

**Peer interaction and its influence on academic performance amongst
Occupational Therapy students in Bangladesh: teachers' and
students' view**

By

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Peer interaction is an effective learning strategy to facilitate learning among a group of students by the teachers. Students learn more specific and complex issues through using positive interdependence, face to face interaction, individual accountability, group skill and group processing. Though it has some limitations, it can be overcome through using a structured and formal session plan by the responsible teacher.

Aim and Objectives: The aim of this study was to identify the influence of peer interaction on academic performance amongst Occupational Therapy students in Bangladesh. In attendance specific objectives were identified to accomplish the aim of the study, these were: to identify the understanding of the teachers & students in Occupational Therapy department regarding peer interaction learning strategy. Another one is to identify the practice of peer interaction in Occupational Therapy department. Recognizing the influence of peer interaction on academic performance was another significant objective. Last objective of the study was to explore the limitations of peer interaction learning strategy.

Methodology: Researcher used qualitative content analysis research design which was an appropriate and suitable research design for this study. The study was conducted in the Occupational Therapy department of BHPI (The academic institute of CRP). Four participants were selected from the teachers of Occupational Therapy department through purposive sampling procedure and twelve participants were selected from 2nd year and 3rd year Occupational Therapy students through randomly. A semi structured and open ended questionnaire was used to collect data. Researcher collected data from teachers of Occupational Therapy department through face to face interview. Data was collected by the researcher from 2nd year and 3rd year students of Occupational Therapy department through focus group discussion. Qualitative content analysis (QCA) was used to analysis the data.

Result: Five themes emerged from the interview these were: teachers have more or less understanding about peer interaction learning strategy, They use peer interaction learning strategy in own academic practice by involving students in different group task, peer interaction learning strategy has positive influences on academic performance and teachers evaluate it as an effective learning strategy although there are some limitations of peer interaction learning strategy, Teachers can help students to participate in peer interaction during different academic activities. On the other hand, there are also five themes presented from the focus group discussion these were: students have an understanding about peer interaction learning strategy, It is very important and helpful learning strategy which is used in different academic group activities, there are some limitations (unequal cooperation, less priority, dependency and lack of interest) of peer interaction learning strategy, most of the time peer interaction learning strategy has positive influences on academic performance, teachers can help students to engage in peer interaction learning strategy by individual evaluation, skill mix and monitoring.

Conclusion: Peer interaction learning strategy is helpful for both teachers and students because it helps teacher to take responsibility of the students while the students taking responsibility of their own learning.

Key words: Occupational Therapy course in Bangladesh, Peer interaction, Academic performance.