

F 286

A trial on a day school technique for social science undergraduates in the Open University

With a view to improve teaching quality a trial was conducted to determine whether a particular day-school-technique for social science undergraduates in the Open University could improve their academic performance.

Two batches of undergraduate students each following a communication course at intermediate and final level were selected for the trial. They were instructed to read four specified lessons before each day school. The tutor clarified the concepts in these lessons at each session and obtained information on the number of lessons read and students' own assessment of knowledge status before and after the day school. No such day-school-technique on communication courses was adopted in the previous academic year.

The final examination mean score was considered as a measure of overall performance. The researcher compared the mean scores on those courses with that of the previous academic year respectively. The same tutor was responsible for all aspects of conducting the two courses papers of the two years based on their content analysis showed correlation exceeding 70 percent.

In spite of day school attendees expressing on an average a knowledge gain from poor to good (on a scale of Very Poor<Poor<Good<Very Good) the overall performance of the students in the trial did not show an improvement at the final examinations. This may be attributed to the poor day school attendance and insufficient lesson reading observed in the trial. On an average the day school attendance was less than 46 percent and the attendees' reading level before each day school was only 50 percent.

The results indicate the need to extend this study to all subject disciplines in the degree programme to determine how the above variables correlate to the final examination performance.