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## Student views on learning stations about smoking

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### Abstract

The major goal of contemporary education is to make students having necessary skills to access and use knowledge as well as reasoning skills.

The study has a qualitative design. The sample of the study includes a total of twenty-two students in Baden-Württemberg state of Germany. The subjects were randomly selected.

It is also found that the developed course content is well-planned, teaches the knowledge that can be employed in everyday life and lead to reflection on smoking. It is concluded that hazards of smoking can be taught making connections with everyday life experiences.

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### 1. Introduction

Current educational approaches require educators to find and employ those instructional methods and techniques that maximize learning. However, it is commonly known that teachers usually use those instructional methods and techniques based on passive student roles. Nevertheless, students need to express, discuss their own views and to listen to the others' views so that those instructional method and instructions as well as learning-teaching activities that provide opportunities for these acts are required (Braun&Müller, 2006; Leppin at al., 2000; Hickmann, 1996; Meier, 1996).

One of such effective techniques to foster high-level skills of students is that of learning stations. Learning stations is a part of the idea of wheel. The idea of wheel is borrowed from sports science. Therefore, the learning wheel including learning stations and practice wheel was firstly used in training activities within sports science. Circuit training was developed by Morgan and Adamson (1952) in England. Different stations were designed so as to be used by sportsmen in a fixed order or by their own choice (Wiechmann, 2006; Judith, 2002; Tobler&Stratton, 1997; Wrede, 1996).

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### *1.1. Basic assumptions of learning stations*

Learning in groups is valuable for students. One of the most beneficial features of learning stations is that it offers groups based on students with distinct ability levels, needs and learning styles. Each student in the group is provided with opportunity to interact with other students and to share equipment, knowledge and skills. Moreover, while group members are responsible for a certain part of the topic, they all contribute to the work at hand. Learning stations have basic characteristics such as shared responsibility among group members, learning the interpersonal communication, shared leadership, feedback provided by teachers and students' evaluation of group effectiveness (Duvina, 2006; Berck, 1999; Bauer, 1997; Faust-Siehl, 1989).

The role of teacher in this context is that of organizer and when necessary, that of facilitator and of complementing. In other words, learning in this context is based on the principle of self-learning (Judith, 2002; Meier, 1996).

### *1.2. Goals pursued in learning stations*

In learning stations the goals of learning can vary as indicated in the following (Duvina, 2006; Eberwein&Thielen, 2006; Faust-Siehl, 1989):

- Instructional activities are implemented properly since learning stations offer several opportunities such as the use of different input channels, the development of various types of assignments and taking into consideration the challenges and help.
- Students themselves discover a particular content or subject that is predetermined in the groups organized depending on the students' individual pace.
- Students themselves deal with the topics in order to research about, experience and reflect about them.
- Learning stations make it possible for students to practice topics from materials or textbooks in order to make them competent in transferring assignments into various contexts using different perspectives and a multidisciplinary perspective under an integrated approach.

### *1.3. Organizations of learning stations*

Instructions for students in learning stations are clear and specific. These instructions are given to students. Instructions should be protected using necessary covers in order to avoid undesired damages on them. Presentations developed by the students are exhibited through poster presentations or exhibitions. For posters, all walls or windows can be employed. Using pins or fasteners etc. will facilitate this activity. Desks are organized for presentations (Czudnochowski, 2006; Hickmann, 1996; Meier, 1996).

Such a learning is one in which students are active learners. In other words, learner is an active participant of the learning process, guides his own learning, uses high-level thinking and decision making skills and collaborates with other learners. Therefore, learner is not a passive receiver of the information presented by the teacher but is an active participant of the learning process. Here the learner is not encouraged just to participate in the learning process but to make use of mental capabilities, think, comment on the learned information and make decisions related to learning in the process. The role of the teacher in this process is that of facilitator who organizes the process before the learning occurs. This study describes a course content developed using learning stations. The goal of the course is to develop in students an awareness against smoking and a conduct to struggle with smoking (Eberwein&Thielen, 2006; Judith, 2002; Faust-Siehl, 1989).

## **2. Method**

The data obtained in the study are analysed employing a qualitative technique. Therefore, the study is a qualitative study.

### 2.1. Sample

The sample of the study includes a total of twenty-two students in Baden-Württemberg state of Germany during the school year of 2008-2009 Spring term. The subjects were randomly selected.

### 2.2. Data collection tool

The data of the study were collected through the use of semi-structured survey questionnaire developed by the author. Firstly, twelve sample items were developed. Then, the number of items were reduced to four based on the views of the field specialists and because of the semi-structured nature of the survey to provide opportunity to ask flexible questions when needed.

Interviews were organized as group interviews. The reason for choosing this type of interview is that it provides opportunity to obtain much information in a short period of time as well as to expand the ideas, thoughts and experiences expressed due to interactions within the group setting (Mayer, 2006).

### 2.3. Development of learning stations

After reviewing options regarding the topic to be studied in the course, that of smoking was chosen as the topic of the course since it leads to serious damages to people's health worldwide. Accordingly, a total of six learning stations were developed with the aim of avoiding smoking habits. Then, course outline to be followed and evaluation tool that would be administrated after the implementation of the course were developed.

Lastly, material for stations were specified and necessary learning environment was organized for the course. The course was planned to be two hours for six learning stations.

### 2.4. Implementation

The materials necessary for the stations were provided before the course and stations were placed in the classroom followin the planned arrangement. The contents of the learning stations are as follows:

1. Smokey-Sue station: The overall aim of this station is to show the accumulated tar in the lungs as a result of smoking. The character of Smokey-Sue in this station firstly smokes. Tar in cigarette smoke is collected in the tube placed under Smokey-Sue. The students see the tar accumulated in the lungs through a stereo microscope.
2. Bronchoscopy station: The overall aim of this station is to make the students familiar with a medical method used for identifying the damages of the smoking in the lungs and to make them practise this method. The students reviews the lung of a sheep through the use of a flexible microscope with lights.
3. Lung volume measurement station: The overall aim of this station is to measure the human lung volume after taking a deep breathe using spirometer. The students discuss the results of this measurement using tables indicating the figures measured.
4. Sportsmen station: In this station, the students use spinometer to measure their lung volumes after taking deep breathe and later, after sitting down and standing up for twenty times and records these figures. The students discuss the results of this measurement using tables indicating the figures measured.
5. Economic saving of non-smoking station: The overall aim of this station is to indicate that smoking has economic damages behind its medical hazards. The students firstly calculate the potential six-month saving of a person who smokes if s/he quits smoking. Then, the students are asked to develop poster presentation regarding what can be bought using this money and to present the posters developed.
6. Drama station: This station requires the students to tell what they do when come across an event related to smoking in their daily life through drama.

## 3. Results (Findings)

The findings about the views of the students concerning learning stations are given in this section (Table 1.). The answers of the subjects to the items are exemplified as follows:

In answering the question "How were the learning stations?" , the students

briefly stated that the learning stations have been well-planned in terms of the content, have taught new information and have been a joyful teaching technique. Some examples of students' answers are given below:

"... the course was both entertaining and influential. [During the implementation] I learnt new information. For me [stations] were useful."

"...during the course I had a good time. After all [the contents of the stations] were well-planned. The materials [equipment] in the stations] were nice."

"... the course was not boring. Using the materials [instructional materials] was fun. They should be used in other classes."

"... the course was productive. I had a good time. No smoking..."

Table 1. Frequency table for the student views (N: 22)

Student views	f
The course was interesting.	20
The course was different from the other courses and I had a good time.	18
The materials were attractive.	18
I have learnt the topic better.	17
The course was both functional and influential.	14
Everybody expressed their ideas.	12
We were active in the course.	10
I have learnt the topic by doing and experiencing.	9
The seating organization was different.	8

In answering the question "Do you have any suggestion for improving the learning stations that you have experienced?", the students did not provide any suggestions to improve the learning stations except for three students. The suggestions offered by these three students are given below:

"... in the fifth station (economic savings of non-smoking), the allocated time was not enough. We could not finish the activity. Much time might be given to this activity."

"... in the drama station another play could be carried out."

"... in the sportsmen station, the number of sitting down and standing up is just twenty and is less, I want it more."

In answering the question "what are the effects of the learning stations on you in terms of your views concerning smoking?", the students provided the following answers.

"...it was influential to see and observe the hazards of smoking. I smoke once. But I will not smoke anymore."

"...Bronchoscopy was very impressive. It was really interesting that using this equipment our lungs can be observed. I will be a physician and help people to quit smoking.."

"... daddy smokes. He might buy many stuff for us instead of spending for smoking. When he will sick, he will pay much more money for his care...."

In answering the question "For you, what are the effects of such a learning in contrast to other learning techniques that you have experienced?", the student provided the followings:

"... I saw the damages of smoking. It affected me. I will never forget these damages. Learning the damages of smoking in this way is much more influential."

"...I participated in the course. Sometimes I could not take part in other courses. But in this course I had a great time and took responsibility. All courses should be like that ."

"... I influenced from the course. I see what will occur if I smoke [cigarette]."

"... the course made me more aware of the damages of [smoking]. Other children and my friends should also experience a similar course. I have learnt that how much money people spend for smoking and for the cure of cancer."

#### 4. Discussion and Recommendation

Today it is commonly agreed that learning by doing and experiencing is much more lasting. In this framework, students make use of their mental capabilities and experiences as well as take part in their own learning process and

tend to practise what they have learnt (Hinz, 2007; Carr, 1998). Recent research indicates that those learning approaches that regard the students as the focus and that provides the students with the opportunities to be active participants in the learning process are much more effective than those approaches that emphasize the memorization of facts and information (Hollederer&Bölskei, 2002).

Earlier the age of smoking, much more the amount of smoking. Most of the current preventive smoking programs tend to inform the participants about the damages of smoking on people's health. In other words, these programs are basically at the level of information. However, just having information is not enough for people to make decisions about quitting smoking. It is required that a person should be persuaded to change his smoking behaviour (Preuss, 2004; Beckmann, 2001). It is found that the materials employed during the course help the students. After the implementation, the students participated in the study have meaningfully learnt how smoking is hazardous for them and other people making connections with their daily life. It is realized through the development of the behaviour against smoking.

In the programs of struggle against smoking, there should special emphasize on avoiding the beginning of smoking (Sussman, 2002; Kersch, 1998). The students' views on the learning stations clearly demonstrate that the contents of the stations are well-planned and lead to learning with fun. It is also determined that the contents of the stations offer new information about the damages of smoking that can be transferred into everyday life and cause to reflect upon addiction. In other words, the course developed has produced bias (awareness) about smoking.

Health-care education should not be reduced just to physical health-care; instead, children should be trained to deal with psychological stressors as well as other stressors resulting from everyday life experiences (Beelmann&Thomas, 2006; Geistl, 2004; Schill at al., 2004). Therefore, programs should be long-term and based on multidisciplinary approaches. Furthermore, they should not be just at the level of information but provide the students with the opportunities to practise social and interpersonal skills acquired during the courses (Baumeister at al., 2008; Hurrelmann, 1998). It is also needed that a healthy learning environment should be provided for students to integrate these skills into their everyday experiences (Glockner, 2004; Bruvold, 1993). The perspective developed in the study can be used with other student groups.

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