

Perception of First year Medical students towards interest in academic activities in a Medical College of Tripura

Rituparna Das¹, Nirmalya Saha², Kaushik Tripura³.

^{1,3} (Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, Tripura Medical College and Dr. B.R.A.M Teaching Hospital, India.)

² (Assistant Professor, Department of Anatomy, Tripura Medical College and Dr. B.R.A.M Teaching Hospital, India.)

Abstract:

Background: Increasing lack of attention among the medical students towards academic activities has become a matter of grave concern for the medical education system.

Objectives: 1. To study the factors determining interest towards academic activities among Undergraduate Medical students. 2. To identify the reasons for lack of attention during class. 3. To identify the students' opinion to make classes more interesting.

Methodology: This was a Cross-sectional study conducted among first year Medical students of a medical college of Tripura in January, 2015.

Results: The study revealed that majority of the students considered that the mode of expression of the teacher (63.30%), and use of humor (57.10%) during the classes make the classes more interesting and availability of the topic in the book was the commonest reason (41.80%) for their lack of attention during class. Majority of students opined that use of pictures, video clips etc. could make lectures and demonstrations more interesting and tutorials should be used for tough topics only and every student must be allowed to do the practical by themselves.

Conclusions: The present study provides insights into student's perceptions regarding lack of attention during classes and modes of making different classes more interesting.

Keywords: Academic activities, lack of attention, lack of interest, Medical Student, Tripura.

I. Introduction

The struggle and competition to get into a medical college is on its rise in a developing country like India. But an increasing lack of attention among the medical students after getting into the college has become a matter of grave concern for the medical education system. Lack of interest in the class deprives a student of any motivation to study and to apply this knowledge in the practical field. Reports have shown that students' inactivity would decrease their concentration and would finally result in their absence from the classroom [1]. To counter these problems educators now strive to provide a productive classroom experience for their students. According to Gorham [2] the behaviors that promote student learning are use of humor, praising student performance, encouraging students to talk, etc. To achieve these objectives, 'Active learning' approach has been used which was first described by RW Revans [3] and popularized by Bonwell & Eison [4] and it encompassed various practices which aimed to engage students in higher-order thinking tasks such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation [5].

Thus, lack of interest towards academic activities is not only determined by the lack of attention of the students in the class but also by the teaching environment. Hence, the present study was conducted with the objective to study the factors determining the interest towards academic activities among Undergraduate Medical students and to identify the reasons for the lack of attention during class. Besides, the present study also aimed to identify the students' opinion to make different classes more interesting.

II. Materials And Method

This was a Cross-sectional study conducted among first year Undergraduate Medical students of Tripura Medical College and Dr. B.R.A.M. Teaching Hospital in the month of January, 2015. The study included all 98 undergraduate students who had given consent to participate in the study out of 100 students in 1st year MBBS. Information was collected from them by administering a pre-structured, pre-tested, semi open-ended questionnaire after taking written informed consent from them.

Data analysis was done manually as well as in epi info version 7.0 and the study was approved by the institutional Ethics Committee of the College.

III. Results

The present study was conducted among 98 students of 1st year MBBS of Tripura Medical College and Dr. B.R.A.M. Teaching Hospital.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the study participants.

		Frequency	Percentage
Age	17	2	2.00
	18	14	14.30
	19	52	53.10
	20	26	26.50
	21	4	4.10
Sex	Male	57	58.20
	Female	41	41.80
Religion	Hindu	92	93.90
	Muslim	1	1.00
	Christian	5	5.10
Community	General	59	60.20
	ST	12	12.20
	SC	15	15.30
	OBC	12	12.20

The study revealed that majority of the students (53.10%) was at 19 years of age. The study also showed that 58.20% of the participant students were male and 41.80% participants were female and most of them were Hindu by religion (93.90%) and belonged to General community (60.20%). (Table 1)

Table 2: Timing of the class determining interest among the students.

		Frequency	Percentage
Time of maximum attention	8 am to 9 am	41	41.8
	9 am to 10 am	42	42.9
	10 am to 11 am	6	6.1
	11 am to 1 pm	9	9.2
	2 pm to 4 pm	0	0
Time of least attention	8 am to 9 am	13	13.3
	9 am to 10 am	1	1.0
	10 am to 11 am	6	6.1
	11 am to 1 pm	29	29.6
	2 pm to 4 pm	49	50.0
Reason for least attention at the said time	Tiredness After Continuous Classes	47	48.0
	post lunch effect	26	26.5
	difficult to understand	4	4.1
	too early for the class	10	10.2
	Hunger	11	11.2

Table 2 shows that majority of the students said that they could give maximum attention during the morning classes from 8 am to 10 am with 84.70% (41.80 + 42.90) students mentioning this time as the best time for having attention in class. Again the study revealed that majority (50.00%) of the student had least attention in the afternoon post lunch classes. Regarding the reason for their lack of attention during classes, 48.00% student said that they could not give attention in the said time as they become tired after continuous classes, whereas 26.50% student said that they become sleepy after lunch and could not pay attention.

Table 3: Teaching related factors determining interest towards class among the students

		Frequency	Percentage
Quality of the teacher that makes the class more interesting	Personality	25	25.50
	Command over the subject	35	35.70
	Mode of expression	62	63.30
	Use of humor	56	57.10
	Experience of teacher	11	11.20
	Comprehension problems	7	7.10
Mode of teaching	Lecture	16	16.30
	Demonstration	29	29.60
	Tutorials	4	4.10
	Practical	24	24.50
Type of class	All	25	25.50
	Lecture	17	17.30

	Small group discussion	41	41.80
	Both	40	40.80
Aids that make classes more interesting	Picture	5	5.10
	Video clips	21	21.40
	Flow chart	20	20.40
	Models	8	8.20
	Multiple Methods	42	42.90
	All	2	2.00

The present study showed that majority of the students gave multiple responses regarding the quality of teacher which makes the classes more interesting. Table 3 reveals that 63.30% of the students said that the mode of expression of the teacher, and 57.10% of the students said that use of humor during the classes make the classes more interesting. Regarding the mode of teaching majority (29.60%) students said that out of the different classes they find Demonstration classes more interesting. Again regarding the type of classes 41.80% said that they find small group discussions more interesting than lectures. Besides, table 3 also shows that regarding the use of different aids in classes, use of multiple methods like pictures, video clips, charts, models etc. at a time has been advocated by 42.90% students as a measure to make the classes more interesting. Again use of video clips has been recommended by 21.40% respondents and use of flow chart was recommended by 20.40% students. (Table 3)

Table 4: Reasons given by the students for the lack of attention during class.

	Frequency	Percentage
Less interaction by the teacher	21	21.4
Comprehension or language problem of the teacher	19	19.4
Available in book	41	41.8
Environment is not supportive	5	5.1
Priorities above the class (eg- exam, personal affairs, etc)	34	34.7
Feeling sleepy or Health Problem	8	8.2
Next Person talking	18	18.4
Lengthy class	35	35.7
Taking notes	3	3.1
Topic less important	9	9.2
Available in internet	26	26.5

The present study showed that the students gave multiple responses regarding the reasons for the lack of attention during classes. Table 4 shows that majority (41.80%) of the students said that often they do not pay attention in the class as the topic is available in the book. Besides, 35.70% respondents said that due to the lengthy class and 34.70% said that due to different priorities above the class they suffer from lack of attention during the classes. (Table 4)

Table 5: Students' opinion to make classes more interesting

		Frequency	Percentage
Suggestion for Lecture	Flow Chart, Video clips, Pictures	25	25.5
	Interactive	16	16.3
	Practical Application Explained With example	11	11.2
	Use Of Humor	13	13.3
	Detailed Description	11	11.2
	Reduce Duration	8	8.2
	Giving Exam Oriented Questions	3	3.1
Suggestion for Demonstration	Models, pictures, videos	38	38.8
	Involvement Of Students To Give Demonstration	11	11.2
	Minimum No. Of Students	17	17.3
	One Day 1 Topic	3	3.1
	Interactive	8	8.2
Suggestion for Tutorials	Interactive	15	15.3
	Use Of Internet Or Multiple Media	4	4.1
	Tough Topic should be Explained	28	28.6
	Should Not Be Viva	19	19.4
	Small Groups	16	16.3
Suggestion for Practical	Clinically Oriented	4	4.1
	Interactive	4	4.1
	Live Model Or Video Clips	1	1.0
	Practical Application should be Explained	15	15.3
	Everyone should be allowed to do the Practical by themselves	31	31.6

Regarding the students' opinion as how to make classes more interesting, 25.50% of the students said that lectures could be made more interesting with the use of flow chart, pictures, video clips etc. Again, 38.80% of the students said that demonstration classes can be made more interesting with the use of models, pictures, videos etc. Regarding improvement of tutorials majority (28.60%) of the students suggested that tough topics should be only discussed during tutorials for better utilization of the classes. Again regarding betterment of practical classes 31.60% students said that every student must be allowed to do the practical by themselves to make the class more interesting. (Table 5)

IV. Discussion

The present study revealed that majority of the students could give maximum attention during the morning classes when their mind is fresh after night's sleep, whereas they had least attention in the afternoon classes. Regarding the reason for their lack of attention during classes, majority of the student said that they could not give attention in the said time as they become tired after continuous classes, and become sleepy after lunch.

The present study showed that majority of the students said that the mode of expression of the teacher, and use of humor during the classes make the classes more interesting. Similar finding was obtained from a study conducted by Jain A et al [6] where 70.67% of the respondents said that use of humor during the classes make the classes more interesting.

Regarding the type of class majority of the students said that out of the different classes they find small group discussions more interesting than lectures. Similar finding was obtained from a study conducted by Priyadarshini. K. et al [7] where 66.60 % of the participants said that they find small group discussions more interesting. Again the study revealed that majority of the students preferred the use of different aids in classes like pictures, video clips, charts, models etc. at a time. Similar finding was obtained from a study conducted by Jain A et al [6] where 94.67% respondents advocated the use of different aids for making the classes more interesting.

The present study highlighted that majority of the students did not pay attention in the class as the topic is available in the book. Again, due to the lengthy class they suffer from lack of attention during the classes. These findings suggest that there is a need to reduce the duration of classes and the classes should be more practically oriented rather than being oriented with the theory books.

Regarding the students' opinion as how to make classes more interesting, majority of the students said that lectures and demonstrations could be made more interesting with the use of flow chart, pictures, video clips, models etc. Regarding improvement of tutorials majority of the students suggested that tough topics should be only discussed during tutorials. Again regarding betterment of practical classes 31.60% students said that every student must be allowed to do the practical by themselves to make the class more interesting. This finding is less compared to a study conducted by Jain A et al [6] where 56% of the students demanded the same for the improvement of the practical.

V. Conclusion

The present study revealed that the majority of student's positively believe in using different active learning techniques for classroom activities. The present study provides insights into student's perceptions regarding lack of attention during classes and modes of making different classes more interesting; which may be very useful in identifying their expectations or requirements.

VI. Limitations Of The Study

The study was conducted in a single medical college of Tripura including only 1st year MBBS students. It can be made more scientifically appealing by including more undergraduate students and more medical colleges across the North Eastern region of the country.

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