meet periodically to follow a structured course of study. Seminars provide students with an in discussion and inquiry can take place with the participation of all members. Interactive seminars facilitate problem solving, decision making and provide direct feedback to teachers and learners<sup>4</sup>

There are disadvantages in a seminar like presence of an expert may inhibit participation of some members and members may not want to spend all the time in preparation.

A Group discussion may be defined as – a form of systematic and purposeful oral process characterized by the formal and structured exchange of views on a particular topic, issue, problem or situation for developing information and understanding essential for decision making or problem solving. The dictionary meaning of the word Group Discussion is to talk about a subject in detail. So, group discussion may refer to a communicative situation that allows its participants to express views and opinions and share with other participants. It is a systematic oral exchange of information views and opinions about a topic, issue, problem or situation among members of a group who share certain common objectives<sup>5</sup>.

It is both a technique and an art and a comprehensive tool to judge the worthiness of the student. Group Discussion is a modern method of assessing students personality and it was re-

ported to have direct positive effect on students motivation to learn.<sup>6,7</sup>

The group will have 8 & 12 members who will express their views freely, frankly in a friendly manner, on a topic of current issue.

Within a time limit of 20 to 30 minutes, the abilities of the members of the group are measured.

Discussions of any sort are supposed to help us develop a better perspective on issues by bringing out diverse view points. Whenever we exchange differing views on an issue, we get a clearer picture of the problem and are able to understand it. The understanding makes us better equipped to deal with the problem. This is precisely the main purpose of a discussion.

G D is essentially an interactive oral process. The group members need to listen to each other and use voice and gesture effectively, use clear language and persuasive style.

Group Discussion helps problem solving, decision making and personality assessment.

Students need to participate in academic discussions, meetings, classroom sessions or selection GDs for admission to professional courses

Whether it is a seminar or group discussion, the ultimate aim in teaching students is to improve their knowledge and performance in the examination while considering students of a professional course.

### Material and methods

In order to know the views of students on seminar and group discussion we conducted a questionnaire based study. 124 students of the 5<sup>th</sup> semester, studying Bachelor of Medicine in Guntur Medical college were selected randomly and a validated Questionnaire with 8 questions was given to each one of them. They were instructed to return them after filling. The answers were analysed statistically. Out of 124, only 108 returned filled forms. As eight were incomplete only 100 were considered for analysis.

### Results

94 felt group discussion is the best thought provoking method

78 felt that group discussion has more depth in attaining knowledge on the subject

70 felt that group discussion is more beneficial to the students

92 reported that group discussion is better learning mode

98 students had an opinion that group discussion is more interactive

90 students felt that group discussion gave a better understanding of subject

All of them voted for group discussion when questioned about which created more interest in the topic.

**Conclusion:**

Interactive learning in the form of seminars and group discussions has been evaluated more positively than formal lectures by medical students<sup>8</sup>

Students commented their views by requesting for at least one seminar per student in his semester period in order to remove stage fear and also stated that student gets benefitted in seminar when compared to other students. Some students also suggested inclusion of quiz competitions to enhance their knowledge in the subject. Some commented that group discussion creates more interest and when undertaken under the leadership of senior persons like Professors gives improvement in the subject by clarifying their doubts and help to gain better knowledge in the subject. Thus group discussion is an easy method of gaining good knowledge pertaining to the subject.

Fig 1:

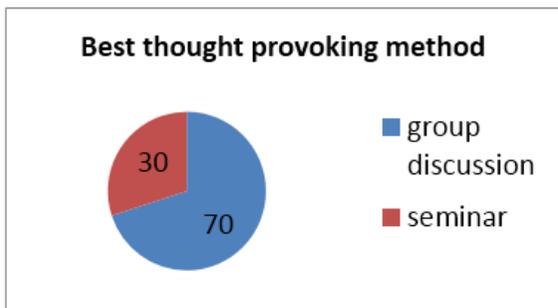


Fig 2:

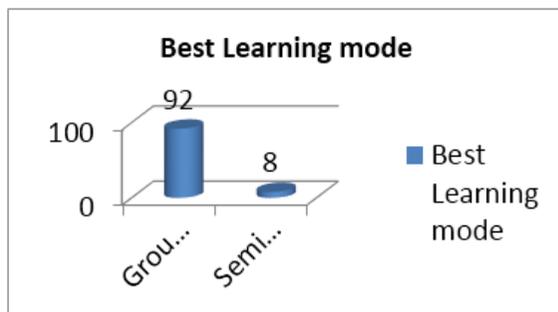
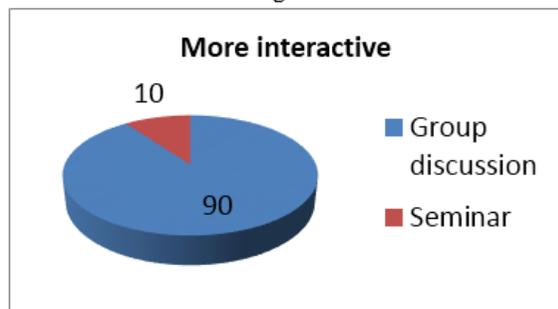


Fig 3:



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