Physical Activity With Gaming as a Teaching Strategy to Increase Student Engagement

Nursing faculty in higher education are challenged routinely with the need for finding creative and innovative ways to keep students engaged during classroom instructions. The goals when facilitating learning to enhance student engagement is that the process will be meaningful, applicable, and enjoyable for students, as well as for faculty delivering the content. Incorporating physical activity such as hula hooping, jumping rope, and gaming may be an effective strategy for keeping students engaged and enhance their learning. The objective of this teaching strategy was to determine the effectiveness of hula hooping and jumping rope, coupled with gaming, on students’ classroom engagement. Evidence-based studies indicated that classroom engagement leads to participation and a better understanding of content (Perkmann et al., 2013). Engagement is often characterized by various behaviors and is often associated with students, confidence, participation, and positive attitudes. Student engagement drives learning and positive outcomes (Hew, 2016; Reschly & Christenson, 2012; Soffer & Nachmias, 2018).

Activity Description

It was hypothesized that incorporating physical activity in the form of hula hooping and/or jumping rope while gaming into the classroom as a teaching strategy would increase student engagement and would positively influence their knowledge of the course content. The activities were incorporated into an undergraduate nursing leadership and management course. In preparation for the activities, the learners must have prior knowledge and understanding of the content (evidence-based practice). Students were given the background information pertaining to the content prior to class and were instructed to access the information prior to the scheduled class meeting.

The students were assigned into five groups of seven students. The game activity was “Jeopardy!”, and the students were given an opportunity to select from one of the five categories, each of which contained five clues valued by difficulty. Once the question was presented, the group consulted with each other. Prior to answering the question, the students had to hula hoop or jump rope for 30 seconds before they could state the answer to the question.

An evaluation form was administered to each student to be completed at the end of the class session. There was one open-ended question in which the students were asked their perceptions and opinions toward the physical activity application use in the classroom (How did you feel about incorporating physical activity with gaming?). The open-ended question presented a series of statements such as:

- Great activity.
- Helps maintain interest.
- It made it exciting, not boring.
- It kept me alert and kept my attention throughout the whole activity.
- It is a good way to feel involved.
- Physical activity made me pay more attention to the lesson.
- Although I was hesitant at first, I learned a lot.
- I enjoyed it, it kept me alert and engaged during class.
- At first I was not excited, however, it really engaged our class and ended up being fun.
- I could take it or leave it.

Discussion

Thirty-five students were enrolled in the leadership and management course. Women represented 97% of the sample. Eighty-three percent of the students were Caucasian, followed by African American (11%), and Asian (6%). Overall, students had a positive opinion toward the use of physical activity with gaming in the classroom and found it helpful to consult with their peers. They thought the activities promoted participation and increased knowledge, kept them engaged, and found it to be a fun activity. The results from the evaluation indicated that students found physical activity (in the form of hula hooping and jumping rope) with gaming increased their engagement with the course content.

References


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