



What Types of Courses Best Prepare Students?

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Abstract

I wanted to do a study on how people learn best because I think it's important for instruction to be effective for productive learning. A lot of professors or future teachers need to know what style of class will work best for their learners. I wanted to know if college students learn best in lecture style, studio style or lab style classes and I thought college students would learn best in studio. In my results, I found that most students liked lecture style classes but learned best from lab style classes. I hope to take the knowledge I gained from this research into my classroom in the future.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to study how college students learn best.

Questions, Hypotheses, and Predictions

Question: built from purpose. Do college students learn best in lecture style, studio style or lab style classes?

Hypothesis: Studio courses would prepare students best for their future job.

Study System

For my study system I used students at Kansas State University that are involved in fraternities and sororities.



Methods and Experimental Design

When I chose to do this research, I started creating my survey. I included questions of demographics of the students in the research such as sex, year in school and type of major. I chose to ask this to have different types of results between the different groups of people. I also added my research questions of: what types of courses were your favorite, what types of courses do you feel like you learned the most in, what types of courses do you feel prepared you the best for a future job. After creating the survey, I looked for different fraternities and sororities to send my survey to. I sent the survey to the presidents of the fraternities and sororities to pass along to their chapter. The survey equipment I used was Google Forms so I could see the data change as people responded to the survey.

Results

We surveyed 222 college students about their course preferences. We found no differences based on gender, but some differences based on academic year and type of major. Specifically, there was a significant drop in preference for and learning in studio courses for junior and seniors. Moreover, non-STEM majors preferred lecture and studio courses, although both STEM and non-STEM majors thought lab courses best prepared them to get a job. Across all groups, lecture courses were students' favorite courses, yet they all thought lab courses better prepared them to get a job.

Conclusions

The conclusions that can be drawn from this study are (1) there is a significant increase in all questions that students liked lectures the most, but felt most prepared by labs. This piece of the study is important because it can help professors and teachers help prepare their students for their future jobs by making a more lab centered course rather than lecture centered.

Future Directions

To further this experiment, I would continue to ask the same group of people about why they chose labs as the style of course that they feel like prepares them best. Another step I would take is asking what most of college students learning style is and seeing if there is a correlation between course style preferences and learning style. Some things that I couldn't account for with my research was the quality of responses there could've been people who clicked through the survey instead of taking time to think about their responses. I tried to account for this by adding in a question at the end of the survey and asked the participants to rate their college experience thus far. I would love to move forward with this experiment because it would help me as a future teacher to know how my students will learn best and be prepared to teach them in that way.

References

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