



Learning approaches, module teams and their impact on student assessment results – Part B

In 'Learning approaches, module teams and their impact on student assessment results – Part A' the authors shared a summary of groups 1, 2 and 3 part C summative assessment results. Part B will compare groups, 1,2 and 3 outcomes as well as offer an analysis of findings and a summary of the audit.

Figure 4 below demonstrates that there was a significant improvement in students overall assessment results when flipped classroom and three formative assessment attempts were introduced with group 2; see part A

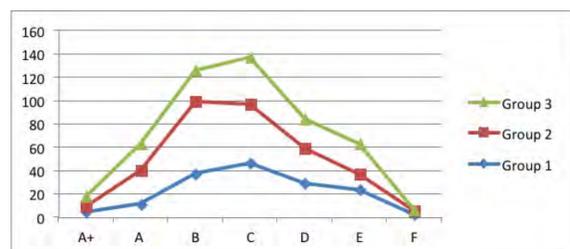


Figure 4: Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 results overlay

Yet the greatest improvement occurs when the flipped classroom and problem based learning approaches are combined with having a regular and consistent staff facilitation team; as exemplified in group 3; see part A.

These findings suggest that a combination of learning approaches (e.g. flipped classroom and PBL) and consistency in module facilitation teams does have a direct impact on the student experience; favourably supporting students to achieve better assessment outcomes; see figure 5.

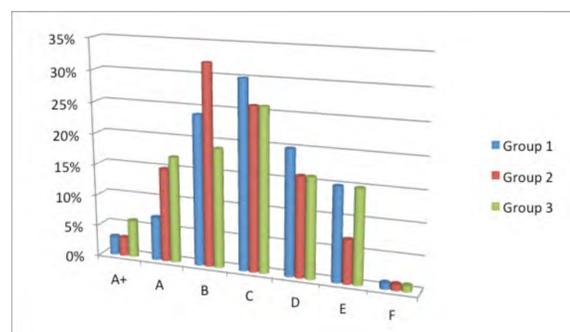


Figure 5: Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3 grade percentages

Analysis of findings

Gibbs and Simpson (2004-2005) suggest that designing assessment to support worthwhile learning is more important than accurately measuring limited learning.

The findings of the audit suggest student's part C assessment does support worthwhile learning. However all assessment activities are subject to student engagement strategies and the approach students afford ranging from surface to deep learning; and the measures of such learning are debatable.

Interestingly Fry *et al* (2003) suggest that students who engage in PBL are better able to take deeper approaches to learning. Yet as Yardley, Malkin and Wilcox-Tolley (2014) suggest ideally students will be supported within constructivist approaches to learning by consistent staff teams who are motivated and engaged; which in turn means students are more likely to be supported by enthusiastic and inspiring educators (Pegg *et al*, 2012).

The challenge therefore is to use an appropriate assessment regime which allows students to demonstrate deep approaches to learning. Hughes and Quinn (2013) suggest the purpose of PBL activities is to enable students to disseminate and share knowledge with their peers as a means of demonstrating what they have learnt. Audit findings from group 1 students suggest that PBL activities alone did not foster this as much as when students were engaged in a combination of flipped classroom and PBL activities (as demonstrated with group 2 audit findings).

The best combination appears to have taken place when students are empowered through constructivist approaches such as flipped classroom and PBL united with a consistent and engaged module team (Yardley, Malkin and Wilcox-Tolley, 2014).

Race (2007) suggests that affording students the opportunity to deliver presentations to an audience requires substantially different skills from those used to write an assignment or undertake an exam. One of several reasons for the choice of students engaging in summative presentation is because it afforded students the opportunity to showcase the employability skills highlighted within the CBI (2011) report. Yet we acknowledge there is no 'one size fits all approach' to learning approaches and/or student assessment.

We are aware that some students feel more anxious about having to present to their peers and academic staff. Yet the ability to present information (e.g. in handover, ward round, with staff, students, patients, family members, carers, the public Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary and/or Interprofessional teams) is a required competency of health and social practitioners and a must in being able to join affiliated professional registers.

The key here has been to incorporate formative opportunities for feedback via the flipped classroom approach as well as offer regular debriefing alongside students within their sub-groups within PBL facilitated learning. All of which should be core features of supporting students through their transition.

Summary

The findings of this audit, our experiences as MC and direct feedback from students suggest the benefits of flipped classroom, PBL and a consistent module staff team include (yet not exhaustive):

- Consistency in staff-student module teams encourages students ownership, engagement and socialisation as indicated in student module evaluations, module annual reports (Yardley and Malkin, 2012-2013, Yardley, Malkin and Wilcox-Tolley 2012-2013a, Yardley, Malkin and Wilcox-Tolley 2012-2013b) and student feedback feed-forward mechanisms (Yardley and Wilcox-Tolley, 2014).
- According to students themselves consistent module staff teams' means they are afforded greater levels of support to facilitate their success.
- Students are enabled to develop effective relationships with staff that is conducive to their learning.
- A consistent staff team empowers students to develop the full range of employability skills, qualities and attributes to enhance their mind-set for satisfied and successful careers. What students want is to be recognised and treated as individuals' undergoing a journey of discovery as they prepare for their move from university into the world of work. It is vital that they are exposed to motivating, engaging and inspiring academic staff at this crucial stage of their development.

- At a time where students are asked to submit National Student Survey (NSS) data it is critical that they are supported by a consistent and recognisable team. Who can address students and any needs they may have as the individuals they are in a timely fashion.
- Staff who are able to recognise those students who require additional support as well as those who are excelling from early stages of modular learning enables facilitators to positively challenge all students to meet their full potential.
- A consistent module team allows for confident peer review of staff performance. Openness to constructive critique and on-going development. It provides an opportunity for a shared and united vision with all staff investing personally and professionally in student learning for the benefit of the student experience.
- A team approach affords opportunities for staff to grow and develop taking on new roles and challenges; without such growth learning and teaching runs the risk of becoming stagnated.
- Inconsistency in the establishment of module teams allows for complacency, a lack of ownership and for custom and practice to perpetuate in an individuals' practice if left unchallenged.
- Whereas a confident, knowledgeable, engaged and motivated module team is more likely to produce confident, knowledgeable, capable, engaged, motivated and positively challenging graduates with well rounded employability skills.

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