



Research Paper

Exploratory Student Rating Survey on the Instructional Strategies Used by Lecturers at Kanye SDA College of Nursing

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ABSTRACT

Higher education learning experience deemed quality as the only extent to which the lecturers varying instructional strategies are realized. The variation of instructional strategies enables productive learning for various students' with different learning ability. There is no fits all size in teaching and learning. This study therefore is a survey in descriptive design which explored instructional strategies used by the lecturers in teaching and learning at Kanye Seventh Day Adventist College of Nursing (KSDACON). A closed ended item questionnaire was used to collect data. The study employed purposive sampling and the sample size was composed of a hundred and forty-three (143) nursing students at KSDACON from different programmes including general nursing, midwifery and family nurse practitioner. Data was analyzed utilizing Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS) version 23 and data presented using frequency counts and percentages in tables. For the classroom activities, the findings reflected that majority of the respondents selected an interactive lecture as a commonly used instructional strategy. The findings for online and assignment activities revealed that self-directed learning and tutorials were commonly used respectively. The researchers recommended that lecturers should be capacitated on the various instructional strategies especially in those that encouraged active learning. Future research is necessary to evaluate if the interactive method is correctly implemented.

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INTRODUCTION

Excellence in teaching is identified as a priority in higher education. It implies that educators ought to possess balanced attributes of their field expertise and adequate teaching skills. Merlin (2011) detected that experts who know their discipline thoroughly are not guaranteed to be similarly capable when it comes to teaching novice learners. Knowledge of the discipline and pedagogy interact was also observed in the study of Bransford et al. (1999) suggesting that teaching pedagogy is an independent variable that guides a teacher on what to teach and how to teach.

High quality Tertiary Education provides the backbone to knowledge creation and its strategic application includes application of pedagogies in teaching to enhance quality learning. However, most of the training institutions in Botswana lack sufficient research outputs to assess their progress on instructional strategies. The Government of Botswana (2015) Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP, 2015 to 2020) emphasizes on the need for higher education institutions to modernize their programmes to provide graduates with higher-level of employable skills as well as, transferable skills that equip

graduates for a fast changing labour market. This requires all higher education institution to ponder on their instructional strategies application which can only be justifiable through research. ETSSP (2015 to 2020) further attested that tertiary education must deliver a learning experience of the highest quality supported by a fit –for – purpose quality assurance framework: to provide opportunities for students to improve their employability and maintain a supportive learning environment. The emphasis in this regard is to improve the quality of the student experience.

In response to this, KSDACON as a nursing training institution found the need to assess the instructional strategies used by lecturers in the day to day curriculum implementation. It is worthy to note that the nursing profession as an applied science field takes diverse and unique characteristics and hence, calls for varied instructional strategies to realize its expected desirable outcome. It is also noteworthy that nursing should address a full range of human experience and responses to health and illness, integrate objective data and knowledge gained from basic, social and nursing sciences which contribute to the understanding of the client's experience (Affiliated Health Training Institutions and University of Botswana) (AHTI and UB, 2008). In fact, nursing programme courses are multi-disciplinary and require varied pedagogies in order for students to experience quality learning. It is therefore imperative to explore the teaching and learning strategies used in the training of nursing professionals.

Theoretical background

Pedagogy is perceived as a type of instructional strategies that is unique and pervasively used in educating students in specific discipline to prepare them for their future professions. Shulman (2005) defined these instructional strategies as one that develop students in the discipline “to think, perform and act with integrity” in their professions. Consequently, instructional pedagogies need discipline-based customization to ensure the success of the transmission, transformation and extension of knowledge. Nursing is an applied science profession; therefore, educators or lecturers in this field need to apply wide range of pedagogies from natural sciences to social sciences.

Gurung et al. (2009) summarized the signature pedagogies (emerging or proposed ways) for the Natural Science or Biological Science as a more active learning involving cognitive development through biology laboratory experiences, where students engage in research or inquiry and enjoy the experience as researchers of Biological Science. Gurung et al. (2009) in addition, held strong views that in social science pedagogies, lecturers are confined to an old tradition of large lectures, laboratory instructions, informal conferences, quizzes and written reviews. However, they suggested that critical

thinking should be infused to the traditional approach for teaching psychology and sociology. Also mentioned in literature reviews are activities, demonstrations, writing and problem solving. The proponent of the two pedagogies encourages active learning.

According to Cambridge International Examinations (2015) active learning means that learners take increasing responsibility for their learning and teachers are enablers and activators of learning, rather than lecturers or deliverers of ideas. Active learning is also related to student-centered, enquiry-based and experiential learning, which broadly describes someone learning from direct experience. It also outlined the benefits of active learning which are:

- Fosters understanding (rather than rote learning facts), which students can apply to diverse contexts and problems. It is this understanding and problem solving approach that employers and universities seek.
- Fosters students' learning and their autonomy, giving them greater involvement and control over their learning and skills to foster life-long learning in the future. It is closely associated with learning how to learn.
- Learners will be more able to revise for examinations in the sense that revision really is re-vision' of the ideas that they already understood.

With increasing attention to teaching across the disciplines, there is also an increased interest in exploring and expanding the alternative type of instructional strategies used by college members. As noted by Shulman (2005), the pedagogies in different disciplines may overlap and thus provide opportunities for one discipline to learn from others.

Statement of the problem

Nursing provides an array of intellectual challenges requiring high level of knowledge and judgment skills. On the other hand, the limited empirical evidence to describe the pedagogies for training nurses in Botswana is a setback. To date, what are known are the findings which led to the change from basic diploma to a higher diploma in general nursing, which among others was to meet the increasing needs and expectations of the society for improved quality health care services (AHTI and UB, 2008). There is no attempt so far in Botswana to identify the instructional strategies commonly used in the training of nursing professionals. It is vague to quantify the extent to which the society is meeting their expectations, if society does not know exactly which instructional strategies bear desirable results. Ideally, the student centered or active learning strategies are the possible solutions, however, no empirical evidence is available to attest in the context of Botswana.

Purpose and question

The purpose of the study was to explore the instructional strategies which the nursing students deemed were used by their lecturers in teaching and learning at KSDACON. Specific question asked was: what are the most frequently employed instructional strategies used by lecturers when teaching course(s)?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies related to instructional strategies used in the classroom were carried out from different perspectives. Knight and Wood (2005) reported the results of a study completed in a large, upper-division Biology lecture course. The following were compared to students' performance when the course was taught using a traditional lecture format:

- (a) Students who were taught with in-class activities in place of some lecture time;
- (b) Collaborative work in student groups;
- (c) Increase in-class formative assessment and
- (d) Group discussion

It was observed that group discussion significantly made higher learning gains and better conceptual understanding.

Merlin (2011) also examined the instructional strategies used frequently in the information system. The results revealed that over 66% of the participants identified lecture as their most frequently used teaching method. Based on the frequency of responses to "Frequently" and "Almost, Always or Always", lecture was identified as the most frequently used strategy. The next most commonly employed strategies were interactive lectures (63%), cooperative learning or team-based learning (53%), problem-based learning (53%), whole group discussions (50%) and demonstrations (49%).

In the recent study, Edward et al. (2012) explored the actual classroom instructional strategies employed in post-secondary settings. To that end, the study discovered that 387 Career and Technical Education (CTE) faculty frequently used interactive lecture, questioning, whole-group discussion and guided practice in their courses, while the most uncommonly used instructional strategies for CTE faculty included question and answer methods using clickers, synchronous online lecture, video creation, student-generated examinations, quizzes and reflective blogs. As such, recommendations were articulated for novice and experienced CTE doctoral students and faculty and instructors regarding alternative pedagogies they might consider when teaching CTE courses.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Research design

The study was based on quantitative paradigm and a

descriptive survey design used. This design was found appropriate for this study to measure the rating of the nursing students in terms of opinions, views and feelings of the respondents. The design has the advantage of gathering more information from the respondents (Hulela and Motsolo, 2011). Nenty (2009) indicated that data in the form of scores which are either collected during descriptive or inferential survey are mostly continuous in nature and measured at an interval scale. It is therefore clear that the chosen design is appropriate for the study as it deals with numerical data in terms of student rating through responses to reveal questionnaire items.

Study sample

The population of this study comprised of a census of students at KSDACON including the general nursing and post basic students, hence, the sample was classified as purposive sample. Thus, the participants were selected based on these criteria and assessed to be information-rich case for analysis of the variables. A hundred and forty-three (143) students participated in the instructional survey study. The data were collected towards the end of the first semester of the academic year (2016 to 2017).

Instrumentation

A survey questionnaire was used to gather data. The instrument was developed by the researchers using some of the descriptions of instructional strategies listed by Merlin (2011). The instrument consisted of two sections. In section 1, the respondents indicated their demographical data (Gender, Year of study and Programme of study). In section 2, the respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which the selected instructional strategies occurred during different courses or lessons. Each rating was anchored on a Likert-type scale described as: 0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = occasionally, 3 = frequently and 4 = almost always or always.

Face and content validity for the instrument was established by three lecturers at KSDACON. Cronbach's Alpha values were found to be alpha 0.89 for in-classroom activities with 18 items, alpha 0.79 for online activities with 9 items and alpha 0.90 for assignments with 16 items which according to Ary et al. (2001) indicates that the instrument was consistent enough to measure what it was meant for.

Data collection procedures

The questionnaires were administered as part of the feedback during the daily Morning Prayer session. The participants completed the questionnaire in 5 min. Only willing participants completed the questionnaires. Students were also informed that their participation was voluntary and at liberty to withdraw from the study at any

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic factors		N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	42	29.4
	Female	100	69.9
	Missing	1	0.7
Programme of study	Higher Diploma General Nursing	121	84.6
	Post basic- midwifery	20	14
	Missing	2	1.4
Year of study	Year 1	28	19.6
	Year 2	42	29.4
	Year 3	25	17.5
	Missing	48	33.6

time they wish without any implication. The respondents were expected to sign the consent form, if they agreed to participate in the study. The respondents were also assured that their participation was not related to the course grade and it would not affect their academic standing in any way. Similarly, non-participation in the study would also not affect their academic standing in any way. The respondents were reminded not to write any identifying information on the questionnaire and assured that their responses would be kept in the strict confidence.

Data analysis

The data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS) version 23. Frequency counts and percentages were used to present data in tables.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1 shows part of the study presented and discusses the demographic characteristics of respondents. The results showed that majority (69.9%) of the students' respondents were females while only 29% were males. Only one participant failed to identify his/her gender. Of the one hundred and forty-three (143) participants, 84.6% were Higher Diploma in General Nursing, 14.0% from Post basic- Midwifery and one participant did not disclose his/her programme. Based on the programme of this study, it reflected that all the post- basic family nurse practitioner students did not participate in the study. With regards to level of study, 19.6% of the participants were in Year one while 29.4 and 17.5% were in Year three and two respectively. A total of 33.6% of the participants did not

disclose their academic level of study.

Research question: What are the most frequently employed instructional strategies used by the college teaching course(s)?

Frequencies for forty-three (43) instructional strategies items were provided. These items were classified into three categories; in-class activities, On-line activities and assignments. As used by Merlin (2011), the teaching and learning strategies were ranked on the mean score computed by the frequency use scores where Never, Rarely, Occasionally, Frequently and Almost always or Always were coded 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

In-classroom activities

The results in Table 2 showed that frequency percentages of in-classroom activities used were ranked from the most frequently occurring to the least occurring. The most frequently were considered reasonable if at least rated 35% or better. Thus, KSDACON lecturers mostly used interactive lecture (53.6%), question and answer (45.3%), student presentation (44.4%), co-operative learning (42.9%), small group discussion (36.4%) and whole group discussion (36.2%) in their classroom delivery. The findings revealed that the most dominant teaching strategy at KSDACON is interactive lecture. Taking into account the participants who rated the strategies occasionally and hence, gave over 70% of the lecturers at KSDACON combined the figures of the most frequently used identified in their daily classroom activities.

Table 3 shows the least frequently (equal/below 34% rating) used in-classroom strategies, among the least four were game/simulations (4.2%), guest lecture (5%), debates (5.6%) and role play (9.8%). Even when combined with the occasionally rating figures, the least four

Table 2: Most frequently used teaching methods/Instructional strategies.

In-classroom activities	N	Percentage (%)		Frequently/Almost/ Always
		Never/Rarely	Occasionally	
Interactive lecture	140	11.4	35	53.6
Question and answer	137	28.5	26.3	45.3
Student presentation	142	22.5	33.1	44.4
Cooperative learning	140	28.6	28.6	42.9
Small group discussion	138	22.4	37.8	36.4
Whole group discussion	141	22.0	41.8	36.2

Note: Ranked based on the frequency of participants "Frequently/Almost/Always" responses on the instructional strategies.

Table 3: Least frequently used teaching methods/Instructional strategies

In-classroom activities	N	Percentage (%)		Frequently/Almost/ Always
		Never/Rarely	Occasionally	
Games/Simulations	143	88.8	7	4.2
Guest lecture	139	80.6	14.4	5
Debates	143	81.8	12.6	5.6
Role Play	143	67.1	19.6	9.8
Problem based learning	139	57.6	28.8	13.7
Lab activities	139	35.3	44.6	20.1
Student peer teaching	143	52.4	27.3	20.3
Brainstorming	140	51.4	27.9	20.7
Review sessions	143	51	27.3	21.7
Quizzes	143	40.6	34.3	25.2
Project method	137	44.5	27.7	27.7
Demonstrations	142	31.7	38	30.3

Note: Ranked based on the frequency of participants "Frequently/Almost/Always" responses on the instructional strategies.

Table 4: Most frequently used online activities.

Online activities	N	Percentage (%)		Frequently/Almost Always/Always
		Never/Rarely	Occasionally	
Self-directed learning	142	73.9	12.7	13.4
Computer based learning	120	83.9	9.1	7

Note: Ranked based on the frequency of participants "Frequently/Almost/Always" responses on the instructional strategies.

classroom activities were not up to 35%. Thus, the frequencies were very low.

Online activities

The items for online activities were nine (9) among the 43 teaching methods/instructions surveyed. The result in Table 4 shows that only two online activities namely: self-directed learning (13.4%) and computer based learning (7%) were rated "Frequently/Almost Always/Always" as the most frequently used online activities while Table 5 shows the least frequently used online activities were collaborative project (0%), online lecture (0.7%) and

online/E-portfolio (1.4%). The other online activities (discussion, reflective blogs and formative quizzes) were not selected or rated by all students and it implies either students did not understand the strategies or never experienced them.

Assignments

The results in Table 6 showed that frequency percentages of assignments used were ranked from the most frequently occurring to the least occurring. On the most frequently used, that is, approximately 29.4% of the participants used tutorials, 21.6% used case study, 20.3% used student-

Table 5: Least frequently used online activities.

Online activities	N	Percentage (%)		Frequently/Almost/Always
		Never/Rarely	Occasionally	
Online collaborative project	143	96.5	3.5	0
Online lecture	140	95.7	3.6	0.7
Online/E-portfolio	142	93.7	4.9	1.4
Participation in social networking	142	92.3	4.9	2.8

Note: Ranked based on the frequency of participants "Frequently/Almost/Always" responses on the instructional strategies.

Table 6: Most frequently used assignments.

Assignment	N	Percentage (%)		Frequently/Almost/Always
		Never/Rarely	Occasionally	
Tutorials	136	48.5	22.1	29.4
Case study	139	58.3	20.1	21.6
Student-created quiz/exam	138	60.1	19.6	20.3
Major writing project/Term paper	133	57.1	24.1	18.8
Literature review	137	66.4	16.8	16.8

Note: Ranked based on the frequency of participants "Frequently/Almost/Always" responses on the Instructional strategies.

Table 7: Least frequently used assignment.

Assignment	N	Percentage (%)		Frequently/Almost/Always
		Never/Rarely	Occasionally	
Field trips	136	87.5	10.3	2.2
Video creation	135	95.6	2.2	2.2
Personal reflection journal	133	88	9	3
Film/Video	133	86.5	9.8	3.8
Learning portfolio	133	86.7	8.9	4.4
Service learning	133	85	10.5	4.5
Student attitude survey	133	75.2	19.5	5.3
Concept maps/Mind map	137	81	11.7	7.3
Short paper	137	74.5	17.5	8
Student peer assessment	137	75.9	15.5	8.8
Research proposal	139	73.4	15.1	11.5

Note: Ranked based on the frequency of participants "Frequently/Almost/Always" responses on the Instructional strategies.

created quiz or examination, while the least frequently used, the number of participants who rated never/rarely used were very high (Table 7). In fact, the result in Table 7 shows the least frequently used assignments and among them were field trips (2.2%), video creation (2.2%) and personal Reflection Journal (3%) to mention just a few.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The desirable traits of education are attainable only through excellence in teaching. The underpinning factors which exacerbate the realization of excellence in teaching is when lecturers or instructors acquired a balanced

knowledge, skills of subject specialization and empowered pedagogies. The ultimate result of the mutual combined factors is the ability of the lecturer to implement active learning approach which boosts the student learning experience. The findings of this study corroborated that of Edward et al. (2012) and Merlin (2011) who explored the actual classroom instructional strategies employed in classroom settings and hence, revealed that most frequently used approaches were interactive lecture, questioning, whole-group discussion and guided practice in their courses. It is noticeable that interactive lecture dominates teaching and learning.

On the contrary, Knight and wood (2005) on their study titled "Teaching more by lecturing less" revealed that the

students' performance when the course was taught using a traditional lecture format as compared to students who were taught with in-class activities in place of some lecture time, collaborative work in student groups, increase in-class formative assessment and group discussion.

Group discussion was observed to make significant higher learning gains and better conceptual understanding. The enhanced performance of the other groups other than traditional lecture was bolstered by active learning. As confirmed by the Cambridge International Examination (2015), active learning improves student's ability to revise for examination in the sense that revision is revision of the ideas that they already understood. The outstanding rating of interactive lecture by KSDACON students tend to corroborate that less quality learning experience is imparted. It is therefore not by chance that students at KSDACON seem not to perform well in their courses.

The less engagement or experiential learning through simulations, even the least frequently use of online related activities like collaborative project, networking and participation in social networking as observed from the findings of this study is an undesirable habit since all these mentioned activities are attributes of active learning strategies. This is also contrary to active learning as attested by the Cambridge International Examination (2015) which tends to foster student learning and their autonomy, hence, giving them greater involvement, control over their learning and skills for life-long learning in the future.

The findings of this study also seem to suggest that KSDACON students are far from attaining the wish of the Botswana Government (2015) through ETSSP (2015 to 2016) which seeks to provide graduates with higher-level of employable skills as well as, transferable skills that equip graduates for a fast changing labour market. This in fact emanates from the application of passive instructional strategies like interactive lecture and hence, students are not afforded opportunities to improve their employability and maintenance of a supportive learning environment.

Finally, the results of the study for assignment used were dominated by tutorials and case study and it is closely consonant with traditional social sciences pedagogies (Gurung et al., 2009). Nursing as an applied science appeals for domination of the combined natural

science pedagogies which encourage students' engagement in the spirit of inquiry and social science pedagogies with emphasis on critical thinking assignments like concepts maps or mind maps.

Following the findings of this study, recommendation was articulated for both novice and experienced lecturers regarding alternative pedagogies (instructional strategies) considered when teaching nursing courses. It is evident that active learning strategies would improve learning outcomes, better engagement and hence, students success in the future.

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