Master students' feedback about the teaching and learning process in the College of Nursing, Hawler Medical University

Nazar Ali Doski *   **Jawdat Mamand ALhag Baker ***   **Norhan Zaki ***   **Dara Abdulla Al-Banna ***

Abstract

Background and objective: Systems for evaluation of teaching and course quality in higher education institutions have long been established and are becoming increasingly common in many developed and developing countries. This study was carried out to identify and assess the feedback of master students in the College of Nursing.

Methods: The study is a mixture of quantitative and qualitative design. The study sample included all master students who had attended the master course within two academic years (2012-2014) in the College of Nursing, Hawler Medical University. A formal questionnaire was used to obtain master students' feedback, and an interview was used as the method of data collection.

Results: The mean age of the participants was 33 years for males and 29 years for females. Results revealed that feedback responses as a general were good in all factors underlining the study, and the lowest scores were shown in items related to teacher -student's relationship and classroom organization.

Conclusion: Master students' feedback was positive for most of the evaluation factors except teacher-student relationship and some items related to classroom organization.

Keywords: Master nursing student; Course evaluation; Feedback; Education.

Introduction

There are almost as many terms used to describe teaching course evaluations as there are articles about them; among the most common are "student evaluations, course evaluations".[1] Evaluations are important for the quality and effectiveness of the student's learning activities. There must be documented evidence that education improves job performance, and enhances patient outcomes. To collect this evidence, an objective system of data collection and analysis must be part of the quality improvement efforts of the students and staff development department.[2] The various evaluation strategies that are useful as quality improvement monitors and that help demonstrate the worth of the students' development measures whether learning actually occurred. Its evaluation mechanism is based on program objectives that can help measure knowledge gained and modify the objectives of the learning processes according to its outcomes.[3] Evaluation is viewed as an ongoing process designed to improve a school's guidance program.[4] The evaluation of teaching and course quality in higher education institutions (HEIs) has long been established both in the United States (US) and Australia and they have also become increasingly common in the United Kingdom (UK). The commonest form of input to educational evaluation (particularly in the US, UK, and Australia) is feedback from students.[5] This study was carried out to identify and assess the feedback for master students in College of Nursing during the academic years 2012-2013 to 2013-2014, and to evaluate the feedback from the master students regarding active learning, classroom organization, the relevance of the contents, course organization, and the assessment process.

***Department of Nursing, College of Nursing, Hawler Medical University, Erbil, Iraq.**

Methods

The study was conducted between July 25th, 2014 and September 4th, 2014. All master students who attended to the master course during the academic years 2012-2013 to 2013-2014 participated in the study. Master students of nursing in Hawler Medical University were asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire. A total of 19 students were included. All of the students were from the Ministry of Health and the College of Nursing. Seven of the students were from Adult Nursing, seven from Maternity Nursing, two from Community Health Nursing, two from Pediatric Nursing and the other one from Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing course. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers and administered to students during class time over the 2nd semester. Verbal informed consent was obtained from all participants and students were assured that their participation was voluntary and their responses would be anonymous and confidential. There were no identifying questions (name) on the questionnaire, and the researchers informed students that the objectives of the study were to identify and assess the learning process. A tool was used depending on five important issues related to the evaluation of teaching and learning process including active learning, classroom organization, teacher-students relationship, organization, and assessment. The scoring of questions was measured by giving 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 scores for poor, good, very good, and excellent responses respectively. Data were analyzed using the statistical package for the social sciences (version 19). Descriptive statistical analysis was used to calculate the mean score (MS) and frequencies of variables, and inferential statistical analysis was calculated to determine the relationship between variables through using Chi square test (χ^2). A *P* value ≤0.05 was considered a statistically significant.

Results

Table 1 shows that the majority of study sample was within age group between 25-32 years old (73.7%), while the lowest age group of the study sample was between 33-40 (26.3%), and most of them were females which represent 63.2% of the sample, and majority of them were married (73.7%). From all factors underline the current study and to assess the objectives of the study, Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 show that feedback responses as a general was good in most factors underline the study, and the negative feedback was shown in the items related to teacher-student's relationship and communication, classroom organization in items related to hearing and temperature of the class, and students were not given enough chance for participation.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic distribution of subjects (participants).

Characteristic		No.	%
Age Group (years)	25-32	14	73.7
	33-40	5	26.3
Gender	Male	7	36.8
	Female	12	63.2
Marital status	Single	5	26.3
	Married	14	73.7
Total		19	100

The positive responses of the students were concerning prevention of the students for having enough chance for participation as shown in Table 2. The other least negative factor was classroom organization especially with factors related to the ability to hear the instructor, and the temperature comfort as shown in Table 3.

Table 2: Distribution of evaluation responses regarding Active Learning.

Active Learning	Poor		Good		Very good		Excellent		MS
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1.Using variety of teaching methods	0	0.0	3	15.8	16	84.2	0	0.0	2.84
2.Student were given chance to participation	5	26.3	9	47.4	4	21.1	1	5.3	2.05
3.There were encouragement for class activities	0	0.0	5	26.3	10	52.6	4	21.1	2.95
4.There was discussion between students	0	0.0	13	68.4	3	15.8	3	15.8	2.47
5.The teaching staff promote and enhance discussion	1	5.3	10	52.6	6	31.6	2	10.5	2.47
6. There was enough time for discussion	3	15.8	7	36.8	6	31.6	3	15.8	2.47
7..The amount of content covered was not excessive	1	5.3	1	5.3	9	47.4	8	42.1	3.26
8. The instructor was knowledgeable and well prepared	2	10.5	7	36.8	8	42.1	2	10.5	2.53

Table 3: Distribution of evaluation responses regarding classroom organization.

Classroom organization	Poor		Good		Very good		Excellent		MS
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1.Were the audio-visual useful	3	15.8	6	31.6	4	21.1	6	31.6	2.68
2.Was the temperature comfort	6	31.6	3	15.8	5	26.3	5	26.3	2.47
3.Did you find that the classes are interesting	0	0.0	5	26.3	6	31.6	8	42.1	3.16
4. Were you able to hear the instructor	7	36.8	4	21.1	3	15.8	5	26.3	2.32
5. Did you find enough resources (books/journals)	2	10.5	8	42.1	6	31.6	3	15.8	2.53
6.Were the seating comfortable	1	5.3	4	21.1	3	15.8	11	57.9	3.26

For the teacher-students relationship and communication, the non-significant factors were the poor relationship between teaching staff and students, the communication between teaching staff and students, and teachers did not know the individual in class as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of evaluation responses related to Teacher –Student's Relationship.

Teacher–Student Relationships	Poor		Good		Very good		Excellent		MS
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1. The teaching staff understood our learning needs	1	5.3	6	31.6	10	52.6	2	10.5	**2.68**
2. There was a friendly relationship between teaching staff and students	5	26.3	8	42.1	3	15.8	3	15.8	**2.21**
3. The communication between teaching staff and students is good	4	21.1	5	26.3	9	47.4	1	5.3	**2.37**
4. The teacher knew the individual differences in class	4	21.1	5	26.3	9	47.4	1	5.3	**2.37**
5. The teachers paid attention to progress of individual students	1	5.3	2	10.5	11	57.9	5	26.3	**3.05**

Table 6: Distribution of evaluation responses regarding Organization.

Organization	Poor		Good		Very good		Excellent		MS
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1. This course was well organized	0	0.0	3	15.8	8	42.1	8	42.1	**3.26**
2. This course was well planned	0	0.0	2	10.5	12	63.2	5	26.3	**3.11**
3. The expect learning outcome were clear	0	0.0	4	21.1	9	47.4	6	31.6	**3.16**
4. The objectives of the course were clear	1	5.3	4	21.1	10	52.6	4	21.1	**2.89**
5. The learning activities helped us to achieve the expect learning outcome	0	0.0	4	21.1	10	52.6	5	26.3	**3.05**
6. This course meet well to our future needs	0	0.0	5	26.3	9	47.4	5	26.3	**3.00**

Table 8 shows that there was a significant association between overall of learning outcomes and age while there was no significant association between overall learning and gender and marital status. Regarding qualitative approach design, the researchers found some similarities in their responses according to the following quotes:

"Students sometimes note that the feedback is provided too late to be of any use or relevance at all. For their part, lecturers frequently comment that students are not interested in feedback comments and are only concerned with the mark."

Table 7: Distribution of evaluation responses related to assessment .

Assessment	Poor		Good		Very good		Excellent		MS
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1. The type of assessment related closely to the expected learning outcomes	2	10.5	8	42.1	7	36.8	2	10.5	**2.47**
2.The assessment tested our understanding of the key concept	0	0.0	7	36.8	8	42.1	4	21.1	**2.84**
3.A variety of assessment method were used	0	0.0	6	31.6	12	63.2	1	5.3	**2.74**
4.The assessment was valid test of course objective	1	5.3	4	21.1	12	63.2	2	10.5	**2.79**

Table 8: Distribution of learning outcomes relationship by demographic characteristics.

Socio-demographic characteristics		Overall Learning Outcome								P
		Poor		Good		Very good		Excellent		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Age Group	25-32	0	0	7	50	4	28.6	3	21.4	**0.023**
	33-40	0	0	0	0	5	100	0	0	
Gender	Male	0	0	2	28.6	4	57.1	1	14.3	**0.172**
	Female	0	0	5	41.7	5	41.7	2	16.6	
Marital status	Single	0	0	2	40	2	40	1	20	**0.917**
	Married	0	0	5	35.7	7	50	2	14.3	

Discussion

Susan, 2003 mentioned that lecture is one of the oldest and most often used as methods of teaching and the lecture format allows for only minimal exchange between the teacher and the learner, but it can be an effective method of teaching in the lower-level cognitive domain to impart content knowledge, and one of the important disadvantages it does not provide for much stimulation of learners, and there is little opportunity for learner involvement.[6] The study results agree with a study indicated that there was some relationship between age and rate of learning. Among college students, the older students scored higher on some subjects more than the youngers.[7] The students see feedback in isolation from other aspects of the teaching and learning process and consider feedback to be primarily a teacher-owned endeavor.[8] Correspondingly, the researchers suggest that the feedback process is most effective when all the protagonists are actively involved in the process, and one strategy is to design assessment so that students can see the direct benefits of attending to feedback advice. This can be done by breaking assignments into stages and providing feedback which is essential to the successful navigation of subsequent stages.[9]

Quote:

Amongst the important suggestions received from the nursing students were to decrease the generation gap between the student and the teachers by imparting group activities in the form of seminars and symposiums. One strategy of teaching and learning that Nicol (2008) suggests is to put students into small groups in tutorials and invite them to share and discuss feedback comments. This would have the additional advantage of heightening students' understanding of course learning goals.[9] The positive responses of the students were concerning prevention of the students from having enough chance to participation. This could be related to the type of teaching methods which mostly used by some teachers which depend on lecture and instruction and not trying to use different methods of teaching and learning like group discussion or role models which enhance the affective domain of learning. The least negative factor was classroom organization especially with factors related to hear the instructor, and the temperature comfort. The result gave the researchers the indicators that teaching halls are not proper in respect of providing a good environment for teaching and learning in this college as most of them complains of difficulty in design and lack of proper ventilation and air-conditioning to keep the class's temperature regular. Regarding the teacher-students relationship and communication, the non-significant factors was a poor relationship between teaching staff and student, the communication between teaching staff and students, and teachers did not know the individuals in the class. This gives an indicator that some teachers like to talk and accept the students to write down what they say and to learn it. A significant body of research indicates that academic achievement and students' behavior are influenced by the quality of the teacher-student relationship. Students prefer teachers who are warm and friendly.[6] More important, positive teacher-student relationships are associated with more positive student responses to increased academic achievement. Davidson and Lang (2006) reported that students who felt liked by their teachers had higher academic achievement and more productive classroom behavior than did students who felt their teachers held them in lower regard.[8,10] There was a significant association between overall of learning outcomes and age, learner participation and creativity are affected by the age of participant as their insights on educational became more mature when they are adults.[11] A further study found that students age 25years or older are more positive to academic performance as the participant are approach to learning because of their personality.[12]

Conclusion

Master students' feedback was positive for most of the evaluation factors except teacher-student relationship and some items related to classroom organization. The study recommends emphasizing on improving teacher-students relationship and practicing the group teaching method which could help to improve this relationship between teachers and students to enhancing the chance for students for participation. The College of Nursing needs to provide some facilities for the master classes regarding proper heating and microphone facility.

Conflicts of interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Baldwin T, Blattner N. Guarding against potential bias in student evaluations: What every faculty member needs to know. College Teaching 2003; 51(1):27-32.
2. Beran T, Violato C, Kline D. What's the 'use' of student ratings of instruction for administrators? One university's experience. Canadian Journal of Higher Education 2007; 17(1):27-43.
3. Beran T, Violato C, Kline D, Frideres J. The utility of student ratings of instruction for students, faculty, and administrators: A "consequential validity" study. Canadian Journal of Higher Education 2005; 35(2): 49-70.
4. Bernstein DJ. Peer review and evaluation of the intellectual work of teaching. Change 2008; 40(2): 48-51.
5. Bothell T, Henderson T. Do online ratings of instruction make sense? In D.L. Sorenson & T.D. Johnson (Eds.), online student ratings of instruction [Special issue]. New Directions for Teaching and Learning 2003; 96: 69-80.
6. Susan B. Nurse as Educator: Principles of Teaching and Learning for Nursing Practice, Second Edition, Jones and Bartlett Publishers, Canada; 2003.
7. Harden R. AMEE Guide 21: curriculum mapping: a tool for transparent and authentic teaching and learning. Evaluating the outcomes of undergraduate medical education. Medl Education 2003; 37: 580 – 1.
8. Taras M. To feedback or not to feedback in student self-assessment. Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education 2003; 28 (5): 549-65.
9. Nicol D, Draper S. Redesigning written feedback to students when class sizes are large. Paper presented at the Improving University Teachers Conference, Glasgow; 2008.
10. Osice JG, Elizabeth MD. The 2005 National School Climate Survey: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools, New York: GLSEN; 2006.
11. Greenho W, Beth R. Learning, Teaching, and Scholarship in a Digital Age, American Educational Research Associatation, 2009; 38 (4):246-59.
12. Elizabeth B, John F., personality and individual differences, Elsevier Publishing Campus 2004; 36 (8):190-2.