

Introduction

The success of entry level occupational therapy students is predicated on their ability to read and absorb mass quantities of text and evidence-based literature. According to McMinn, Tabor, Trihub, Taylor & Dominguez (2009) reading is not only essential to learning and growth but provides the underpinning for the fundamental knowledge required for the development and maintenance of competence in a profession. Cooper (2015) in her citing of the literature reported that approximately half of students read text in preparation for classroom instruction. The impact of this salient truth is too often experienced by course directors who have to witness the sad consequences of such a phenomena (e.g., poor performance on examinations, work quality, integration of knowledge, development of clinical reasoning, . . . , performance on the NBCOT examination). Starcher and Proffitt (2011) in a study linked to student attitudes about reading and preparation for class assert that students express a belief that course instructors do not actually expect them to complete assigned reading. Are we as faculty actually sending such a message to our students and how can we change this early in the occupational therapy curriculum?

Abstract

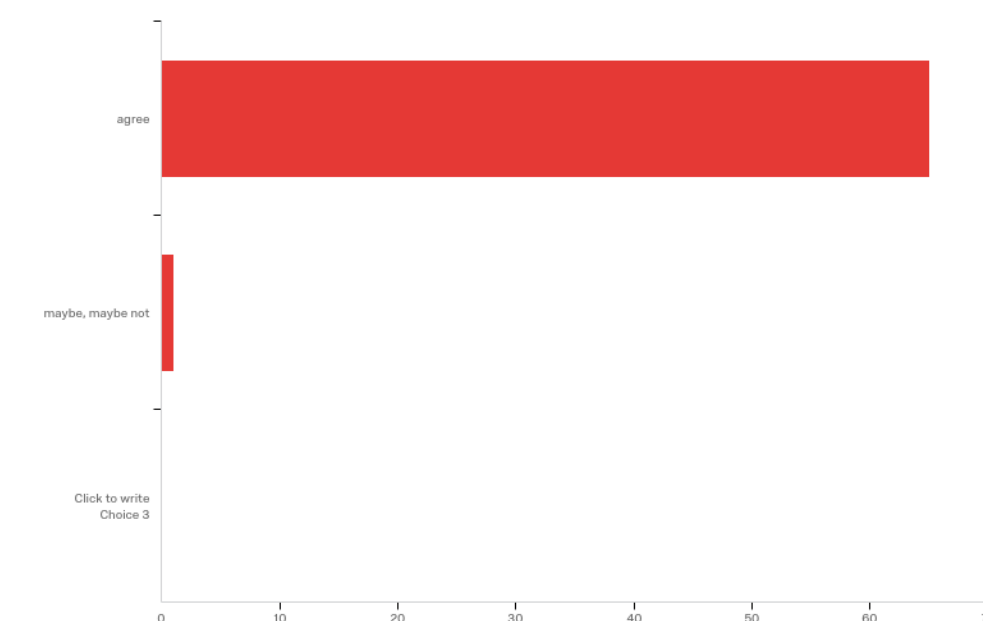
The work presented here exemplifies only one method applied to enhance occupational therapy entry level students' reading; which is believed to improve, preparation for class, integration of knowledge, and examination performance. The assertion underpinning this intervention is that a student's failure to develop strong reading habits during their entry level education will have a negative impact on their readiness for practice and on future participation in research (McMinn et al., 2009). This intervention was a modified version of the "Team-based learning (TBL)" concept. According to Brame (2013), team-based learning is an organized form of small-group learning focusing on student preparation for class and application of knowledge acquired in that preparation. Similar to TBL students were challenged with individual pre-lecture quizzes and were required to complete quizzes as teams focusing on reading assignments. The teams, however, were identified as accountability teams, designed to warrant students' discussion of concepts and insights gleaned from their readings. The impact of this methodology was assessed using a survey that addressed students motivation for completing readings, confidence in retention of knowledge, responsibility for accountability to team, willingness to communicate knowledge, perceived value of the approach, team performance, impact on readiness for class, investment in applying knowledge, and perceived effect on examination performance. Sixty-six (n = 66) of 126 possibly students in their first, second, and third years of the OT curriculum completed the survey. An average of 92.1% of students agreed that this approach benefited them in all areas examined.

Materials and Methods

Students were randomly organized into teams of 6-7 students who worked together for the duration of the course. Student were required to complete assigned text and special reading posted on the web prior to class. Individual and team quizzes were employed to assess knowledge retention and participation in accountability teams.

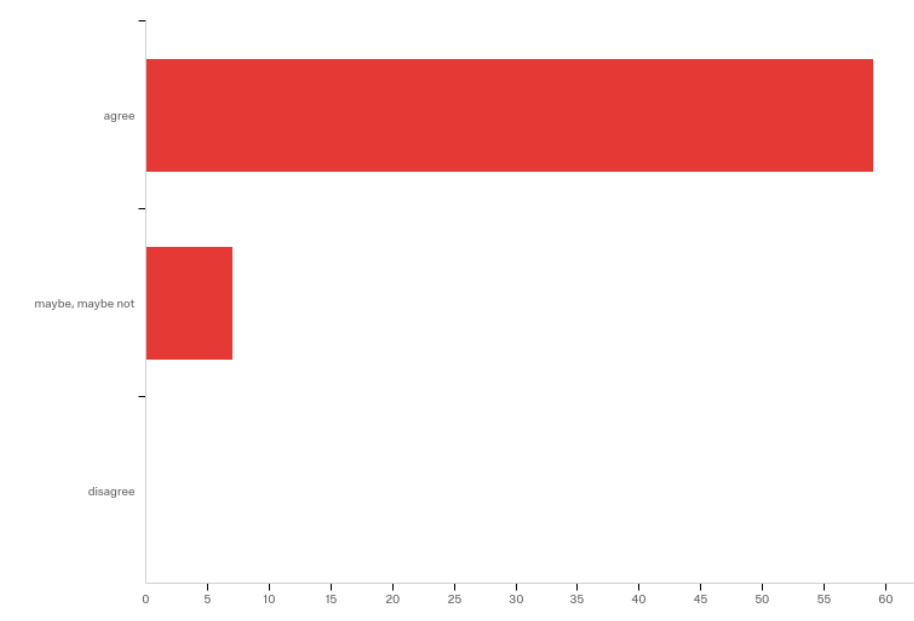
Results

Q1 - The individual and team quizzes helped me to increase my motivation for completing the reading assignments for class.



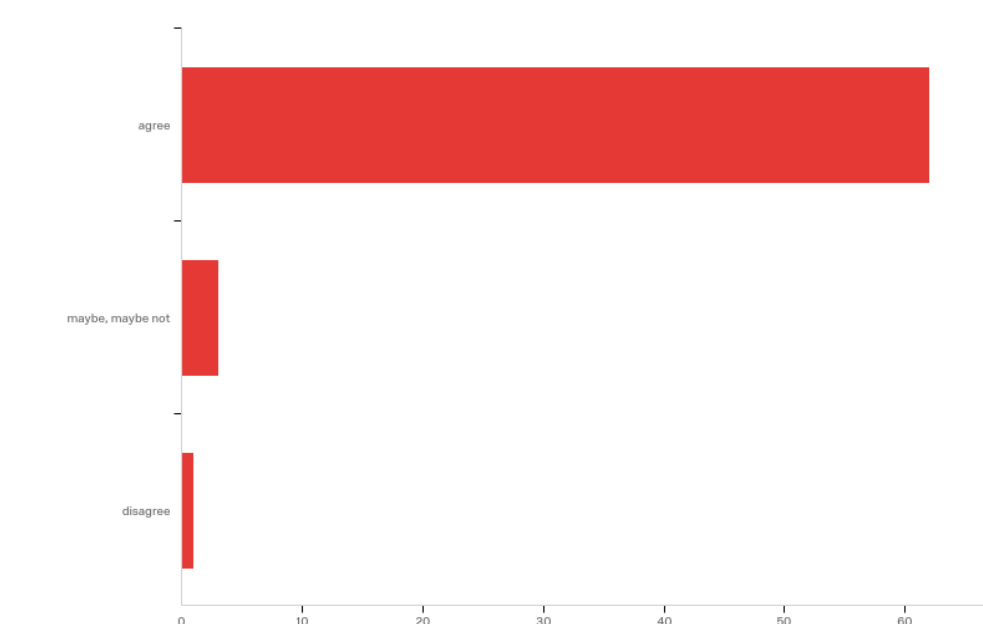
#	Answer	%	Count
1	agree	98.48%	65
2	maybe, maybe not	1.52%	1
3	Click to write Choice 3	0.00%	0
Total		100%	66

Q2 - The individual and team quizzes helped me gain confidence in the retention of knowledge from my text.



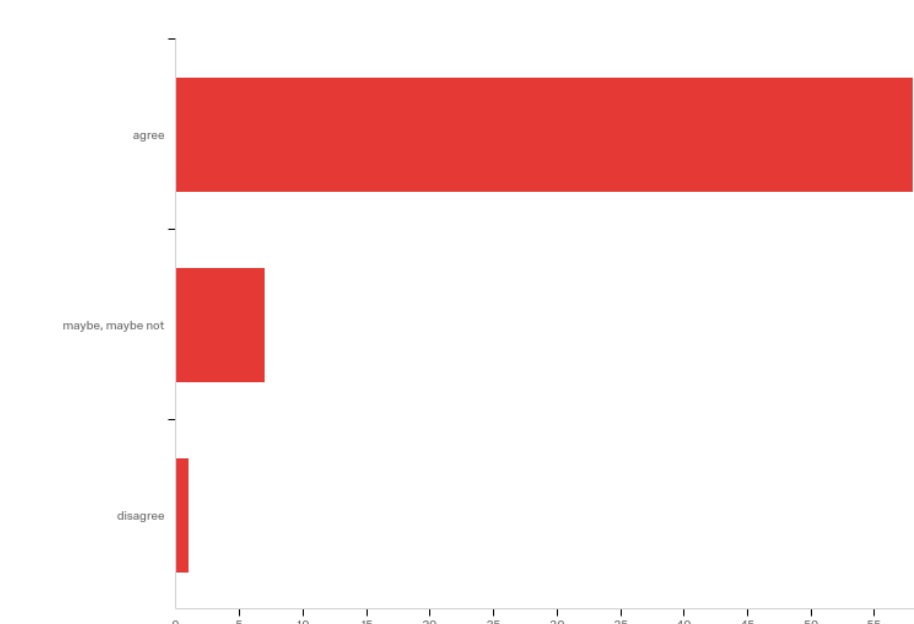
#	Answer	%	Count
1	agree	89.39%	59
2	maybe, maybe not	10.61%	7
3	disagree	0.00%	0
Total		100%	66

Q3 - The team quizzes motivate me to read in order to contribute to my team's performance.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	agree	93.94%	62
2	maybe, maybe not	4.55%	3
3	disagree	1.52%	1
Total		100%	66

Q4 - The team quizzes helped increase my willingness to communicate my knowledge and opinion during the team quizzing sessions.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	agree	87.88%	58
2	maybe, maybe not	10.61%	7
3	disagree	1.52%	1
Total		100%	66

Q5 - The individual and team quizzes were valuable and worth the time and effort.



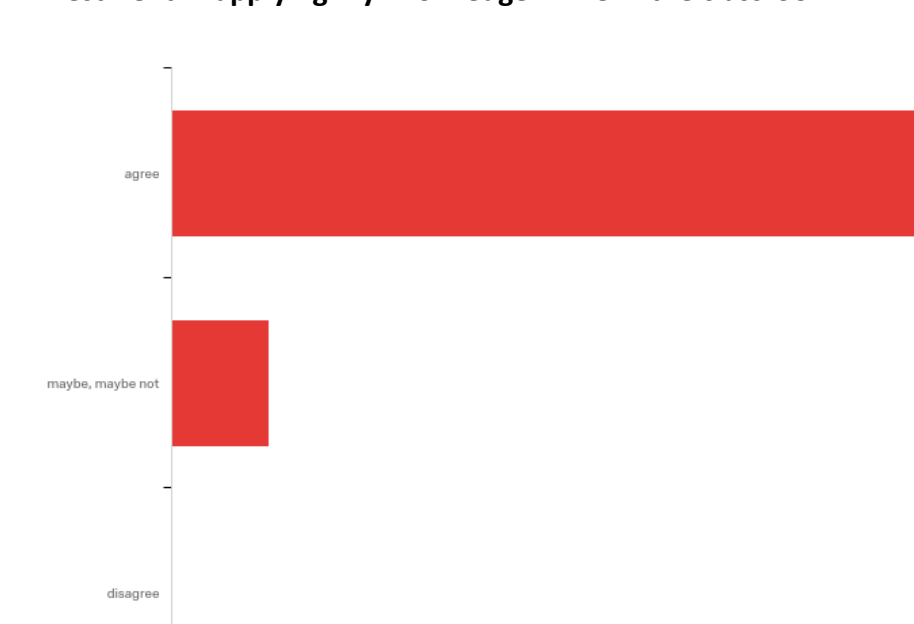
#	Answer	%	Count
1	agree	90.91%	60
2	maybe, maybe not	7.58%	5
3	Click to write Choice 3	1.52%	1
Total		100%	66

Q7 - The individual and team quizzes helped increase my readiness for class each class.



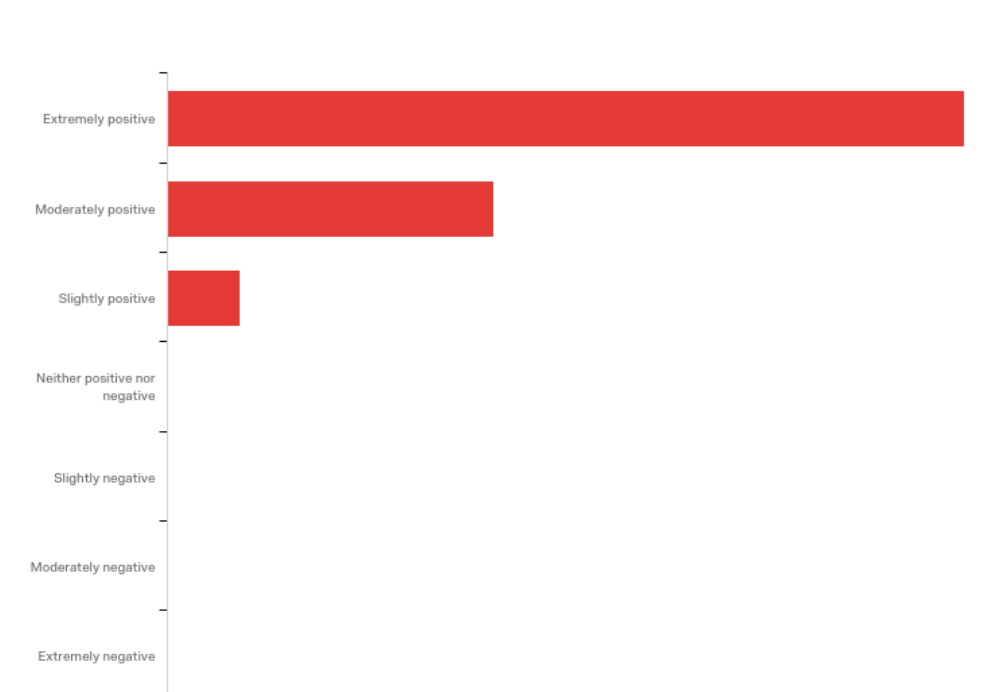
#	Answer	%	Count
1	agree	95.45%	63
2	maybe, maybe not	4.55%	3
3	disagree	0.00%	0
Total		100%	66

Q8 - The individual and team quizzes helped increase my overall investment in applying my knowledge while in the classroom.



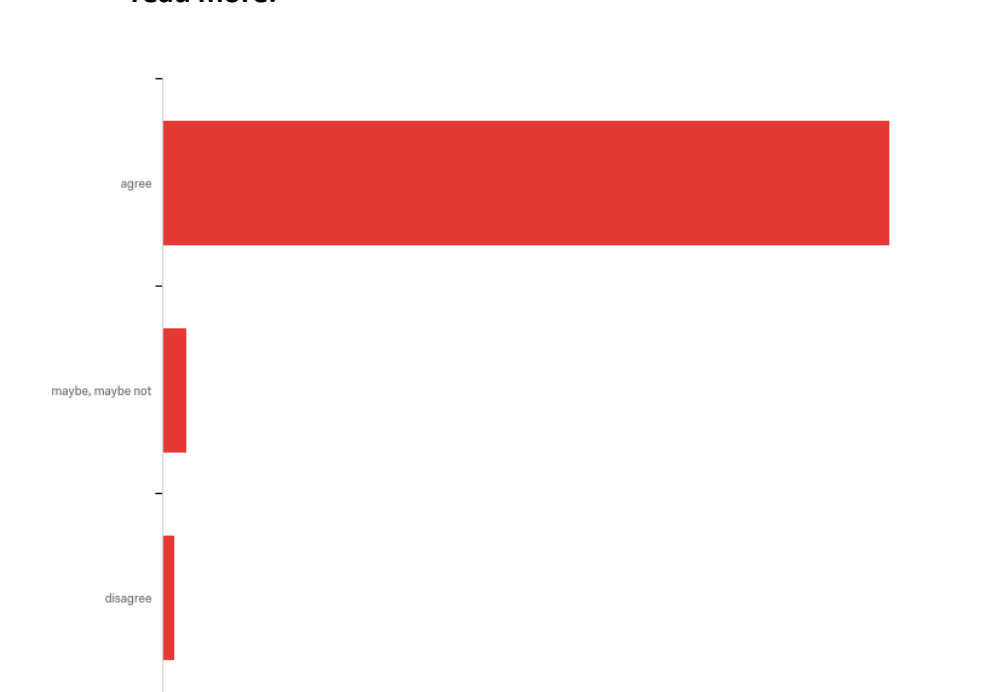
#	Answer	%	Count
1	agree	89.39%	59
2	maybe, maybe not	10.61%	7
3	disagree	0.00%	0
Total		100%	66

Q9 - The individual and team quizzes has a positive effect on my examination performance.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	extremely positive	66.67%	44
2	moderately positive	27.27%	18
3	slightly positive	6.06%	4
4	neither positive nor negative	0.00%	0
5	slightly negative	0.00%	0
6	moderately negative	0.00%	0
7	extremely negative	0.00%	0
Total		100%	66

Q10 - The individual and team quizzes motivated me to read more.



#	Answer	%	Count
1	agree	95.45%	63
2	maybe, maybe not	3.03%	2
3	disagree	1.52%	1
Total		100%	66

Conclusion

This team-based learning strategy was highly effective in preparing entry level occupational therapy student to complete readings, apply knowledge in class discussions, participate as team members, and increase their perceived performance on class examinations. 91.7% of the students who responded to the assessment survey agreed that this team-based learning approach enhanced their motivation for completing reading assignments, confidence in retention of knowledge, responsibility for sharing knowledge as a team member, willingness to communicate knowledge, team performance, readiness for class, investment in applying knowledge, and performance on examinations. 94.5% of the students surveyed agreed that this team-based approach was a valuable technique for increasing their reading habits. The results of this assessment identified that the strategy used here can be valuable in increasing occupational therapy entry level student reading habits and can serve as a method for monitoring students' reading compliance. According to Burchfield and Sappington (2000) if we fail to monitor reading compliance of our students, we send the message that "reading is not essential".

References

- Cooper, Brittainy Anne, "Reading Compliance in a School Psychology Graduate Program" (2015). *Theses, Dissertations and Capstones*. Paper 902.
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- McMinn, M. R., Tabor, A., Trihub, B. L., Taylor, L., & Dominguez, A. W. (2009). Reading in graduate school: A survey of doctoral students in clinical psychology. *Training and Education in Professional Psychology*, 3 (4), 233-239. doi:10.1037/a0016405
- Burchfield, C. M., & Sappington, J. (2000). Compliance with required reading assignments. *Teaching of Psychology*, 27 (1), 58.