



Original Contribution

IMPLEMENTING INTERACTIVE METHODS OF TEACHING IN TRAINING OF NURSES AT TRAKIA UNIVERSITY, BULGARIA – AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The social and economic changes and the ongoing health care reform in Bulgaria demand new professionalism of nurses. The undergraduate education is challenged to produce a new kind of nurse. Innovative methods of teaching are needed for achieving this goal.

Purpose: Aim of the study is to analyse the impact of implementing interactive methods of teaching on the knowledge, attitude and behaviour of the first-year students in nursing.

Methods: The target group consists of 66 students at The Medical college of Haskovo - Trakia University, Bulgaria. Time of the investigation was the 2004/2005 academic year. A direct group inquiry and direct observation were applied. The results were statistically analysed by the means of the statistical packages SPSS v. 10 and Microsoft Excel 97.

Results: Most of the students (89%) expressed a positive attitude to the innovative methods that have been applied. Their communication and problem-solving skills were significantly improved especially their ethical behaviour – respecting patient's autonomy (75%) and keeping the confidentiality and trust when communicating with patient.

Conclusion: Interactive methods increase activity and motivation of the students to apply their knowledge in a creative way on the basis of proper professional attitude and humanistic behaviour.

Key words: innovative, knowledge, attitude, communication, ethical, motivation, humanistic, professional

INTRODUCTION

The social and economic changes and the ongoing health care reform in Bulgaria demand new professionalism of nurses. The undergraduate education is challenged to produce a new kind of nurses with new professional behaviour, thinking and culture. That makes necessary paying special attention to the selection and application of methods used in their training.

There are many reasons for the interactive technologies in the system of preparation of the future nurses to show up. This is connected, on one hand, with the active presence of the phenomenon "interactivity" in different areas of scientific knowledge and with the aspiration for interaction between persons while solving problems, including global ones (1). On the other hand, the orientation to interactive methods of education of students is in the

context of introducing the informational technologies and the necessity of nurses to become competitive with respect to their colleagues in other countries of the European Union.

The question for reconsideration and constant improvement of the educative medical programmes in order to be adequate to the changing conditions of living has been worked out at a world scale for more than three decades. (2, 3) The medical education in the whole world is ready for revolutionary alteration. The changes in education in the 70 years of the 20th century have been put by persuasion and political decisions. Today innovations are sustained by evidence. (4)

A previous empirical study of training students-nurses that has been performed at The Trakia University, Medical College - Haskovo, shows that applying only traditional methods of training and education does not lead to the desired results. Students lack detachment. There is no connection between the subjects and there are difficulties in putting into practice the assimilated theoretical education.

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A model of the system of pedagogical interaction in the college has been elaborated and tested in order to help overcome these tendencies in the education of health care professionals. One of its basic components is the priority in the use of untraditional didactic methods – case discussion, role-play, SWOT-analysis, problem solving in an urgent situation, “the five important things” technique.

Aim of the study is to analyse the impact of implementing interactive methods of teaching on the knowledge, attitude and behaviour of the students of nursing. This piece of work, which is a part of a larger research in the field of professional and moral formation of medical specialists, reflects the positive changes from the point of view of the students themselves. (5)

Tasks:

- a. To analyse the changes, occurring in the professional behaviour of the students, with emphasis on the ethical attitude toward the patient;
- b. To determine students' satisfaction in applying innovative methods of education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

66 students of specialty “Nurse” in Medical College-Haskovo were enrolled in the study. Six lecturers in Health care from the same college also participated. Time of the study was during the 2004/2005 academic year. The following sociological methods have been applied – direct group inquiry, interview and direct observation.

The results are statistically analysed by the means of the statistical packages SPSS v. 10 and Microsoft Excel 97.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most of the students were female (97%). Their average age was 20.67 years. The distribution by the year of training is as follows: first-year students – 29; second-year students – 20; third-year students – 17.

The interview showed that the students considered the abilities for communication with patients as very important. Among the second, third and most of the first-year students, they agreed that the autonomous model had transformed their permanent characters. This is a guarantee for ethical relations between the future medical

specialists and their patients.

The informed consent was in the centre of the autonomous model. It is a basic issue in a number of new models of relations with the patient, based on trust as well. (6,7) The answers of the question: “Do you ask the patient for his/her consent before taking healing-diagnostic action?” showed that 95% of the third-year students, 85% of the second-year students and 70% of the first-year students always asked the patient whether he/she agreed with the action or not. The rest of the students gave the answer “Not always”. The fact that there were no negative answers after applying the model in practice was impressive (**Figure 1**).

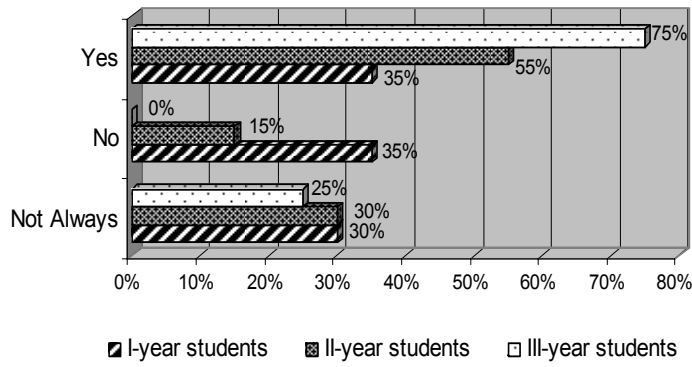
Another basic ethical requirement was keeping the confidentiality. It evolves from the respect to the patient’s autonomy. The research showed that students thought of confidentiality as a basic factor in building relations of trust. While solving the presented cases the students were mindful of the degrees of breaking the medical secret and were aware of who could and at what occasion a patient’s secret could be revealed. It was observed among students and lecturers that the propensity to reveal colleagues’ and patients’ secrets decreased among the first-year students. Such a pre-study negative trait was not common among second and third-year students. The results on **Figure 2** clearly show the increased level of trustworthiness among the future medical specialists.

This fact is a proof that students have become more confident in their own possibilities to work in real hospital atmosphere. That was the reason for their satisfaction with the model.

Of great importance was the fact that 89% of the students had a favourable attitude to the methods of education, 6% could not judge and 5% gave a negative answer. Students who gave an affirmative answer shared that these methods helped them assimilate the educative matter easier and put their learning into practice (**Figure3**).

This can be proved by the answers of the question about the satisfaction from the training in the college as a whole. According to the results, the percentage of the third-year students who gave positive answers rose from 77% to 95% -first-year students, from 66% to 89% - second-year students and from 60% to 85% - third-year students (**Figure 4**).

Before Applying The Model



After Applying The Model

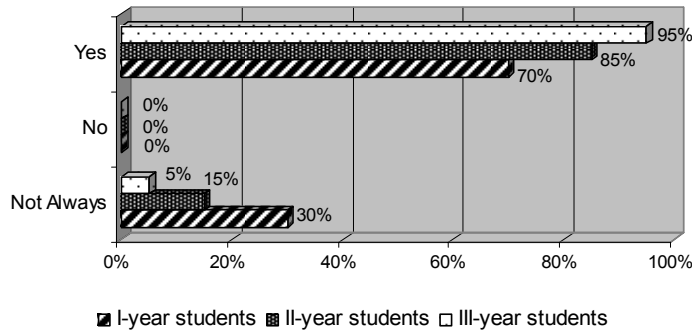
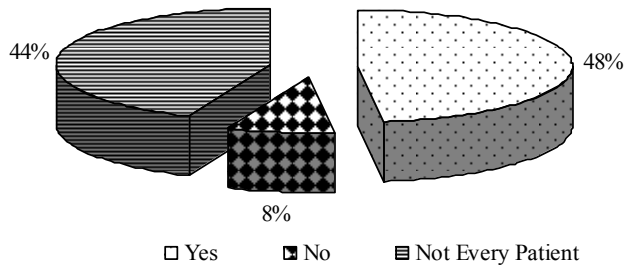


Figure 1: "Do you ask the patient for his / her consent before taking healing-diagnostic action?"

Before Applying The Model



After Applying The Model

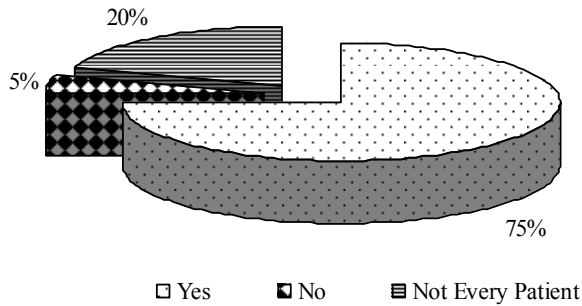


Figure 2: "Do you think your behaviour makes the patient trust you?"

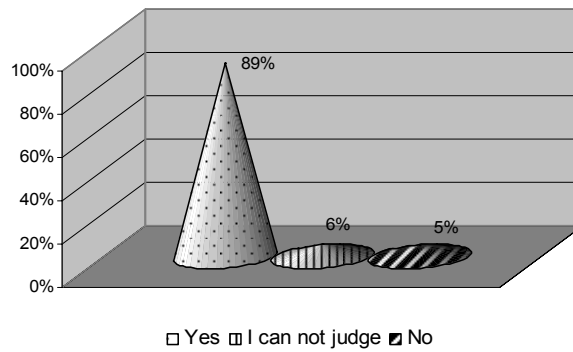
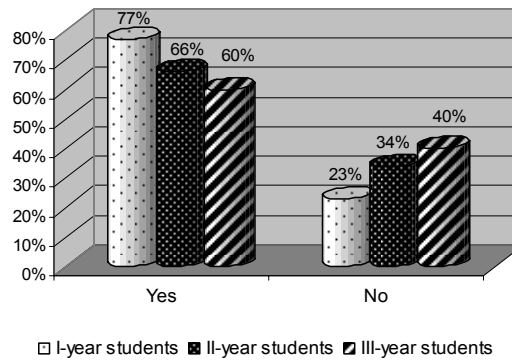


Figure 3: “Do you approve the new methods of education?”

Before Applying The Model



After Applying The Model

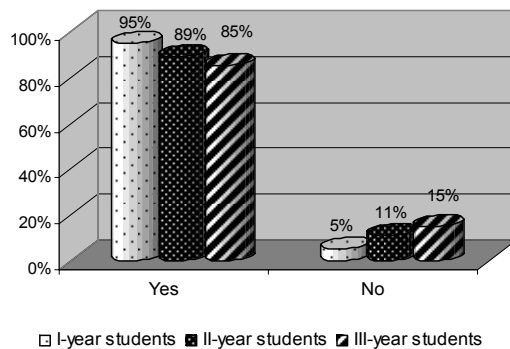


Figure 4: Satisfaction with the education in Medical College

CONCLUSIONS

1. The innovative methods in education raise the level of students’ cognitive activity and their motivation for ethical and professional behaviour.
2. These methods can be considered as successful for the process of forming competent and highly humane nurses. They help the creative application of acquired knowledge and the formation in the future nurses of a professional style of thinking, personal qualities and abilities for rational association.

DEDUCTION

Interactive methods increase activity and motivation of the students to apply their

knowledge in a creative way on the basis of proper professional attitude and humanistic behaviour. The effective interactive method of approach presumes a good planning of time and place of the interactive methods in accordance with the concrete situation. The choice of appropriate methods and their number depend on the specific character of the educative matter, on the students’ capability for separate and team work, on the motivation and the willingness of the lecturer for using these methods. “The art” is in the synchronization of traditional and interactive methods (8).

Testing the usage of interactive methods of education allows the lecturers to determine the exact measure of optimum distance in the communication with students,

which will bring them near and will ensure the best results in the training-educative process.

The results of our experimental work confirm the thought of the French alternative pedagogue Célestin Freinet: "To learn something, first you have to experience it" (8).

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