The Effect of Non-Academic Social Time on Group Cohesiveness and Overall Understanding

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Research Questions:
• Does increasing social interaction increase collaboration?
• Does increased collaboration increase understanding?

Methods:

Survey (1 – 10 scale)
• How comfortable do you feel talking to other member of the class about workshop problems?
• How comfortable do you feel talking to other members of the class in general?
• Do you feel that other students contribute to your learning?

Survey (1 – 10 Scale)
• Repeat of 3 original questions, plus two additional questions
• How often did you collaborate with another student on the workshop problems during today’s workshop?
• How comfortable would you feel answering questions similar to today’s workshop questions on an exam?

Data source: four Biology 110 Workshops, two weeks
Control: Two Biology 110 Workshops

10 minutes social time

Workshop

Results:

Survey Results: Week 1 vs. Week 2

Comparison of Student Responses Before and After Workshop

Comfort Talking to Peers about Workshop Problems vs. Comfort Talking to Peers in General

Comfort Talking to Peers about Workshop Problems vs. Amount of Collaboration

Amount Collaborated vs. Comfort Answering Similar Questions

Conclusions:
• Starting comfort levels were high, indicating success of previous workshops
• Level of comfort, collaboration, and understanding slightly increased
  • Exception to trend: Survey 2 Question 1 – may have resulted due to type/difficulty of workshop questions
  • Social time increased amount of collaboration
• Limitations in data:
  • Small sample size (23 students per week)
  • Length of study (2 weeks)
• Further research:
  • Begin study earlier in semester
  • Other possibilities that effect collaboration: workshop leader, group size, workshop location

References:

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