

Integrating a Gallery Walk in a Nursing Classroom: A Nurse Educator's Perspectives and Student's Reflections

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Abstract

Teaching and learning are two important components that travel synchronously in the journey of education. It is also like two sides of a coin that is used in our day-to-day life. Current students need newer and interactive method of learning. Gallery walk is an active learning approach performed in the classroom, which facilitates students to gain knowledge on a specific subject matter through interaction. The main aim of this active learning experience is to share experience of the Gallery walk as classroom interactive learning method: Nurse Educators' Reflection. The scope is to stimulate critical thinking amongst students that enrich the teaching learning environment in an optimistic fashion. A trial implementation of gallery walk was done in the nursing classroom of Symbiosis CON during a child health nursing lecture by the second author. The instructor gave the basic guidelines about the gallery walk. Every student passed through the six tables, which had a discussion period of 15 minutes each. After all groups finish with all study tables, the instructor or facilitator gathered the class and summarized the topic. The collective reflections from students will be used for the betterment of this method for future lectures. This paper focuses on the nurse educator's perspectives beginning from planning, implementing and evaluating the Gallery walk as a classroom based active learning approach in a nursing college. To conclude, synchronized learning environment is essential for all the undergraduate nursing students in all levels of learning.

Keywords: *Gallery Walk, Active Learning, Cooperative Learning, Innovative teaching, Peer group learning.*

Introduction

Education has been considered as a process of transmission of values, social norms and desired qualities from one generation to another. Wherein an individual comprehends, own potential and utilizes for personal growth and for the betterment of the society.¹ Due to the rapid changes in the modern world, the higher education system is facing variety of challenges. Therefore it's essential to figure out the effective teaching and learning method.² To enable the progression of transmission of knowledge, teachers need to implement suitable teaching method that are relevant to the objectives and

exit outcomes.³ Appropriate knowledge provided to the students by variety of pedagogies determines the kind of learning outcomes. At this point, the role of the teacher is selecting appropriate materials and resources. The outcome of effective teaching is independent learning, reasoning and collaboratively working.⁴

Teaching the undergraduate students in an active way will facilitate interest and promote competent learning. It is also important that current undergraduate students need newer, interactive and analytical method of learning.⁵ Likewise, Gallery walk is a technique involves discussion in which student are allowed to leave their chairs and get involved in discussion, writing and synthesizing substantial science concepts. It also fosters listening, speaking and team spirit.⁶

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Gallery walk is considered an exciting technique to stimulate classroom discussion. Literature available supports that discussion is much better than lecture as it advocates high order thinking, competency, comprising

analysis, evaluation and synthesis.^{7,8,9} It provides liberty to the students to address thought provoking, open ended questions utilizing the terminology and language relevant to the course. It is very flexible to be used as an icebreaker for fifteen minutes. Gallery walk can be utilized with different class sizes, but considered easier to implement in the class less than 40 students. It offers students to actively involve as a participant and move in the classroom, break the boredom of being seated at same place for long time.¹⁰

Objectives:

1. To present findings from research literatures on effectiveness of gallery walk.
2. To provide a structured instructional guideline for implementing the Gallery Walk method in a nursing classroom.
3. To share experience of the Gallery walk as classroom interactive learning method: Nurse Educators' reflection and reflection analysis of students.

Methodology

Using keywords like "*Active learning*", "*Innovative Teaching*", "*Gallery Walk*", "*Peer group learning*" a thorough literature search was done to identify evidence based articles related to effectiveness of gallery walk and how to implement it in a classroom. Using single search option available with the university's e-library and entering the keywords relevant journal articles published in the past five years were generated. A bibliographic mining of the retrieved five articles were done to find more literatures. The results of emerged literature are narratively described and based on these papers analyzed the steps of implementing Gallery walk has been made in order to replicate the same in nursing classroom.

Supporting Research Literatures on Effectiveness of Gallery Walk: Gallery walk is a classroom based active learning approach, which facilitates students to gain knowledge on a specific topic through interaction. This methodology encourages connectivity among learners, induces student-led learning, fosters leadership qualities infusing a sense of responsibility and team spirit in several interactive ways stimulating student's critical thinking.¹¹ Teaching the undergraduate students in an active way will facilitate interest and promote competent learning.¹² The adage of passive learning is pushed to the lowest rung of the Bloom's Taxonomy. Cooperative learning method give positive reinforcement and a collaborative experience for nursing students, which is

later implemented into their professional practice by collaborating with health teams.

A quasi-experimental study was conducted in a medical surgical nursing classroom to test the effectiveness of a paired shared gallery walk activity with thirty students in the interventional group and thirty students in the control group. CAS questionnaire developed by Oxford University was used to assess. The control group used a standard journal presenting method. The findings reported that the group using paired shared gallery walk method had a significantly higher post test scores proving the method effectiveness.¹³

A gallery walk method was introduced in a biology class for the topic of Cardiovascular System. The students were surveyed for the effectiveness of the method. 66.7% of students agreed gallery walk as an interesting method to be used for learning but only 28 percent agreed that it is more superior than the normal lecture from by a teacher. Overall findings of the study reported that it is an interesting way of learning.¹⁴

Gallery walk-Guidelines to implement in a nursing classroom: The authors after thorough literature search prepared a set of instructions on how to implement a gallery walk method. Information like how to organize the classroom setting for the learning activity, maximum number of students who would participate, extent of content preparation needed, time management and facilitation of the activity. The structured method of how to organize a Gallery Walk based on various published research studies in different fields are outlined below.

Topic Selection: Nursing is a blend of theory and practical sessions either in the form of lab demonstrations or clinical postings. Students are bound to attend lectures to understand the theoretical and scientific aspects. Certain topics are sometimes monotonous with facts, trends and figures and hence the instructor faces many challenges in retaining the attention of the students. A study surveyed identified monotonous lectures as the reasons why students often missed classes¹⁵

Pre-learning Activity: The nursing instructors have a role in developing the reading skills of nursing students. With emerging of the internet era and easy Google search the habit of referring to reliable and prescribed textbooks are vanishing. Hence, before any classroom based activity it is good to read the related content to effectively participate in the activity.¹⁶

Grouping the students: It is essential to group the students into small numbers if the class strength is big. A study reported in its results that students if grouped in a structured way seems to work more willingly in an organized matter in a task assigned rather than students in a non-structured group. The students should be grouped into a team of minimum 3 and maximum 6 for an effective small group learning environment.¹⁷

Classroom Set Up: Classroom arrangement and Designing matters while planning an activity. It creates interest among participants and is feasible to conduct it.¹⁸

Display Preparation and Exhibition: Gallery walk is a creative method of learning. Each station displays educational materials as either Posters, Bulletin Boards, Flash Cards or Pamphlets based on the objective of the topic. Students can help in preparation of the materials, which can be reviewed by the instructor before the actual display. Students to be given required stationeries.

Student Role Assignment: Each group has to assign or volunteer among themselves for roles like leader, monitor, reporter and recorder. Each team member should alternate these roles as they move to next stations. For a better group cooperative structure, a role of an “emissary” can also be played. An emissary acts as a communicator of problems or any questions to the instructor.¹⁹

Facilitation of the Gallery Walk: The instructor as a facilitator is involved in the planning, implementing, facilitating and evaluating the active learning process. This helps in contributing to achieve “Synthesis” in the Bloom’s Taxonomy. In this role adorned the instructor guides students to identify the situation and encourage them to understand and synthesize solutions thus creating a personal knowledge from the learning objectives.²⁰

Debriefing of the Gallery Walk: Debriefing has become an essential part of activities like simulation and classroom based student led learning approaches. Using debriefing to review the learned concepts provides a platform for students to recollect and organize what they have learnt in the different stations and reflect on it like a summarization of events. It should be done meaningfully moderated by the instructor by either using Socratic questioning method or guided reflections.^{21, 22}

Self-Reflections: Reflection has been considered as an established antecedent to learning meaningfully.

Dewey says, “*Self-reflection is the only type of thinking that leads to learning*”. Use simple questions like “How did you find the learning experience? What was good? What needs improvement? Did you benefit?”^{23,24,25}

Teach & Talk through Gallery Walk: An Active– Collaborative Classroom Learning Experience: A Model

Most direct classroom nursing lectures are post lunch sessions when a student is usually tired after their pre-lunch clinical posting. Ensuring a class strength of 50 students to be actively listening to the instructor is a challenge. Gallery walk focused the third year BSN students at Symbiosis CON. It was facilitated during a planned lecture on “*Trends and Global Patterns in Pediatric Nursing*” the topic which previously were verbalized as monotonous. The session was timed for two hours. The authors agreed on one core objective for the topic and split contents into six sub themes for an easier understanding. The sub themes were family centered care, high technology care, evidence based practice, atraumatic care, cost containment, prevention and health promotion. An overview of the active learning method was given to the students two weeks before the scheduled session with the pre reading topics and references. The class was divided into six small groups consisting of maximum 8 students each. This was done in order to have ample time to develop the contents and displays. Each group of students volunteered to creatively prepare for the exhibits based on a chosen sub theme, which were reviewed by the instructor before being displayed for the learning purpose on the main day.

The classroom makeover was done by identifying six spots in order to arrange the prepared educational exhibits with seating arrangements made around a table. The instructor facilitated by giving the participatory guidelines and explaining what is expected from the students to do in each learning spot. Each group moved through all six topics, which had a discussion period of 15 minutes, one student who acted as the team leader took the lead in discussing thus ensuring they covered the content in each spot and answered the quiz as a group for every topic. Five multiple-choice questions were in each quiz adding up to thirty questions at the end of the walk. The gallery walk worked on the principle of Adult Learning Theory where the students were responsible for their own learning with minimal assistance from the instructor on completion of the walk, the instructor gathered the class, debriefed the topic with additional

information and clarified the student's doubts related to the topic. Quiz papers were submitted to the instructor for evaluation and the highest scoring group was rewarded. By this way, the instructor was able to understand if students understood the topic and the effectiveness of organizing a gallery walk. The below figure shows the model of the classroom arrangement.

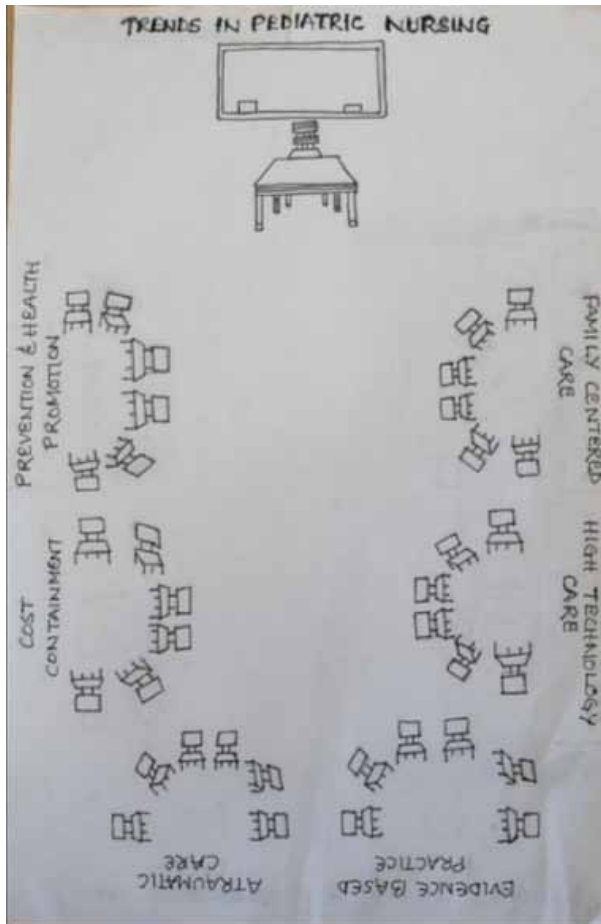


Figure I: Classroom Arrangement

Student Reflections about the Gallery walk: The instructor asked the students to share their reflections about the gallery walk, its impact on their learning, how they felt it from their routine lecture class in an **“open your heart out”** meet the following day. Students penned down their reflections. The collected reflection was considered by the authors and classified them into strengths of the activity and areas of improvement. The best reflections analyzed were recorded as a classroom teaching learning activity report. Some of them are as follows verbatim *“It made us use our reasoning capacity and initiated team work”*, *“I was able to understand a lot through charts and pictorial exhibits”*, *“A new experience of learning, please include in other topics too”*, *“Creative and Fun Way of Learning”*, *“More than*

any normal lecture”, *“Made us think out of box”*, *“I was moving around the class and active”*

Nurse Educators Perspective: As a nurse, educator who implemented the gallery walk had the following perspectives to share, *“It was an active and fun learning session though the preparation time and planning took some time. Students showed great interest in preparing materials for display, which led them to read in depth of each topic assigned to them making discussion more fruitful. It is a very beneficial method for classes during post lunch sessions”*.

Limitation: The gallery walk activity was done as part of an interactive teaching learning activity in the nursing classroom supported with research literatures from other fields. Smaller class strengths are usually effective.

Implications for Research in Nursing Education: A research can be proposed to find the effectiveness of the activity as an evidence based practice in teaching and learning in the nursing discipline.

Discussion

Cooperative learning theory plays a significant role in education arena, especially in science field the experts realized that it enables the students to learn through decision making, problem solving and working cooperatively. The teacher adopts the role of facilitator and guide in cooperative classroom; teacher is no more remains a controller of the class instead assumes a manager role. Students are responsible of their learning. It reflects that cooperative learning is more effective than learning alone these results in the success of the whole classroom or group. Learning becomes more effective when the learner is interested and active.²⁶

The findings of available literature strongly suggest that cooperative learning is an effective teaching method, which encourages the university instructors to change teacher-centered method into student-centered method, also builds students' self-esteem and reduces their anxiety while participating in the classroom activities. It boosts the students to be proactive in learning process.²⁷

Conclusion: A synchronized learning environment is essential for all the undergraduate nursing students in all levels of learning. A change from the usual routine makes the class feels more participatory and helps in retaining the learned concepts.

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