

B5 - Walking with Seminars

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Abstract

Sedentary behavior is a growing health problem in the Western world. According to WHO, physical inactivity is the fourth most common cause of death in the world and behind 6 % of deaths. Students in teaching and learning situations are no exception where for example students from Luleå University of Technology on average sits around 10 hours per day, of which more than 6 hours are when at their university (Dijkstra & Syrén Sandström, 2014).

There is, therefore, from a public health aspect, reasons to find alternatives to sedentary teaching and learning situations. However, we have gone a step further and looked at opportunities to move also from a learning perspective. For example, "mind- wandering" is very widespread in teaching situations, where studies show that students can focus on average between 3-5 minutes before they lose focus (Rosen, Cheever & Carrier, 2012; Judd & Kennedy, 2011), which increased physical activity could possibly counteract. Furthermore, studies have shown that walking lead to increased creativity (Opezzo & Schwartz, 2014).

In our study, four groups of 5-8 students performed a seminar while walking outdoors with a twofold purpose: to achieve the health benefits mentioned above, but also to improve the quality of the seminars. In a questionnaire we examined how students experienced these seminars compared to traditional classroom-based seminars and their perception of communication during the seminars, the overall quality of the workshops and how they felt after the seminars.

The results are in favour of the walking seminars: the 23 students (of 27) who answered the questionnaire report improved communication, sense of well-being and quality and 83% would like to see more such walking seminars at their university.

References

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