**StudyGram: Meeting Students Where They Are**

Undergraduate students face many potential distractions from their coursework, one of which is consistent access to their social lives via social media. Although consistent exposure to social media can increase procrastination of their studies, the same consistent exposure to course material can significantly improve retention of course content. Evidence shows that content delivered in a familiar platform also increases retention of information. Many theories, then, indirectly support the idea of using social media to help students study course content.

**Strategy**

While working with an undergraduate nursing student who had already completed the Mental Health Nursing course, the idea that social media could be used to improve course outcomes was tested in this course. The senior nursing student created a course-specific Instagram account with the hope of helping students study the difficult material in this course. In collaboration with the instructor, one to two NCLEX-RN® style questions were posted by the student each weekday, aligned with the course content schedule. The idea was that students, while scrolling through Instagram, would see the questions in their spare time on a familiar platform. Correct answers for the questions, as well as rationales, were provided after a 24-hour-period.

Students were surveyed monthly for 4 months about the usefulness of Instagram as a study tool, and students unanimously responded the account was helpful. Students commented that the posts, which appeared as they were scrolling through social media “procrastinating,” were helpful in getting them back on track for studying. Comments also included that the posts helped them retain information and were a fun way to review content.

At the end of the semester, 64% of the students in the course selected StudyGram as the most helpful study strategy they used during the entire semester. In addition, overall average examination scores increased significantly ($p < .05$) compared with the average scores for the previous four semesters. Perhaps most importantly, without prompt, 83% of students requested a StudyGram account for all future courses.

**Support for Strategy**

Although it has already been established that social media can be used in multiple ways by educational organizations to share and collect information, propagate university culture, connect students, and provide a place to collaborate on projects (Moghavvemi et al., 2018), little research has been conducted on the impact of social media on information retention and content focus. However, according to the complementary learning systems model, retention is increased by repetition, reactivations, and replay, which move content from recent memory to remote memory (McClelland et al., 1995).

The StudyGram strategy used in this study creates repetition of content exposure in a familiar, casual, and comfortable format that interrupts procrastination, according to student participants. This strategy also involved meeting students where they are by using the tested cohort’s preferred social media platform and not implementing hard deadlines or requirements that place undue focus on dates instead of content.

**Conclusion**

Social media is being increasingly used in higher education to create connections and collaborations (Moghavvemi et al., 2018; Gülbahar et al., 2017). Social media also can be used to improve student outcomes, as supported by seminal research on learning and retention (McClelland et al., 1995) and this research. Familiarity, casual comfort, repetition of content, and interrupting procrastination all led to improved student performance via a social media study tool.

**References**


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The authors have disclosed no potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise.

doi:10.3928/01484834-20200520-13