

Dynamic Interaction: Middle-level Group Activities in Supplemental Instruction

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Agenda

Research Presentation

1. How to activate groups and engage students in class discussion
2. How to orientate the role of leaders in SI for group dynamics?

Workshop

Introduction

PASS/Sl: learning efficiency, academic performance

Participant Interaction: Marketing, behaviour science

The Role of Leaders: Ambivalent

Collaborative and Interactive approach: productive group discussion

Background

SI (Supplemental Instruction): the US and Canada

PAL (Peer Assisted Learning): the UK

PASS (Peer Assisted Study Session): Australia and New Zealand

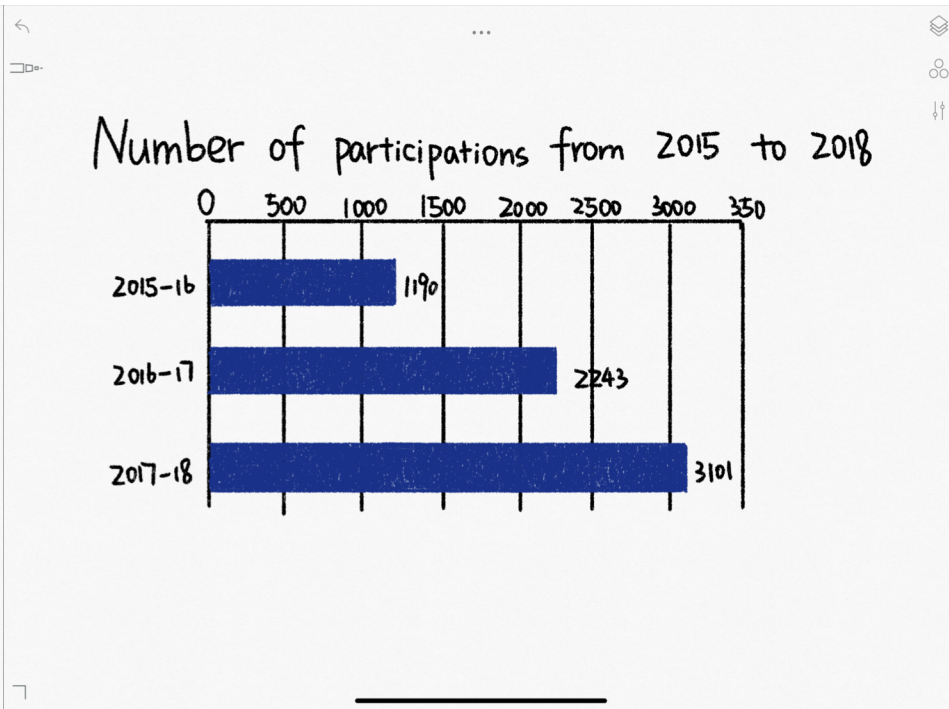
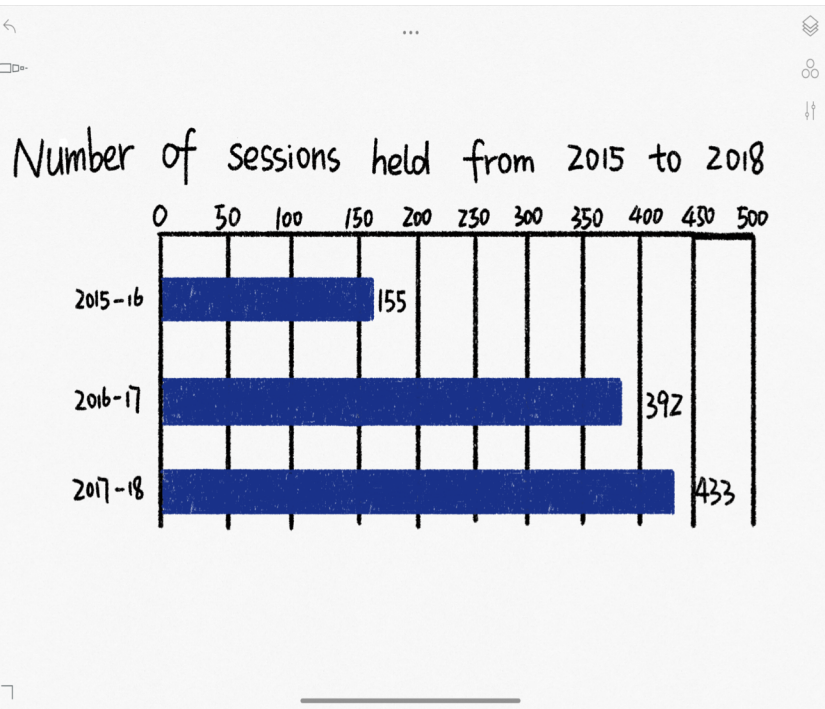
Background



PASS@GEF

Students work together in a relaxed and supportive learning environment to improve understanding of the texts and develop effective reading skills.

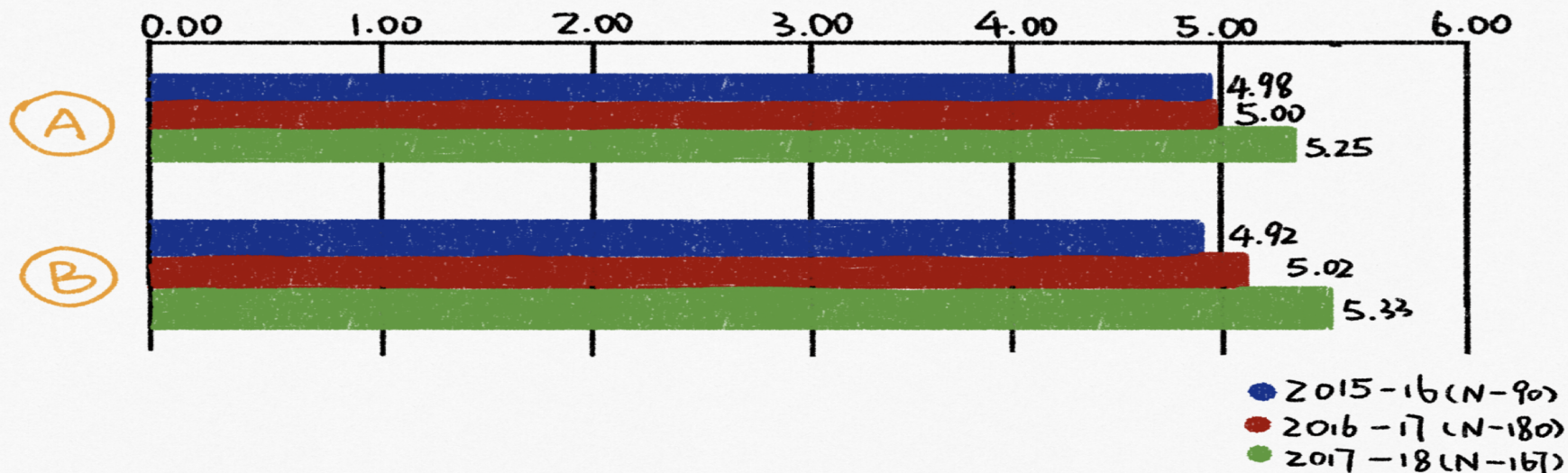
Background



Background

(A) Overall speaking, I am satisfied with PASS.

(B) Overall speaking, I am satisfied with the PASS leader(s).



Literature Review

The University of Missouri-Kansas: Higher GPA, lower rate of withdrawal

Chemical Engineering (Kieran and O'Neil, 2009)

Chemistry and Statistics (Miller et al., 2004)

Education (Heirdsfield et al., 2008)

English Literature (Longfellow et al., 2008)

Mathematics (Cheng and Walters, 2009)

Medicine (Naqi, 2014)

Physiotherapy (Hammond et al., 2010)

Participant Interaction

Complexity theory (Power, 2010)

Interconnectedness and interrelatedness (Doll, 2008)

More knowledgeable others (Vygotsky, 1978)

Peers interaction (Rogoff, 1999)

Active learning in interaction (Biggs, 1999)

The Role of Leaders

The leader should be...?

The Role of Leaders

High achieving students with excellent communication skills (Stout and McDaniel, 2006)

Model student: authority (Hammond et al., 2010)

Knowledge giver (Berghmans et al., 2013)

Subject expert (Chng et al., 2011)

Methodology

10 Focus groups

5-12 participants of each

30 minutes group discussion

Methodology

Proposed Questions for Participants

Opening Question:

Any feedback to today's session?

Further Questions (Alternative):

Why you came to PASS?

How would you describe PASS to another student?

What is the difference between PASS and lecture?

What have you learned by attending PASS?

How do you evaluate the performance of your leader?

Methodology

Name	Gender	Time	Course
Sara	Female	2017-2018	FH
Jack	Male	2017-2018	FH
Ken	Male	2017-2018	FH
Yuki	Female	2018-2019	FH
Lily	Female	2018-2019	FN
Joe	Male	2018-2019	FN
Joy	Female	2018-2019	FN
Connie	Female	2018-2019	FN

Findings

- Comfortable Environment
- Group activities in student interaction
- The role of leaders

Comfortable Environment

- The size of room

“the first two sessions were held in a small, dark classroom which was intense and I could tell students were nervous; when we moved to a brighter room, I felt students changed a lot”. (Joe, Leader)

- The use of equipment for teaching

“I have to be busy with marking down all notes showed on powerpoint, I say it's good to have extra materials, but when he (the leader) used powerpoint, I think I stay at the same class.” (student 13)

Comfortable Environment

The number of students

What is the “perfect” number of students for SI?

Comfortable Environment

The number of students

“The PASS was helpful as we could go over the coursework in smaller and manageable groups. You don’t have to be very serious, we always play jokes and some words to amuse each other. Just like everyday communication.” (student 7)

“We are more likely to have a group discussion if we have a small number, while it will become a one-direction lecture when 33 students came to my session, since I have to take care of their different needs.” (Yuki, Leader)

Comfortable Environment



Comfortable Environment

The sit setting

“The session can be fully used if they sit in a circle. For the same number of students, they were very passive in the first semester, and I felt anxious, but when they sat in a circle, they will discuss automatically even without my intervention or direction.” (Joy, Leader)

“PASS is friendly and non-threatening, we sit around like informal gathering...I felt I could ask any questions I wanted, ” (student 18)

Comfortable Environment

The informal relationship build-up

“You have to let students get familiar with you first, and they will feel very embarrassed if you are a stranger. The first step is friendship, and you should remember their names to let them know they are respected. The same for students, you should have an ice-breaking activity to create a relaxing environment. After all, we are peers, and they will gain more confidence to talk about their opinions because they know I won’t score them or laugh at them even they say something not that correct.” (Ken, Leader)

Comfortable Environment

Online community

“The time of our session is limited; it seems we don’t have time to go through all questions, so we post questions to our group, and we will discuss next time.”
(student 23).

“I created a Google group, all of them were anonymous, they exchanged resources and learning materials, posted questions which they felt difficult when reading texts...they have some questions in mind, and they know next time we will discuss his/her questions, so the student will come to my session to figure it out.”
(Sara, Leader)

Student Interactions

Rehearsal and Confidence

“I feel it is difficult for me to share my thoughts before class very quickly, my language skill is not that good, so I can’t express my opinions at a short time. After practising in the group, I have more confidence to speak to other students and my teacher.” (student 11)

“I didn’t feel like I was being looked down on if I said something stupid... It was good to chat with someone who has recently dealt with similar difficulties in this subject. So, I can share my opinions in my group first, but I know my leader will evaluate my argument if i say it first.” (student 25)

Student Interactions

Relationship

“The teacher is more like your supervisor; you will die if you say something wrong. The leader see you with God’s perspective. But you know your classmates have a similar understanding with you.” (student 12)

“If one student is asked to answer my question, he/she will feel the similar pressure as a tutorial, one student said he wouldn’t come to my PASS if I asked him questions directly. Instead, they are more confident after the discussion. Besides, if I raise a question, they think it has nothing to do with each, but when $1/20$ changes to $1/4$, they know they have to make contributions to this group.” (Yuki, Leader)

Student Interactions

Diversity

“They believe that they will get some inspiring points from group discussion, and these sparks can motivate them to seek information and acquire inspiration from other subjects.” (Lily, Leader)

Student 15, “The interaction with others was useful I can see some different perspectives from my group members and perfect my answer. Like you, you are doing religion studies, so you can always inspire me when we learn Bible.”

Student 17, “Yes, it’s very interesting to see how non-religious people study texts from Bible, I feel I love share and learn from others.”

Student Interactions

New ideas

“It’s very helpful to get something new when you communicate with others. Compared with class discussion after the question, it’s more like a brainstorm. We do have different understandings for the same text, but now you will think about why different? and to think about if you can justify your argument.” (student 3).

Student Interactions

Grouping Skills: To create necessary conflicts

“This religious text shows a difference about marriage between man and woman, so I divided the session into male and female groups. I asked them to write down their answers on mini-whiteboard, just answer yes or no, or some keywords. Obviously, boys and girls had very different perceptions, so they had a hot debate when they saw different answers. You should do something to let them notice a difference, and difference means debate.” (Yuki, Leader)

Student Interactions

Grouping Skills: Competitive groups rather than competitive individuals

“One session was about the ladder of love, so I asked students if they can draw a ladder of love based on the text in a group and share to whole session, sometimes students are not competitive, but the group integrity make you feel you have to do a better one for your group. They shared with each other and I could feel they learned how to do collaborative work after this.” (Joe, Leader)

The Role of Leaders

Students' Perspective: The authority who have standard answers.

“ I will ask the leader to verify my answer is true or not, sometimes my leader can help me correct my opinions.” (student 48)

“We are actually at the same level, but students expect you know more than others, sometimes they are not satisfied with a facilitator, but they hope a controller to give them a correct answer.” (Lily, Leader)

“Students are really dependent on PASS Leaders and have the hope of marking down correct answers, but they will get used to your style gradually and finally, they will find which way is more beneficial.” (Ken, Leader)

The Role of Leaders

Expectation: Moderator

“sometimes students share their personal opinions only and have no consciousness of commenting others’ answers, so leaders need to pay special attention to this to facilitate group discussion.” (Ken, Leader)

“When I explain or elaborate the problem, I am like a teacher, but now I am more like a guide to help them discuss, I think I am more like a lubricant or catalyst.” Yuki would introduce her role in the first session, “I told students maybe I would say something you disagree, it’s very normal, and you can stick to your opinions and use evidence to argue.” (Joy, Leader)

The Role of Leaders

Transgression

“The most enjoyable thing is that your students ask you about how to become a PASS leader, you will know he/she must be stimulated by your facilitation.” (Jack, Leader)

“After group activities, students have more questions which will go deeper and deeper, so sometimes I can’t give a clear way or opinions, I will ask the teacher and redirect to other students next time.” (Joy, Leader)

Conclusion

- Comfortable environment
 - The appropriate classroom size
 - A comparatively small number of students
 - Sit in a circle
 - Informal friendship
 - Online community
- Student interaction
 - Rehearsal and confidence; Relationship; Diversity; New ideas
 - Grouping: necessary conflicts; competitive groups
- The role of leaders
 - Moderator
 - Transgression

Discussion

Edge of chaos: out of control

Generalisation: General education has more space to discuss

Questions

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