

Evaluation of team-based learning (TBL) using focus groups in a cohort of undergraduate optics students

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The aim

To evaluate students' perceptions about TBL in a Level 5 optics related module using focus group sessions.



Benefits

- Gained a thorough understanding of students' experience with TBL.
- Students described positive aspects associated with TBL sessions such as working in smaller groups and feeling less stressed before the exam.
- Other benefits of TBL included working with others, helping with other modules and helping in their future careers.

The approach

After receiving ARU Ethics approval for this study I ran 2 focus in Sem 1 18/19. A total of 14 students took part in the sessions (7 students/each). All students invited to take part in the study had attended at least one TBL tutorial in Sem 17/18. The sessions were audio-recorded and students received refreshments and £10 Amazon voucher.

Data was transcribed verbatim and transcripts were managed by NVivo 12 and coded using an open coding technique. The data was broken down into: major themes (first-level) and sub-themes (second-level)

All data was coded by the principal investigator (MV-E). Final emergent themes need to be confirmed by panel (next phase analysis of this project)

The outcome(s)

- Positive feedback towards TBL in this optics module.
- TBL was useful in this numerical module where students need to carry out calculations.
- Students get used to working in the teams (first session needs to be a taster session).

Profile

Tutor name:

Dr Marta Vianya-Estopa

Faculty/Service:

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Future Development

The feedback gained during the focus groups sessions complemented previous information gathered using the 'Team-based Learning Student Assessment Instrument' questionnaire developed by Mennenga (2012). I plan to prepare a peer-reviewed article with these findings.

Recommendations

This module had TBL in tutorial sessions alongside traditional lectures. Students enjoyed having a variety of sessions (lectures and TBL sessions) as they believe learning something new for the first time might be difficult when working in groups. Similarly, other academics might consider introducing TBL in some sessions within their modules.