The Learning Environment

Jessica Yun, Kristine Kniaziewicz, Ye Jin
Learning Assistants for Statistics 200, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16803

Introduction

The Learning Environment plays an enormous role for how a student will learn and grasp the material that is being taught to them. Such elements as in seating position, effectiveness of the teacher connecting to the student, and the student’s ability to adjust in a new environment are things that can help or hurt the student to learn. We read three articles that relate to the learning environment and saw how these three elements were similar and different.

Results and Graphs

After reading the three articles we chose, similarities and differences between them.

Similarities

- Focus on an element of the Learning Environment
- Each had a strength and weakness
- Focuses on how a student can learn better
- If one part of a student’s environment is negative, so is their mindset on learning.
- There must be a relationship between the student and the people who help develop their learning.
- The articles displayed a weakness in each relating to some aspect that does not relate to the overall article.
- The learning environment follows the student throughout their years in school.

Differences

Each element effects the student differently
- Seating location affects how a student is active in class
- Poor and minority students are affected by stereotypes
- Teaching assistants affect the students was of maintaining a material.

Two articles concentrated mainly on the students, while the third focused on a lead figure in the students’ learning environment.

My Experience

- As an immigrant from Korea, I always kept in mind that I have to try more than anyone else in school since I don’t know English. I studied hard, tried all my best, and did whatever to prove that I can do it. I agree that external factors do not matter on performances. I can say this since I got all As for the first three years that I first came to the United State. If you believe in your ability and the potentials you have, nothing is impossible.
  - Jessica Yun

- Seating position does have an impact on learning. I went from sitting in the back to sitting in the front of the classroom, I found factors such as being unable to hear the teacher, seeing and reading the board, and “easier distraction” increased the farther I was from the teacher. As of now, I sit in the front of all my classes so these factors do not affect me. So in a way, seat location does have an effect on a student.
  - Kristine Kniaziewicz

The above graph is from The Surprising Impact of Seat Location of a Student’s Performance. This shows the comparison of a students attendance (light grey) verses their distance from assigned seat (black).

Conclusion

Our conclusion is separated into three targets that our articles concentrated on in regards to teaching practices. These targets were the Supplemental Instruction Staff, College Science Professors, and College Science Students.

For the Supplemental Instruction Staff, ways of improving their facilitation strategy includes:

- Always stay positive, the mood you are in greatly affects the learning atmosphere a student is in. (~)
- Keep the classroom together, students are more willing to find out how to accomplish a task (+)
- Walk around the classroom, it eliminates the “front seat” idea. (*)

For the College Professor, ways of improving their teaching practices include:

- A healthy balance, letting the student believe that they have the ability to learn, and that their effort will only maximize that ability (-)
- They should know that most of the lower achievers are at risk for believing that their poor performance results from lack of ability (-)
- Walk around the classroom, encourages the student to ask more questions because they no longer feel uncomfortable asking in front of a whole class. (*)
- Use learning/teaching assistants, if the teacher is stuck in the front of the room, have them in the back to help students in the back

For the College Science Student, ways of improving their teaching practices include:

- Believe. Students who believe that ability is a fixed thing tend to be less resilient about failures
- Attendance. Students who attend regularly seem to have an easier time with the class. (+)
- Encourage group work. With students talking to other classmates, their comfort level increases and so does their understanding.

Resources


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The above picture is from The Impact of Teaching Assistants on Student Retention in the Sciences. This shows the ratings of Teaching Assistants based on the statistics of how the student performs in class.