
“What I did with my summer stipend”

Factors Influencing Uncompensated Care in Georgia Hospitals

Billie Ann Brotman

The study I conducted this summer involved information gathered from the Georgia State Planning Agency that included financial data for 144 general hospitals for 1992. I was attempting to see what influenced levels of indigent care in these hospitals.

Hospitals are required to provide information on such care to remain eligible for Certificate of Need reviews. Failure to report the information could restrict

the hospital's ability to offer new services. All hospitals in Georgia were included in this study.

The results showed no influence on indigent care spending based on third-party payors such as Medicaid, Medicare or Blue Cross. This was true whether the hospital was for-profit or not-for-profit, or whether the hospital had an emergency room.

It is likely that a certain percentage of indigent care is done

by all hospitals because of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act that requires hospitals to stabilize critically ill patients before transferring them to another hospital regardless of their ability to pay.

The Medicaid variable had a positive coefficient and was significant. This variable probably reflects the fact that poor families patronize certain hospitals or are transferred to these hospitals.

Promoting and Managing Classroom Interaction

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The student's role in many college classrooms is changing from “passive listener” to “active participant in the learning process.” Research in several fields has documented several advantages of active learning, including greater retention of material and greater student satisfaction. I have attempted to incorporate interactive learning in my classes and have developed a few management techniques that may be helpful.

In ACC202, I use the first half of class to cover homework. Instead of working out each problem myself, I randomly assign one of the problems (or a portion of a problem) to small groups of students. The students meet for about 15 minutes and agree on an answer.

The students then compare their group answer with mine

and record the solution on a transparency. One member presents the solution to the entire class and addresses questions from other students. After the student's presentation, I go through the answer again to reinforce the key points.

I have used this method for several quarters, and I have noticed several benefits. First, the groups rarely, if ever, miss an answer. It is amazing how combined effort can guide the group through the toughest problem. Second, students become more comfortable speaking to the class as the quarter progresses. Third, students become friends with group members; at test time, groups often study together. Finally, in course evaluations, students comment very favorably on the interactive, informal nature of the class.

TIPS FOR INTERACTION

- **Establish an informal classroom environment.** I encourage students to talk with each other informally before and during class. Getting to know each other—and not seeing me stuck behind the podium—seems to create a comfortable, relaxed setting.
- **Don't make it a “sink or swim” presentation.** I make sure to check each group's answer before they commit it to transparency. In that way, students aren't left out on a limb with the wrong answer (which may also have the effect of confusing other students).
- **Manage the process efficiently.** Although the atmosphere is relaxed, I make sure groups stay on task and watch the clock. One way to ease into this process is to make the group activities short (less than five minutes). Gradually, this time can expand as the groups learn to work together.