Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (ORDT) Enhances Graduate Students' Preparedness

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Abstract

Graduate programs should persist in creating a comprehensive and customized framework to promote and sustain mentorship, ensuring the smooth progression of graduate students throughout their academic journey. The action research aimed to determine the impact of the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT) on the preparedness of graduate school students. Using the qualitative-phenomenological, the information was gathered through researcher-made guide questions to 16 purposely selected graduate students. Implementing the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT) in literary studies garnered a positive reception and was praised for fostering engaging discussions and enriching the learning experience. Participants highlighted its emphasis on critical thinking but noted challenges, including the demanding nature of OLDT and internet connectivity issues. Students' proactive measures emphasized the importance of pre-reading. The study underscores the role of educational institutions in supporting students during online learning, suggesting measures to alleviate pressure and address connectivity issues. Future online learning approaches should leverage OLDT's positive aspects while balancing interactivity and manageable session lengths for an effective and inclusive environment.

Keywords: _Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT), Graduate Students, SPAMAST._

INTRODUCTION

The spread of COVID-19 has impacted the implementation of learning at various levels of education (Sundari & Dewi, 2021). Academic activities were suspended at almost all levels, including graduate school. As a result, graduate students and their mentors need help dealing with learning. Hence, mentors think, innovate, and share more to guide graduate students despite fearing COVID-19 (Li et al., 2021). As a precaution against the spread of the Coronavirus, most academic institutions worldwide switched to remote learning. However, this caused numerous challenges (Rotas & Cahapay, 2020). Imeri et al. (2021) said that graduate programs must continue developing a robust and tailored system to encourage and maintain mentorship to facilitate graduate students' successful paths through their studies. However, Sundari and Dewi (2021) found that students needed a higher understanding of the concepts presented through remote lectures.

Teachers using online learning during COVID-19 used the recitation method to maximize students' learning at home (Mamentu, 2021); recitation sessions transitioned to remote learning platforms (Hayitoma, 2023; Ross & DiSalvo, 2020). The recitation method is a reasonably popular method teachers use because most learning materials are only explained through online media (Klein et al., 2021). However, the widespread application of the recitation method in learning during the COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly caused students to react (Fadli et al., 2021); recitation underwent significant changes to adapt to the challenges

posed by the pandemic (Salame et al., 2023; Rusdiyanto, 2023). In virtual recitations, teachers make extra effort to encourage students to participate actively (Clarin & Baluyos, 2022; Pitogo & Ecle, 2021). Likewise, recitation during COVID-19 depended on the institution, grade level, and availability of resources (Salame et al., 2023).

Some students may hesitate to actively participate in online discussions for various reasons, such as shyness or difficulty expressing themselves in writing. Create a supportive and inclusive environment where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. Encourage participation through clear prompts, asking open-ended questions, and providing positive feedback.

Few students may dominate the discussion while others remain silent. To mitigate this issue, set clear expectations for participation, such as requiring everyone to contribute at least once. Implement strategies like rotating discussion leaders, using breakout rooms for small group discussions, or utilizing anonymous discussion tools to encourage equal participation.

Online discussions can quickly go off-track or exceed the allotted time. Establish guidelines for the duration of discussions and set clear objectives for each session. Moderators should steer the conversation back on topic if it deviates and help keep the discussion within the designated time frame. Online discussions lack the non-verbal cues in face-to-face interactions, making it challenging to gauge participants' understanding or engagement. Please encourage students to use emoticons or emojis to express their reactions or encourage them to provide concise summaries or reflections at the end of the discussion. The researcher observed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, graduate students were not enthusiastic during the lecture. Instead of interacting with the teacher, they were timid, inattentive, or doing household chores like washing the clothes, cooking, eating, etc. Hence, the researcher considered making these students more active and alive by implementing the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT). In this technique, the researcher assigned topics to each graduate student. After each student presented the topic through PowerPoint, the teacher randomly called a student to answer open-ended questions prepared by the teacher. The students are rated based on rubrics given before the technique's implementation.

The results of this action research may benefit graduate school teachers who use online classes and need help sustaining their students' enthusiasm. Also, it may give graduate school teachers significant concepts on how to make their graduate students attentive to every lesson or session they conduct.
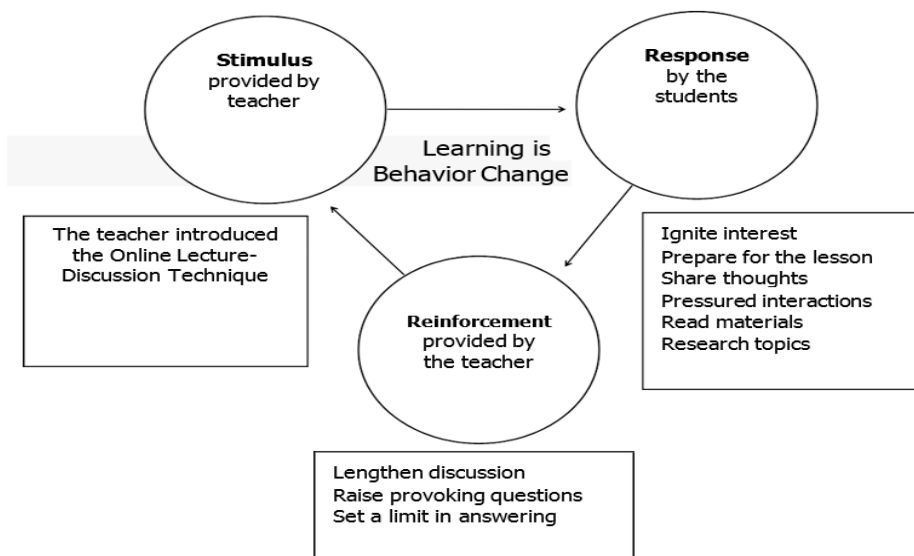
Objectives of the Study

This action research aimed to determine the impact of the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT) on the preparedness of graduate school students in their lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic. Notably, this study sought:

1. To determine how graduate school students find the Online Lecture

    - Discussion Technique (OLDT) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. To ascertain the favorable experiences of the graduate school students on the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT).

3. To find out the challenges of the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT).

4. To determine the preparation the graduate school students do before attending the online class, which uses the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT).

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Behaviorism developed by B.F. Skinner (1985). This theory focuses on observable behaviors and the stimuli and responses that influence the learners. It suggests that learning is a result of external stimuli and reinforcement. It also emphasizes the role of conditioning and repetition in forming associations between stimuli and responses. It suggests that desired behaviors can be learned through rewards and punishments. Due to COVID-19, educational institutions introduced online teaching; hence, graduate students had to stay at home while lessons were conducted online.

Below are the steps in the conduct of the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT)

Step 1	Orientation	Students are oriented on the objectives of OLDT. Presentation and recitation rubrics are given to students.
Step 2	Topic Assignment	The students are given topics to be presented based on the syllabus. Dates of Presentations are also given.
Step 3	Submission of PowerPoint	The teacher sets the date of submission of the PowerPoint.
Step 4	Making of Open-Ended Questions	The teacher formulated open-ended questions based on the presentation given.
Step 5	Giving of Questions	After each presenter delivers their presentation, the teacher randomly calls students to answer the prepared questions.
Step 6	Marking	Each student's answer to the open-ended questions is based on the recitation rubrics given.
Step 7	Recapitulation	After the students answer all the questions, the teacher raises the good points and summarizes the topic.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used the qualitative-phenomenology. Tabroni et al. (2022) opined that the qualitative method is the most effective technique for documenting reactions during the pandemic because it makes it possible to observe and comprehend how individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences. On the other hand, phenomenology, according to Ritunnano et al. (2022) and Villar et al. (2021), emphasizes the importance of subjective experiences and consciousness in understanding the world. This method is commonly used in social sciences,

psychology, nursing, and other fields where exploring human experiences and understanding their subjective meanings are of central interest. Furthermore, Kim and Lee (2022) and Urcia (2021) mentioned that it is a method that aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of individuals within a specific phenomenon, and it seeks to uncover the meaning and essence of these experiences by examining the subjective perspectives and interpretations of participants.

Research Instrument

A researcher-made validated interview-guide questionnaire was used to gather information from the identified participants. The interview questionnaire comprised four primary and probe questions based on the study's objectives.

Research Participants

The participants of the study were 16 teachers (13 female and three males) who were taking Master of Arts in Education major in Language Teaching at the Southern Philippines Agribusiness and Marine and Aquatic School of Technology (SPAMAST), Malita, Davao Occidental, enrolled during the First Semester of School Year 2020-2021. The participants were chosen using the universal sampling technique.

Data Gathering

In the gathering of the information for this study, the researchers followed these steps: the researcher was ignited to make a proposal based on the final report of the accrediting agency on the lack of action research in the graduate school; interview guide questions based on the research questions were formulated and validated; Informed Consent Form was given to those graduate school students who were interested in being part of the study; focus group discussions were conducted online; recorded information was transcribed; and memoing, coding, thematic analysis were conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the presentation of the results, the researcher used a table to consolidate the information. The table was divided into three columns. In the third column is the pattern of response. It is marked General if the pattern of response obtained by the core ideas reached 50% and above; Typical if it is 21% but not to reach 50%; and Variant if the response pattern is 20% and below.

Theme	Core Ideas	Pattern of Response
Reactions to the approach	Making the discussion more interesting and engaging	General
	making the student prepare for the class	
	Giving everyone the chance to share their thoughts	Variant
	stirring students' critical thinking	
	Allowing interactions between students and teacher	
Challenges	feeling pressure and not confident when not prepared	General
	takes much time	Typical
	limited internet connectivity	
Preparation before class	Reading the materials in advance	General
	Research additional information about the materials	
Suggestions for Improvement	lengthen time discussion ask more provoking questions	Typical
	visibility of the students during class guide questions be given ahead set a time limit for answering the questions	Variant

Reaction to the OLDT Approach

Most participants found OLDT made the class discussion exciting and engaging because students were eagerly ready to answer the questions based on the topic presented. A participant from FGD1 mentioned that OLDT was engaging because thoughts and ideas from their classmates were free-flowing; hence, they also learned.

> "It makes the discussion even more interesting and engaging. More thoughts and ideas from everyone could also mean more learning to grasp." (FGD1)

Another participant from FGD1 bluntly said that they felt OLDT effectively raised the students' spirits because they were involved in the process. It implies that making the students aware of the learning technique allowed them to be engaged.

> "I find it very meaningful and engaging. The approach used was effective for it allows students to get involved in the process." (FGD1)

Although OLDT was interesting, participants from FGD2 found it also challenging because they needed to prepare themselves before the class. They needed to make sure that they deciphered the learning materials given. It indicates that the students clearly understood the OLDT; hence, explaining any learning technique to students was necessary so that they were able to prepare.

> "It was challenging but an interesting one. It urges me to study ahead of time while making sure that materials given are comprehended and understood." (FGD2)

With a serious tone, a participant from FGD3 believed that the OLDT was exciting and engaging because students could unconsciously recall their college lessons related to the topic under discussion.

> "This kind of a teaching-learning process is something that I think is very interesting and engaging in a way that it allows us to apply and share not just the information that we have learned in the lesson for the day but also the stock knowledge that we got from our previous lesson way back in college days." (FGD3)

Interestingly, most students found OLDT to effectively assess their level of preparation for the materials, promoting a sense of responsibility for their learning. They also believed that the approach helped them effectively gauge their understanding of the material.

> "I like the recit-discussion approach because it assesses whether a participant is studying the material. Thus, it urges a participant to study and browse for more information about the material." (FGD1)

> "I always see to it that I read, research, and scan before our class starts. Also, I like the feeling of having something to share, along with my classmates, whenever it is time to answer." (FGD1)

> "It forces me to study my lessons in advance for me to be prepared during the class, and by that, it can also help the teacher to make the discussion easier and smooth sailing." (FGD2)

> "Personally, what I like about this recipe-discussion approach is that it pushes me beyond my comfort zone on a positive note. Because of this, I always see that I read, research, and scan before our class starts." (FGD3)

Few participants mentioned that OLDT ticked students' participation during the discussion because the technique allowed them to discuss what they knew. One of the participants from FGD3 said,

> "I find it to be beneficial also on my end giving us a chance to talk or to answer." (FGD3)

Still, only some others found OLDT promoted critical interest in studying literature. Participants from FGD2 & 3 candidly say,

> "It perks up my interest in learning more about literature. It stirs critical thinking." (FGD2)

> "During the recit-discussion, I tend to be rational, and I give insights to arrive at a solution." (FGD2)

Lastly, only some participants averred that OLDT allowed teacher-student interactions, influencing their learning. With excitement, a participant from FGD2 mentioned,

> "Based on my observations, this approach was indeed efficient in the teaching of literature because both students and teachers interact with each other, exchange of ideas that made it more effective." (FGD2)

These students also appreciated the teacher's patience in explaining and elaborating salient ideas of the literary works, ensuring a deeper understanding. Hence, students exchange thoughts and ideas with the teacher. Students also felt valued for questions and answers even though they were unsure.

> "During our recit-discussion, our teacher promoted a highly engaging teaching method, yet it was more interesting and challenging. Throughout the exchange of ideas, I also learned to tolerate the views of others. Even if some are unpleasant or contradictory, one side is completely understood. Sometimes, my ideas are different, but the respect for my viewpoints is seen clearly. I see a democratic way of teaching. It also trained me to be self-expressive and reflective. I have observed ample opportunities to express ideas and thoughts in every good way." (FGD3)

> "In the recit-discussion approach, I like how our teacher asked questions because it can challenge and make some ways to answer them. In this subject, we are working in cooperative learning groups, we share our ideas in our group through group chat, and we have also guided anything that we need to clarify by our professor, and he will accommodate all questions." (FGD3)

Participants praised the OLDT approach for making class discussions lively and engaging. The engagement and eagerness of the students to contribute led to a free exchange of ideas, which improved the learning environment. Some participants, however, needed help finding it and underlined the significance of being familiar with the material beforehand. The OLDT method also promoted critical thinking and active involvement by having students recall prior information. Overall, the interactive features of OLDT enabled good teacher-student interactions, which helped make teaching and learning more effective, especially in literary

studies. The findings of the study proved some points raised by previous researchers. Dauer et al. (2021) that the recitation-discussion approach, specifically in an online class, has proven to have advantages among students during COVID-19. Manahal et al. (2019) and Chen et al. (2019) also mentioned that lecture discussion develops critical thinking and encourages students to study ahead of time to comprehend the learning materials provided to them. Shahroury (2020) also averred that lecture discussion allows students to participate without fear of negative feedback because the teacher accepts answers from the students openly. As a result, Asem and Rajwa (2023) pointed out that the lecture discussion builds positive interactions and exchange of ideas between students and teachers, resulting in effective learning. Moreover, online lecture discussions offer opportunities for interactive learning and promote a deeper understanding of the topic being discussed (Narca & Caballes, 2021). Likewise, it encourages students to be present and prepare for class to maximize their time with the instructor and classmates while also building meaningful learning relationships (Fulgueras & Bautista, 2020; Sasikumar, 2020).

Challenges

Although the OLDT positively impacted the students, it also brought pressure, especially to those who were not prepared. The participants said,

> "I do not like about it is that whenever I am not prepared, it trembles my whole body, and it gets me nervous, especially if we are called alphabetically; I cannot explain the feeling, but it has given me a good impact because it taught me to become a responsible student." (FGD 3)

> "I think it would be the idea of putting so much pressure on myself. I know I have said this approach is pushing me beyond my comfort zone but on a positive note. Yes, that is true, but I can't deny the fact that I also put so much pressure on myself to have something to say whenever I need to answer. I can feel it to the point that I would sleep late at night scanning through the topics to be discussed the next day." (FGD2)

> "I felt nervous during the receipt-discussion approach, which led me not to deliver my thoughts to the class." (FGD 1)

> "It instigates some nerves, especially answering tricky questions." (FGD 1)

Moreover, the not-so-favorable aspect of OLDT was that it took much time. Due to the nature of the technique, discussions between students and teachers were more extended. The participant mentioned,

> "Although lecture-discussion is interesting, it consumed much time." (FGD 1)

Likewise, the limited internet connectivity hampered learning. If there was intermittent connectivity, the audio and video were hampered. Those participants who usually experienced this were living in far-flung areas.

> "We do not have a good connection because there were two Saturdays. As a result, I could not understand the lesson and questions being asked because the words were not clear due to the bad weather, plus there were many users during that time." (FGD 2)

> "I do not have time to research due to turtle connection in our place specifically at Jose Abad Santos, Davao Occidental." (FGD 3)

In summary, the use of Online Learning and Discussion Techniques (OLDT) positively impacted students, encouraging responsibility and pushing them beyond their comfort zones. However, it also brought challenges, such as pressure and nervousness, when unprepared. Participants noted that alphabetical calling during discussions intensified these feelings. The pressure to perform well led to late-night studying for some students. Additionally, the lengthy nature of OLDT discussions was perceived as a drawback, consuming much time. Limited internet connectivity posed a significant obstacle, particularly for students in remote areas, leading to disrupted audio and video during sessions. Participants sometimes needed help understanding lessons and questions due to unclear communication caused by bad weather and high user traffic during intermittent connectivity.

Students' feelings of pressure and nervousness are natural, mainly since OLDT was used for the first time. Abdou (2019) said that students are prone to experiencing anxiety regarding their competence in a learning environment that is unfamiliar to them. Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT) may require significant time. However, this investment is justified as it ensures active participation from every student, allowing them to express their thoughts on the topic. Sial et al. (2021) pointed out that discussing with students after a lecture presentation assists students in developing and expressing themselves; hence, students develop their confidence.

Internet connectivity is generally observed to be one of the hindrances in online education, particularly in developing countries (Aljedaani et al., 2023; Mu et al., 2022), particularly in rural areas (Ashari et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2022) underprepared learners (Ishtiaq-Khan et al., 2022). In the context of this study, it implies that academic institutions need to address the issue of connectivity as part of the strategic plan to connect with learners. With the global trend of distance learning, it is a necessity to have strong internet structures.

Preparation before Class

Relative to the active participation of the students, they made sure to read, scan, and review the reading materials given by the teacher so that they could familiarize themselves and be ready to answer the questions thrown by the teacher during the recent discussion.

> "I read my lessons in advance and I asked random questions to myself." (FGD 1)

> "Watch in advance the given instructional videos about the topic." (FGD 1)

> "First, I must see to it that I have read the topic in advance." (FGD 2)

> "I attended the class making sure that I have checked the materials and most of all understanding and researching further information about them to prepare for the complex questions." (FGD 3)

> "I do reading, scanning, and researching before attending the online class that uses receipt-discussion approach." (FGD 2)

Moreover, despite the given materials for the lecture discussion, students researched the topic so that they could cull additional information and have a deeper understanding of the topic.

"I do research and study." (FGD1)

"I have only three preparations before attending the online class. First, check the internet connection to see if it is strong. Second, do further research about the literary texts given by our professor, and lastly, get myself ready to listen and prepare the writing materials such as a notebook and ballpen for taking notes purposes." (FGD 3)

"I get to check the materials posted on the Gclass. I study and do further research about them." (FGD 3)

In summary, the responses highlight students' proactive steps to prepare before attending online classes with a recitation-discussion approach. Key preparation strategies include reading, scanning, reviewing assigned materials in advance, watching instructional videos related to the topic, and conducting additional research. Students expressed a commitment to understanding the subject matter thoroughly, anticipating and preparing for questions from the teacher, and actively participating in recitation discussions. Practical considerations, such as ensuring a strong internet connection and having necessary materials like notebooks and pens, are also noted.

The findings of this study conform to the study of Gudu and Jesse (2023), who said that presentation with a discussion strategy highly motivates students. It also affirms Asem's (2023) findings, which state that a lecture-discussion set is a supportive and desirable environment for learning. Yücel et al. (2022) reiterated that lecture discussion during distance learning promotes active participation and motivates students.

SUGGESTIONS

Even though the students found the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT) motivating, they offered four relevant suggestions for improving the technique. Typically, they suggested extending the time of the discussion, and questions should be challenging so that students could elaborate on their answers and make interpretations.

"Lengthen time discussion." (FG1)

"Ask more provoking questions." (FGD2)

Variantly, a few others suggested that students needed to open their cameras so that others could see them. They wanted that everyone should be visible on the platform. Likewise, others suggested guide questions may be given by the teacher ahead of time so that they could prepare their answers. Also, a few mentioned that setting aside time to answer the question was important. It was to allow students to make their answers concise.

"Visibility of the students is important during class." (FGD1)

"Guide questions may be given ahead so that we can prepare." (FGD2) "Impose time limit in answering the questions." (FGD3)

Students appreciate the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT) for its motivational aspects but have provided valuable suggestions for improvement. Commonly, they recommend lengthening the discussion time and posing more challenging questions. However, diverse perspectives emerged, with some proposing that students turn on their cameras for visibility, while others advocate for teachers to provide guide questions in advance for better preparation. Additionally, some students emphasize the importance of setting time limits for

responses to ensure concise answers. The suggestions highlight the diversity in student preferences regarding online learning techniques. Acknowledging and incorporating these varied perspectives could enhance overall engagement and satisfaction. The request for camera visibility indicates a desire for a more interactive and personal experience. Institutions may need to assess the technological capabilities and privacy concerns of such features. The call for guide questions and time limits suggests a need for structured and well-prepared sessions. Educators could benefit from providing clear guidelines to facilitate effective student participation and ensure a productive learning environment.

While extending discussion time is favored, there is a simultaneous need for questions that prompt deeper thinking. Striking a balance between extended discussions and thought-provoking questions is crucial for maintaining student engagement and promoting meaningful learning. The suggestions underscore the importance of adaptability in online teaching methods. Educators must be flexible in implementing varied strategies to cater to students' diverse needs and preferences in a virtual setting.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals a predominantly positive reception towards implementing the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT), particularly in literary studies. Participants praised OLDT for fostering vibrant and engaging class discussions, emphasizing its capacity to enrich the learning experience. The method's emphasis on critical thinking and active student involvement contributed to a more dynamic teaching and learning environment. However, challenges, such as the demanding nature of OLDT, pressure to excel, and issues related to internet connectivity, were evident. The proactive measures students take in preparation for online classes underscore a commitment to optimizing the learning experience, highlighting the importance of pre-reading, scanning, and researching in advance. The study emphasizes the need for educational institutions to play a role in supporting students by providing resources and support tailored to the challenges of online learning. To enhance the positive aspects of OLDT measures to alleviate performance pressure, explore alternatives to alphabetical calling, and manage study sessions need consideration. Additionally, addressing issues of limited internet connectivity, especially for students in remote areas, is crucial for creating an inclusive learning environment. Looking forward, the positive facets of OLDT, such as lively discussions and heightened critical thinking, should inform the development of future online learning approaches. Striking a balance between interactivity and manageable session lengths is essential for creating a more effective and inclusive learning environment that accommodates online education's strengths and challenges.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the positive reception of the Online Lecture-Discussion Technique (OLDT) in literary courses, further research could delve into specific strategies for mitigating the challenges identified, such as the demanding nature of OLDT, performance pressure, and issues related to internet connectivity. Exploring alternative methods to alleviate performance pressure, enhancing the inclusivity of participation strategies beyond alphabetical calling, and developing practical approaches for managing study sessions could contribute valuable insights. Additionally, future studies could focus on implementing targeted interventions by educational institutions to provide tailored resources and support for students engaging in online learning. Addressing the connectivity issues, especially in remote areas, could be a focal

point for research to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities. Moreover, investigating the long-term impact of OLDT on critical thinking skills and its potential integration with other innovative online teaching methods would contribute to the evolution of effective and inclusive online learning environments.

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