Project: Note Taking Skills

Team Members:
Jean Halpern: Associate Professor of Nursing at SUNY Orange
Georgia Rampe: Biology Teacher at Monroe-Woodbury High School and SUNY Orange
Summary of Partnership (Conducted April, 2007 Nursing II and September, 2007 Nursing I Class)

- **The Challenge:** Work collaboratively with my assigned faculty member from High School Biology- Instructor Georgia Rampe, to improve student success in both levels of study.

- **The Project:** The common goal was to increase student success in our classes and to prepare the students for taking exams by utilizing the *Note Taking Skills Sheet* that we created. (see attachment)

- **Objectives:**
  1. Students will develop techniques and strategies to enhance study skills
  2. Students will develop good note taking skills, especially during videos and instructor lectures
  3. Students will utilize critical thinking skills and apply knowledge to a given Medical or Scientific situation

- **Why select this topic?**

  During our first meeting with the Partnership, the group collectively decided the top ten reasons why students fail in high school and college. Among them were:

  1. Difficulty reading
  2. Poor study habits
  3. Non-motivated
  4. Do no value education
  5. Have been babied in prior grades
  6. Have difficulty focusing
  7. Lazy
  8. Forgetful and not organized
  9. **Poor note-taking skills**
  10. Social promotions

Having taught Nursing Lectures to Nursing 2 students for many years, I became aware of the difficulty that many students have in taking good notes. When the student who was failing an exam came to my office for help, the first thing I always asked the student was how they were taking notes. I immediately also asked to see their notes from class. I suddenly realized that most students needed help in organizing their notes and learning how to outline and re-copy the notes to study from for an exam. The other major difficulty I observed was that students slept during a video, did not take any notes and
failed questions on the exam pertaining to that information that was not in a lecture format.

Method:  Date Administered- April 18th, 2007 9am. Nursing 2 Class Medical Surgical Unit
Hematology - Leukemia

26 Nursing II students were studying Leukemia in the Cancer Unit. The video IN THE
BLOOD, described types of leukemia and new treatments. It was about 10 min in length.
Students had been given a sheet on note taking the week before. I told them to take notes
during the video and afterwards they had an open book quiz based on the video. They
also were asked if the exercise was helpful. I also did the lesson plans that went along
with the website at www.vcu.edu/lifesci/sosq. This was an excellent reference for both
high school and college classes on various topics with videos and plans for each selection.
The critical thinking part of the exercise was a case study on leukemia that they
completed based upon the knowledge they learned from viewing the video. (see
attachment for case study used). I also included questions on the next cancer quiz from
the video.

Results: 17/24 students said the exercise was helpful. (Overwhelmingly positive). Only 3
students said no, and 4 said it was some help. The exercise helped them take better notes
and stated that the paper on note taking was very helpful, even for college students.
The lowest number of questions wrong on the quiz was 1- to a high of ten….. 1-2, 2-7, 3-5,
4-4, 5-2, 6-1, 7-3, 9-1, 10-1. No one answered all of the questions correctly. There
was a 68% failure rate on the open quiz test.

Nursing I September 27, 29th 2007 - Fundamental Nursing Support groups-15 students in
each class were given the first day of class the paper we created on Note Taking Skills
and I discussed how important good note taking was to their success on exam scores. I
was unable to have them view a video and complete a case study because of the level of
student – being a novice learner.

Quiz given after viewing video- open note

Name___________________
After viewing the video:

1. Define Cancer______________________________________________________________
2. Define Leukemia

3. CML stands for

4. # of cases per year

5. ALL stands for

6. # of cases per year % cured

7. AML stands for

8. # of cases per year

9. What drug was the first used to inhibit the gene to target and destroy the lesion in CML and leave normal cells alone? 

10. List 2 leukemia’s that have a good treatment result. 1. 
2. 

11. One in match a bone marrow successfully.

Comments

Do you feel that this exercise helped to improve your note taking skills during the video? Explain.

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

Did you learn anything new after doing this exercise? 

_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
Student Comments

- Yes, it helped me to pinpoint important information and to listen to key words and terms
- Need to leave more room for notes, be more specific
- Yes, pay close attention to key points
- Yes, pay attention to smaller details, statistics are important
- No, I have been doing this all semester
- No, I take many notes already but pay attention to statistics
- Yes, concentrate more on note taking
- It made me pay attention
- Didn’t take it seriously and didn’t have the answers from the notes
- Yes, I realized I don’t take enough information down so you should write it even if you don’t think it is important
- Some of my abbreviations didn’t make sense
- No

View of the website used:
Note-Taking Skills

Reasons to develop good note-taking habits:

1. Note-taking keeps you on task.
2. Note-taking stops you from daydreaming.
3. Note-taking allows you to process information in two ways for better retention.
4. Note-taking provides you with something to refer to when studying.
5. Note-taking is a skill you will continue to use past your classroom days.

Most successful people take notes on a daily basis. No one can retain everything in their head.

How to Take Good Notes

1. Have plenty of paper. Leave spaces to add things in later and to prevent your notes from looking too crowded and complex.
2. Use a pencil or pen- whatever you prefer.
3. Have an alternate pen with a different color or a highlighter.
4. Always date the note page and all handouts.
5. Keep your eyes focused on the paper.
6. Write everything down - not just PowerPoint or board notes. Class discussions often contain vital information.
7. Use a lot of abbreviations and be consistent. Ex. P=patient, K+=potassium,
8. Use symbols for speed. Ex. ↑ increase, @ = at, Δ = change
9. If your teacher shows or draws a diagram copy it in your notebook, or note the page it appears in your textbook for future reference.
10. When you get home copy your sloppy notes into another clean notebook. Use different colored pens to emphasize important points. Transfer your notes actively, try to understand the material or retain it.
11. To test your knowledge, try doing some of the questions at the end of the chapter. No one will TELL you to do this. You have to take it upon yourself to be an active learner.
12. Videos are not for sleeping through. Videos are shown for a purpose. Some students learn better by seeing videos. Notes must be taken during videos so you can remember what you saw.
Outcomes:

What would I do differently? Barriers to the Project!

One of the main barriers to my project was the inability to have the identical class (Nursing2) being taught in the fall of 2007. My class in the fall is a beginning class with no experience in medicine or nursing and I could not give them the same content to view. I would like to try a different exercise with the beginning students and have perhaps a mini lecture prepared with a pre and post test given on the subject matter with a critical thinking component of the nursing process paper. My other nursing classes are skills classes which really do not pertain to the area on note taking. I was however, able to distribute the Note Taking Skills sheet to those in my Nursing I Support Classes and utilize the information. I plan on implementing this every semester.

Another concern of mine with the results of the quiz being so poor was the thought that students in the class were almost through with the course and may not have taken this exercise serious enough. A larger sampling size would be beneficial and I hope that other faculty in Nursing 2 might consider replicating this same lesson plan in the future with a pre-tests also. The case study that came with the lesson plans (on website) was very helpful and I also used another case study that was more specific to nursing students. (I would be glad to give a copy of this to any instructor that may have use for it in their class.)

Lessons Learned:

As a result of this partnership, I have gained so much more knowledge about the problems our students face in any level of education. I also learned about an actual bone marrow organization from the website on Leukemia, at Secrets of the Sequence Video Series on the Life Sciences, www.vcu.edu/lifesci/sosq.

I also hope that by identifying that students have difficulty taking good notes, I will be better able to assist students from the beginning of class and try to help them become successful earlier during the semester.

I would like to thank Georgia for being such a great partner and all her help and support with this project. Also I would like to thank Rosana for her guidance and the entire Partnership for such a great learning experience. I look forward to continuing my involvement in the program and hope I can in some small way, bridge the gap and help prepare students to be more successful in the Nursing Department.

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