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Studying Methods of Top Medical and Education Students in Yemen

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify the studying methods of top students of both the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Education in Yemen. An in-depth interview with 33 top students (20 medical students, and 13 from Faculty of education) from both genders have been conducted. The study methods used by top students were different, including study schedule, taking short notes, source of information, consulting with lecturers and senior students, good preparation for final exam and family support. The other studying methods reported by the participants are rewrite the topics and lectures in their own way, focused reading, attentive listening, summarizing, and memorizing. In addition, they prefer to listen and take short notes during lectures and use various mnemonics with other tricks and drawing diagrams during their studying. All the above mentioned methods including drawing diagrams, taking short notes during lectures, good preparation for the final exam and re-writing notes in their own way, are the most methods used by top students in Yemen.

الملخص:

هدفت الدراسة للتعريف بطرق الدراسة عند الطلاب المتفوقين في كل من كلية الطب وكلية التربية في جامعتي اب وتعز، اليمن. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 33 طالب وطالبة (20 من كلية الطب و13 من كلية التربية) من كلا الجنسين. تم اختيار الطلاب من خلال كشوفات النتائج. تكونت منهجية البحث من مقابلات معدة كتابيا وبشكل مفصل وتمت مع 33 طالب وطالبة وضمت المستويات من المستوى الثاني الى المستوى الرابع. تنوعت طرق الدراسة عند عينة الدراسة وتضمنت عمل خطة للمذاكرة، كتابة الملاحظات عند الاستماع للمحاضرة، البحث عن مصدر المعلومة، استشارة الزملاء والمدرسين. التحضير المناسب للاختبارات النهائية، والحصول على الدعم من الاسرة. كما ذكر المشاركون في الدراسة طرق تعلم مختلفة منها إعادة كتابة المواضيع والمحاضرات بطريقتهم المناسبة، القراءة المتعمقة، الاستماع بانتباه، التلخيص والحفظ. كما انهم يفضلون الاستماع واخذ الملاحظات اثناء المحاضرات واستخدام فنون استذكار متنوعة مع مهارات أخرى وأيضاً عمل رسوم بيانية اثناء المذاكرة. وعلية خلصت الدراسة الى ان المهارات المذكورة انفا هي الطرق المستخدمة من قبل الطلاب المتفوقين في اليمن.

Keywords: Medical students, Education, Yemen, Studying methods,

Introduction

Learning methods are the most significant and crucial key to improve the students' scores (Crede & Kuncel 2008).

This study is conducted to identify the studying methods used by the top students, and how they follow these methods, in order to improve their levels and how they are able to be top students. This is because the vast majority of top students achieve their success by developing and applying effective study

strategies so that, if all other students know these strategies, they can follow them to become top students as well. According to Kahtz & Kling (1999:23)“Developing instructional methods and materials that are appropriate for a wide range of cognitive learning styles should be a priority of all educators”. This study is also conducted to help the low level students improve their levels with more achievement and get better results .

This study is important because it provides the information and knowledge to the students about the best students' methods they used for their studies. The study presents an outcome of high experiences of top students that help other students to use and implement in their studies. Ellis (1994:245) described a learning style as the more or less consistent way in which a person perceives, conceptualizes, organizes and recalls information. Basically your learning style is the method that best allows you to gather and use knowledge in a specific manner. The learning style really matters. According to Silver et al (1997:9) "Learning styles are not fixed throughout life, but develop as a person learns and grows". This means if learners know how to develop the best learning style that is more effective, they will develop better knowledge and better scores .

The common learning styles can be categorized into three types: Visual Learners who fall into this category typically learn through what they are able to see with their own eyes. These learners love visual aids such as photos, diagrams, maps and graphs. Visual learners frequently are good writers and will commonly perform quite well on written assignments. Auditory learners are very good listeners. They tend to absorb information in more efficient manner through sounds, music, discussion, teaching, etc. These individuals will be more likely to record lectures so that they can replay them at a later time for study purposes. Kinesthetic learners are tactile learners. This means that they learn best through moving, doing, acting out and touching. Projects that are hands-on in nature are best for kinesthetic learners. Kinesthetic learners tend to become frustrated when they must sit for long periods of time. They enjoy conducting experiments, exploring and performing tasks (Ayres 2007). Ellington & Benders (2012) state that determining learning style can help students grow and succeed now and in the future. Therefore, the aim of this qualitative study is to explore the studying methods for top 10 students at Medical and Education Faculties in Yemen .

Methods

Population of the Study

The study population was carried out in the two main Universities in Yemen, namely: Taiz University and Ibb University. Both universities have well-established Faculties of Medicine and Education. The participants were selected from level 2, 3 and 4. The

population of the study consists of the top students, those who get (A+)/excellent scores in their studies .

Sample of study

The sample consisted of thirty-three students (20 medical students, and 13 from faculties of Education) from both genders. The selection of students is taken according to the registers of students results .

Data collection

This is a qualitative study. The design and the interview questions were based on previous studies with some modifications to suit the context of the Yemeni students. The participants were invited to participate in the in-depth interview. Consent forms were given to the participants before conducting the interview. The students were interviewed for 60 minutes. Questions were asked and propping questions added for more details to ask about learning methods that used by the interviewed students. The interviews conducted among students until the themes were saturated and no further interview needed .

Data analysis

Data analyzed according to the main themes obtained from the participants' interviews. The themes were categorized and analyzed manually .

Results

The total number of the participants was 33, 14 males, and 19 females from both faculties.

Table 1: socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants (N=33)

Variable	Categories	Number
Sex	Male	14
	Female	19
Age	Range	19-23 years
Faculty	Medicine	20
	Education	13

The in-depth interview of the participants yield seven themes which are described in the following paragraphs .

1- How to prepare schedule for your study?

The first item asks about how to prepare schedule for your study. Most of the participants said they don't prepare written schedule for their study. Twenty students said that they study each lecture on the same day of the lecture, and during weekends and holidays they study the lectures they feel difficult. Fifteen of

the participants said they always start with the difficult subjects and then go to the easy ones. Five of the participants said they divide their time according to the subjects' needs. Twenty-five of the participants are of the view of preparing for the coming lesson. One student said that she starts collecting information about the upcoming lectures and read them so that she grasps all the related information during the lecture. She adds, 'in new lectures there is a term and a new vocabulary which are dominant and they are the focus, so in case one doesn't get their meaning well, he/she will not be able to comprehend the topic that is being taught by the lecturer .

2- Number of hours the students spend in studying

Item two asks about the number of hours the students spend in studying. Nineteen of the participants read between 4-5 hours a day. Eight participants read between 3-4 hours, one says he spends 6 hours studying daily, while the rest study between 1-3 hours. The participants mentioned that they used to spend more hours in level one and the number of hours decreases as they come up to higher levels. It is worth mentioning here that most participants increase the number of hours during the exam period between 8-9 hours a day .

3- Studying style

Studying style that top students use and like most, is included in third item. Ten participants use the following: they start with reading, then understanding, then summarizing and finally memorizing. Reading silently is the most agreeable between the participants and only one student prefers to read aloud. Another way is to highlight/circle or underline the important information. Other students draw mental images in their minds and use maps, tables or diagrams. Five students use the style of explaining, they study through explaining to themselves and ask themselves questions. One student says my studying style is that when I start studying, the books, the pens, the dictionary, and the notebook are my world. That is, I don't know what is going around as all my attention, senses and focus is on the topics/lessons before me. Another student says, she always imagines that there is a large audience before her and she addresses them with the information she learns. Another participant comments when she finishes memorization, she asks someone to listen to her and underlines her mistakes to revise them later on. Really, the participants men-

tion styles such as using visual and aural style, make actions/acting, explaining to one self, and interaction .

4- Taking notes during lectures

Item 4 asks whether they take notes or not during lectures. Thirteen of the participants said, they try to write all what the teacher says. At home they rewrite it, add some ideas and supporting details and they depend on them as one important source of information for the final exam. Seventeen of the participants always take notes during the lectures. WikiHow (2019:4) states that studies show that writing things down helps the students remember better and faster.

5- learning style

Item 5 asks about the learning style. When the learner knows the best learning style that suits him, it means less effort, high marks, and more understanding. All the participants are of the view that learning style is an important key to improve learners' levels. One participant said the things that differentiate between the excellent students and those slow learners are the learning style and the strategy they use. Some research suggests that the types of study techniques that a student uses affect exam performance. How students prepare for tests can be a crucial element in their achievement. Because certain study techniques are more beneficial than others, instructors should help students more effectively prepare for exams by informing students about the techniques and modifying ways to best help students use the techniques. How students study does actually seem to matter.

6- Studying methods

The studying methods that top students use are included in item 6. Ten of the participants said that discussion is the fastest method for studying effectively. 15 of the participants said that rewriting in your own way, what you have read and understood, is one of the best studying methods. About 19 are of the view that studying silently is the fastest method for understanding; it keeps the person with energy longer and less tired. One student says he links the ideas to his real life situations. The participants are of the view that the lecturer's teaching method, in this respect, is to elicit information from the students and don't give them the information in a direct way. This helps the students to study hard and improve their thinking and creativity .

7- Actual studying methods used

Again item seven asks participants of the studying methods they really use. The participants have various answers. They mentioned that the type of the

lesson determines the studying method. Generally, most participants said, they ask themselves questions before they start studying: what is the aim? What should I know and learn? What should I understand? And what should I memorize? Now these are some of the studying methods mentioned by the participants: get the main ideas first, then scan for details, using different sources. The lessons which need only understanding, I read them several times to understand and then answer the exercises that follow if there are or I make my own questions and answer them, I always expect every point to be in the exam and prepare suitable answer for each. Another method used by the students is that they make an image of the context, the figures, and the subtitles. 'I never move to another point unless I understand the first' one student states. One student takes teacher's role then he starts studying as if he is teaching students so that he knows how much information he fails to convey. WikiHow (2019:3) states that try teaching to some stuffed toys as if they were your pupils. Once you can teach someone else you really know it. This helps to remember 80% of the information that you teach .

Discussion

Most of our participants read between 4-5 hours a day. Previous study by Wilson (2006:6) stated that students should anticipate investing a minimum of 2 hours outside of class and about 4 hours on homework problems per week. Another study emphasized on the hours studied mentioned that several factors influence student performance on exams include hours studied, careful textbook reading, a quiet study environment. Hours studied were positively related to exam scores (Perlmann et al. 2002).

Al-Naggar and Osman (2016:1829) state in their research that the study methods by top students were divers including study schedule, notes, source of information, consult with senior students, consult with lecturers, good preparation for final exam and family support .

Starting with reading, then understanding, then summarizing and finally memorizing. This is effective way because the students use several senses to learn and remember their subjects, using more than one sense may fix the information and they can recall it anytime they want. Writing all what the teacher says, adding some ideas and supporting details are important sources of information for the final exam. Dickinson and O'Connell (1999) also showed that

time spent organizing course material (e.g. taking notes on the textbook) related to test scores .

Most of the participants checked out previous exam forms to find out how the teacher is handling the questions. Al-Naggar and Osman (2016:1829) reported that the majority of the top students include past year question papers as a medium for their final preparation for examination. Knowing the previous exams make the students familiar with the format used in the previous exam when they try past year question papers and they believe that some of the questions might be repeated in the examination (Wyatt et al. 1997: 27).

Discussion is the fastest method for studying effectively. Discussion usually enriches the understanding of the subject from all aspects and may help students to excel in their study. Starting with the difficult things and move to easy ones to save time, and the learners are influenced by their teachers and lecturers.

Students' believes and desires accompanied by teachers' guidance and support help positively to get high marks. This is reported by Okpala et al (2000) that self-confidence plays a major role in student's grade .

Conclusion

Drawing diagrams, taking short notes during lectures, good preparation for the final exam and re-writing, reviewing highlighted material, figures, and tables in the text are the most and best methods used by top students. Students who get high and excellent marks in exams are not more intelligent than those who don't get high marks. The students who get excellent marks are more focused and they develop habits that help them to get high marks.

Recommendations

The students should be guided and trained by instructors how to manage their time during their studies. Write down the new information and put them in sequences. Build relationships with outstanding colleagues and those of previous patches. Check out previous exam forms to find out how the teacher is handling the questions. Studying difficult topics at the peak of mental activation .

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