



THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS WHO TRANSITIONED FROM TRADITIONAL TO ACTIVE LEARNING

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KeyWords

Active learning, curriculum transition, effectiveness of teaching techniques, physical therapy education, problem-based learning, student experience, traditional active learning

ABSTRACT

Over the years the learning experiences have vastly changed. Active learning gives students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and grow as future medical professionals. This study examined the experiences of students that transitioned from Traditional Learning to Active Learning. Survey Questionnaires were given to freshmen students at a private university in Cebu City to gather relevant information and feedback. Results showed most of the students looking for leadership and professors to teach and guide them through the learning process. Most students cannot accommodate the changes in curriculum in the university and have a poor outlook on how they are going to get promoted to the next year level.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years the learning experiences have vastly changed. Better technology and bases for researching and gathering information is at the tip of our fingers. A new way of learning has been introduced but as we all know, change is not always warmly welcomed, especially by students that have been traditional learning for their whole school life. Uniadmissions of the UK 1, states that being in a medical course is already hard enough but with PBL it tests all your skills whilst you are learning.

Being in a medical course, PBL challenges more of the clinical setting rather than theoretical. It engages clinical judgment, decisions, and garners you to be a better medical professional. Active learning gives students the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and grow as future medical professionals. A journal by Schmidt 2 concluded that PBL works because it encourages students to discuss in small group settings and provides opportunities for different perspectives of their knowledge. It shows that in small group discussions (SGD) that the students highlight their study habits and give them a platform to collaborate as a group to get the idea of the lessons. Abraham Osinubi and Kemi Aloje 3 conducted a study in which a combination of traditional learning and case-based learning (CBL) and its benefits and flaws in the medical professional fields in college. They sought to find the benefits of collaborating with the two techniques. As stated in their research, traditional learning was effective for theory and memorization of the information given to them while CBL gives them the side of the clinical setting in which they can utilize their theoretical knowledge and apply it to their practices.

The main objective of this study is revolving around the transition from lecture-based learning (LBL) to PBL. It is to figure out the results of the transitions if it is being implemented correctly and if it is being received well by the current students undergoing the transition. This study compares two teaching methods (PBL & Traditional teaching style) and how it impacts the students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The techniques over the years have since changed and advanced. In a series of studies, it shows how it has affected and/ or enhanced the perception of students learning in PBL. Most students are struggling with staying awake in a traditional setting of learning and at the same time in certain universities, they are struggling to transition into a PBL approach. In the setting of traditional learning most students in a study done by Uzma Zaidi in Saudi Arabia 4, showed they had a higher GPA than those who were enrolled in a PBL setting. In an article by the University of the Philippines 5, it stated that there were students struggling to transition into the new teaching technique of the university. Being used to a setting of traditional learning and then transitioning into a new style or technique was found to be difficult for most of the students. As stated by the same source, the transitional period should be done in a way the students can adjust easily to avoid confusion and the feeling of being lost in what they are studying. In a study 3, they showed the shortcomings of the traditional learning techniques in a medical university setting. The results they garnered showed that students in a traditional learning setting had poor clinical judgement. It admitted that in a traditional setting for learning that it is boring at times and students tend to lose interest especially in long lecture hours. In lecture - based learning there are less opportunities for the students to receive feedback on their work and if they are doing things correctly. Many of the traditional settings depend on the teacher, professor, or lecturer and most of the time there is minimal participation from the students. For medical students to learn professionally and correctly in the field they are going to practice in, they must fully understand how a hospital functions aside from the lectures they receive.

Anuraj Malav and Neelu Ahuja 6 discuss how traditional learning techniques have been taught since the beginning of the educational system and are now seeming outdated. There is extremely poor interaction between students and teachers most of the time. It seems it is hard to keep the attention of the students during a lecture. It is now the century where technology has grown and given us more opportunity to learn through little effort. As simple as a touch of a button or web search, all the information is at our fingertips. Educational professionals may now use this to their advantage by changing the way they provide students with information. It also changes the way students may learn, they have all their gadgets now and information that is easy to find with just a touch of a button. This gives a bigger and better opportunity for students to learn how they feel is most comfortable for them.

In contrast to that, other universities and researchers have found success in shifting towards PBL. Results have shown that most students prefer the integration of PBL and the new teaching technique approaches. Diversity of people and information in the small group discussions (SGDs) brought about a better style of learning and communication within the group, peers, and faculty. With shift to PBL students have an opportunity to actively learn and participate in discussions about the topics they have knowledge on. They could share their ideas at the same time they could also form new ideas to better improve the discussions. PBL better prepares them to be in a clinical setting and polishes their clinical intuition before they are put into work. It shows that they are ready and are geared for the work they are to do. This information was found in studies by R. Aiguade 73. In a collaborative study 7, they discussed learning anatomy in a PBL approach in a physical therapy degree program. Incorporating this style of teaching and learning garnered a more satisfactory and effective way of learning. The study routines of students have drastically changed and proved effective. Results showed that students preferred having the active learning since it gives them control on how they learn the topics and have various ways of obtaining the information needed. The students have different types of platforms in how they gather their informa-

tion. Textbooks nowadays are limited since it depends on the year it was published, where on the internet everything is up to date but not fully reliable. Students have a higher motivation to expand their knowledge since they are independently learning with their own ways. A journal by Dr. Srinivasan [8], it argues that the PBL process does not allow much time and is frustrating for time – pressured medical learner which usually leads to erroneous conclusions. PBL may be beneficial to be an analytic thinker but at the same time, the students over analyze and over think their conclusions leading to a different series of complications. It is also important for teachers, professors, and lecturers to completely grasp the concept of PBL in order to execute it correctly and properly. They are the first line to incorporate this way of teaching and are ultimately the ones who guide the students in the proper direction to ensure the information they have gathered is correct.

Other students may prefer traditional learning over active learning because it has been how they have been taught throughout their educational life. From the start they have been dependent on the usual classroom setting, where a teacher teaches, and the students listen to take notes. The new approach with active learning forces the students to challenge themselves and step out of the usual comfort zone of a classroom. He [8] says that some people have called PBL an open injury approach. Students are forced to be independent and teachers do not give as much input as they usually do. Both parties are required to adjust to the new approach. However, when they do adjust, the discussions are harmonious. Students figure out their way and professors take on less of a load. Both parties have to prepare in advance, and it shows in the performance of the students during small group discussions and how the proctor facilitates the discussion between the students.

From a professional perspective, PBL offers development in the areas of independence, cooperation, communication, and critical thinking aspects of a student. It allows students to integrate their own methods in learning and teaching. Students are pushed to become more active in their academics and are not forced to learn with just one technique. They are given the chance to expand on their topics and research through independent learning.

SUBJECTS

Freshmen students of Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy from a private university in Cebu participated in this study.

METHODS

A qualitative approach was utilized in this study. Participants who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were given the Student Instructional Report II (SIR II) questionnaires to fill up with their information regarding their reactions and/or emotions towards the transition from traditional learning to Problem Based Learning (PBL). The SIR II has ten topics, each with about five questions, the topics range from the student's communication, the faculty interaction, course organization and planning, course outcomes, and other necessary information needed for this research.

RESULTS

A few students feel like they are falling behind or cannot keep up with the new curriculum. They feel as if the change is too much to handle for them. Some students agree that PBL is expanding their knowledge on the subjects they are taking, and others are having issues comprehending the lessons given to them. CBL was favored by most students and faculty because of fewer unfocused tangents, less workloads, and new opportunities for clinical skills applications [8]. They are still split with their emotions towards PBL. The results of the study of Awad, U. Zaidi, it showed only a slight difference between the students in the group of PBL and LBL. The results presented that both groups had a mean GPA of 4 out of 5. This shows that it is strongly related and dependent on the motivation of a student for studying [4]. Some have said they learned a lot with the help of their professors. Others have said it is ineffective since everything is being given to them all at once and do not have much time to prepare their materials. This study aims to give professors and educators feedback, letting them know if the students prefer traditional learning, PBL, or a combination of the two. Some students preferred a combination of the two learning techniques. A balance of PBL and traditional learning so they can completely grasp the idea of the topics and lessons given to them.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, a conclusion was drawn that from traditional learning to problem-based learning needs more improvement. The students feel as they are being bombarded with too much information and are having a hard time adjusting. Most of the students requested more guidance and leadership from the professors. They would rather prefer having long lectures in which they are given information on the topic and then a small group discussion afterward. Though it is time-consuming, they would rather do that than have a small group discussion and not fully comprehend what they are discussing.

Students are facing a few issues with the new curriculum change. One of which is the fact that they feel they lack knowledge on the topics given to them. Most of the respondents have stated that they feel they cannot keep up with the work given to them and that the pace is too fast for them to fully comprehend the topic or even the idea. Most of them have a poor outlook on how they are

going to pass the course. They do not see any progress in their skills and knowledge so far in this course.

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