Encouraging students to learn non-core subjects in health education

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BACKGROUND

The project aimed to explore the connection between educational use of IT-based designs and student learning activities. How can students utilize the opportunities for learning in pedagogical designs that include:

- Flipped classroom
- Blended learning
- Case based collaborative activities supported by group activities as:
  - quizzes
  - productions
  - debate sessions
  - structured role playing
  - all conveyed by digital designs

Will the use of IT-based designs motivate students to engage in learning activities?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Action research as overall research design in collaboration with the teacher. Data gathering involving:

- Documentation of the pedagogical developments and designs
- Narrative analysis
- Informal interviewing
- Observation in the classroom
- Registration of attendance and learning behavior IRL & LMS
- Group interviews with students

RESULTS

Did the use of IT-based designs encourage students to learn?

- All in all we found that a big group of the students was not motivated to learn a non-core subject as ‘Administration, organization and management’ even though different activities was offered
- Our aim was to engage the students in learning activities in both the quantitative and the qualitative phase of the SOLO taxonomy. This was too big a challenge for a large part of the students
- Changing the learning activities in the course made the students confused. It seems to be extremely important for student’s motivation that learning goals are specific and contains clear criteria for success
- What seemed to engage the students most, was the opportunity to take quizzes as preparation for exam

How did students utilize the variation in teaching methods?

- A group of students took advantage of the variation in teaching methods while offered flexibility in time and space - for example the videos, the case work, and the quizzes
- Another group of the students did not recognize these activities as teaching and found it very confusing
- Many students complained about lack of feedback even though several activities did offer different kinds of feedback

Our conclusion is that more scaffolding and verbalizing about the different activities could have helped this.

AFTER ADJUSTING AND RUNNING THE COURSE 3 TIMES:

STUDENT: “At first we thought it would be uninteresting to work with this theme and we kind of opponant to the way the lessons were planed […]. We feel well more prepared to discuss and identify administrative and management problems now. But it is a shame we just work this way in our third year as a nurse student, this way of planning lessons should be throughout the whole education”.

EDUCATIONAL GOAL AND OUTCOME

Biggs’ learning taxonomy

Actual learning activity took place here

THE STUDENTS, THE TEACHER AND THE SUBJECT

A subject which has shown difficult to engage nursing students to learn, is the 2 week module: ‘Administration, organization and management’ surrounded as it is in the curriculum by attractive learning activities related to saving lives. We chose this course as our educational development project.

THE PROBLEM WITH THE COURSE FROM THE TEACHERS’ POINT OF VIEW

- Uninterested students
- Unprepared students
- “Why can’t students realize that this issue is important”
- “The students only discover the relevance at the end of the training (and then it is too late)”

THE PROBLEM WITH THE COURSE FROM THE STUDENTS’ POINT OF VIEW

- Abstract and difficult literature
- Boring lectures
- “Dry subject – therefore I choose to stay at home”
- Lack of relevance to practice and the rest of the module’s topics
- Organization and management theory is boring