

AN INVESTIGATION INTO STUDENT PREFERENCES



AUTHORS - Wintec, Hamilton, New Zealand

Dr Fernanda De Mello Costa Fernanda.costa@wintec.ac.nz

Dr Gudrun Dannenfeldt Gudrun.dannenfeldt@wintec.ac.nz

Dr Don Milham Don.milham@wintec.ac.nz

AIM

To improve educational experiences for students by determining their preferences about teaching and learning styles.

BACKGROUND

With the diversity of the student cohort and with education moving to flexible delivery, we wanted to determine the type of teaching and assessment processes students would most likely engage with.

The Wintec ethics approval process was followed and of the 155 students who logged into the questionnaire, 94% agreed to participate and 96% found the questionnaire useful.

RESEARCH

An on-line questionnaire about teaching and learning styles was completed by 155 undergraduate nursing and midwifery students at the start of the science module in 2012. 60 (39%) students completed the same questionnaire at the end of the module. The results from the questionnaires of the 162 will be discussed in this poster.

A few examples from the 22 questions:

- Do you prefer to have the same lecturer for all your classes?

- If you have questions in class are you likely to ask them?

- Do you read about the topic before coming to class?

- Which option best describes your preferred frequency of assessment?

- On a scale of 1 to 7, put the assessment methods in order of your preference?

RESULTS

The main learning style was kinaesthetic (52%) and this was reiterated by students (78%) stating they liked to use practical and laboratory sessions to help with understanding of the theory

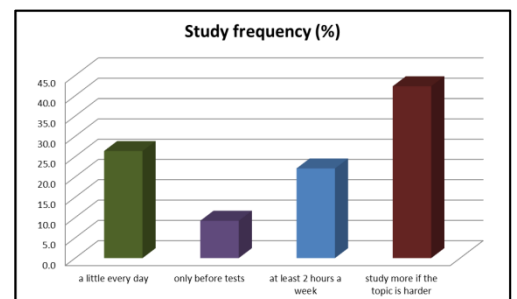
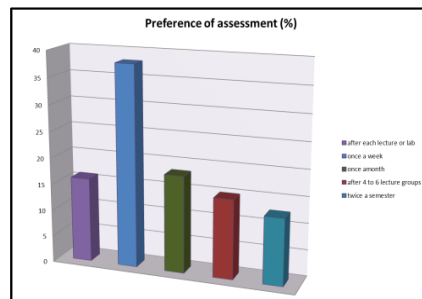
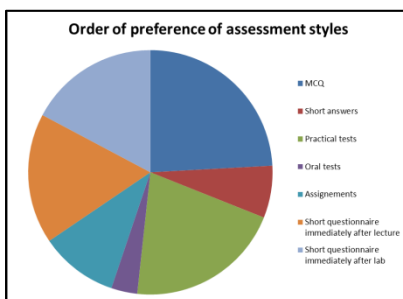
The second most common type of learning style was visual (39%). The majority of students (95%) enjoyed the videos and animations.

Students (71%) did read up about the topic before the lecture. At the end of the module, 30 students (50%) stated that they did pre-lecture reading.

Multiple-choice questions were the first choice in terms of preferred assessment style and written assignments were the least preferred method. There was no change in preference at the end of the module.

The preference (73%) for the frequency of assessments was once a week.

Of the students, 26.4% studied a little every day, 9.2% studied before a test, 22.2% studied at least 2 hours per day and 42.3% studied harder if the topic was difficult.



Discussion + conclusion

- The key issues brought out by this research were that students
- learn for summative assessments, not to become life-long learners
 - do not like oral examination when in their profession they requires oral skills in dealing with the public and colleagues
 - preferred more frequent assessments with fewer topics in each
 - preferences did no change much during the 6 months of the module
 - were kinaesthetic learners which will help them in their work place

The differences were not as marked as was expected from the cohort of students.

Action plan

- To use the laboratory sessions to facilitate linking theory to practice
- To increase confidence in oral skills eg include role play in labs
- To offer many practice exercises

