The Negative Effect of Skipping Workshop on Academic Performance

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Introduction

Workshops have become an integral part of the University of Rochester course structure. Many courses integrate this unique system into their structure. As workshop leaders it became clear early on that students have different levels of motivation while in workshop and sometimes students even choose not to attend workshops.

It is hypothesized that students that are unhappy with the workshop program are more likely to skip workshop. In doing so they directly injure their academic performance. More quantitatively, a student who reports negative feelings during workshop is more likely to skip workshop. When a workshop is skipped that week’s homework grade suffers along with the students midterm performance.

This hypothesis was shared and found to be valid in J.W. Hollister’s study of the effect of workshop attendance on General Chemistry class performance.

Discussion

Throughout the workshop process, academic performance was assessed for the first seven homework assignments as well as the two midterm exams. The assessment of student reaction to workshops was conducted after the second midterm. The survey consisted of questions about student emotion during workshop as well as a using a Likert scale for stress, hunger, and tiredness. Finally, the weekly averages of those who attended workshop and those who didn’t were compared for each homework and for the midterms.

After comparing the weekly scores of the entire class with those of the students who did not attend workshop that week it was found that in all but one instance the average performance of the workshop non-attendees was lower than the class average. This suggests a correlation between workshop attendance and academic performance. The comparison of test performance on both midterm exams between those who had skipped workshop in the preceding weeks and the class average showed a similar trend, though less striking.

For the class as a whole, the top words used to describe in-workshop emotions were primarily positive: calm, productive, efficient, and tired. This is essentially the inverse of the non-attendee group who chose words such as hungry, bored, aimless, and overwhelmed to describe how they felt during workshops. Students who regularly attended workshop also reported lower levels of feelings of stress, fatigue and hunger during their workshops than those who chose not to attend some of their workshops.

Conclusion

The data collected does suggest a correlation between workshop attendance and classroom performance. Before making a concrete judgment on this link more factors such as personality, intelligence, and other life circumstances should be taken into consideration.

The data also suggested that students who felt higher levels of satisfaction with their workshops were more likely to attend and, thus, improve their performance.

As this was a study of only one class, a larger sample size could also provide more conclusive results.

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References