



Expansive Horizons: Understanding the Experiences and Insights of Medical Students Participating in a New Distance Learning Environment

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INTRODUCTION

➤ To address the country's primary care physician shortage, the Medical College of Wisconsin has matriculated students into accelerated 3-year campuses located in Central Wisconsin (CW) and Green Bay (GB). To assure consistent content delivery within the basic science curriculum, students at all three sites participate simultaneously in daily learning activities.

PURPOSE

➤ The purpose of this study was to examine student and faculty perceptions and experiences with distance learning by using a mixed methods approach.

METHODS

➤ Beginning in the 2015-2016 academic year, nine individual focus groups with end-of-session surveys were conducted. In the 2017 academic year, additional focus groups were conducted with students from MKE, GB, and CW in addition to faculty teaching the basic science courses.

➤ Audio recordings of the focus groups were transcribed and thematically coded using NVivo 11 Plus. At the conclusion of each focus group, an eight-item, seven-point Likert-scale survey was distributed to the students' and faculty. Numerical data analyzed with IBM® SPSS® 24.

MIXED METHODS RESULTS

FOCUS GROUP THEMES & SELECTED QUOTES

Peer/Faculty Relationships

"I liked the fact that MKE faculty had specific satellite campus review sessions with the instructor making sure that we, out here, understood what was going on" (GB M1 Student)

"I wish there was more chance to do research, either bench side or quantitative. And I also wish that we had more of action like Milwaukee has with their residence year entrance. I wish we had that, it's like a foot in the door essentially" (CW M1 Student)

Social Persuasion/Feedback

"I think in the last few years, actually, even on this campus, students aren't taking as much advantage of face-to-face meetings even in MKE where they can just walk over to you. They are emailing questions more than anything else" (Basic Science Faculty)

"A lot of people had the lectures streaming.. They were in the MCW building, but they were still streaming, just because they didn't want to come get interrogated by the instructor" (MKE M1 Student)

Work-Life Balance

"I've got a two-year-old at home, and just the flexibility of the schedule makes medical school and the demands more tolerable and possible. Having everything recorded is nice where I'm not necessarily having to plan school around my life" (GB M1 Student)

Discrepancy Between Learning/Teaching Delivery

"It just seems like we're kind of an afterthought when it comes to those review sessions, especially the large group ones. And then, we have also had issues considering our difference in schedule, being in a clinic all ready. A lot of us happen to have clinical hours during those times which obviously makes a little bit more difficult to, well I guess attend any review sessions" (GB M1 Student)

"You sometimes forget they're (GB and CW students) there. Partly that's the placement of those conference screens. They're not in a place that is natural to the eyes. So they're quiet up there, they're not saying much, and sometimes you just forget that they're there" (Basic Science Faculty)

2015-2017 PARTICIPANTS

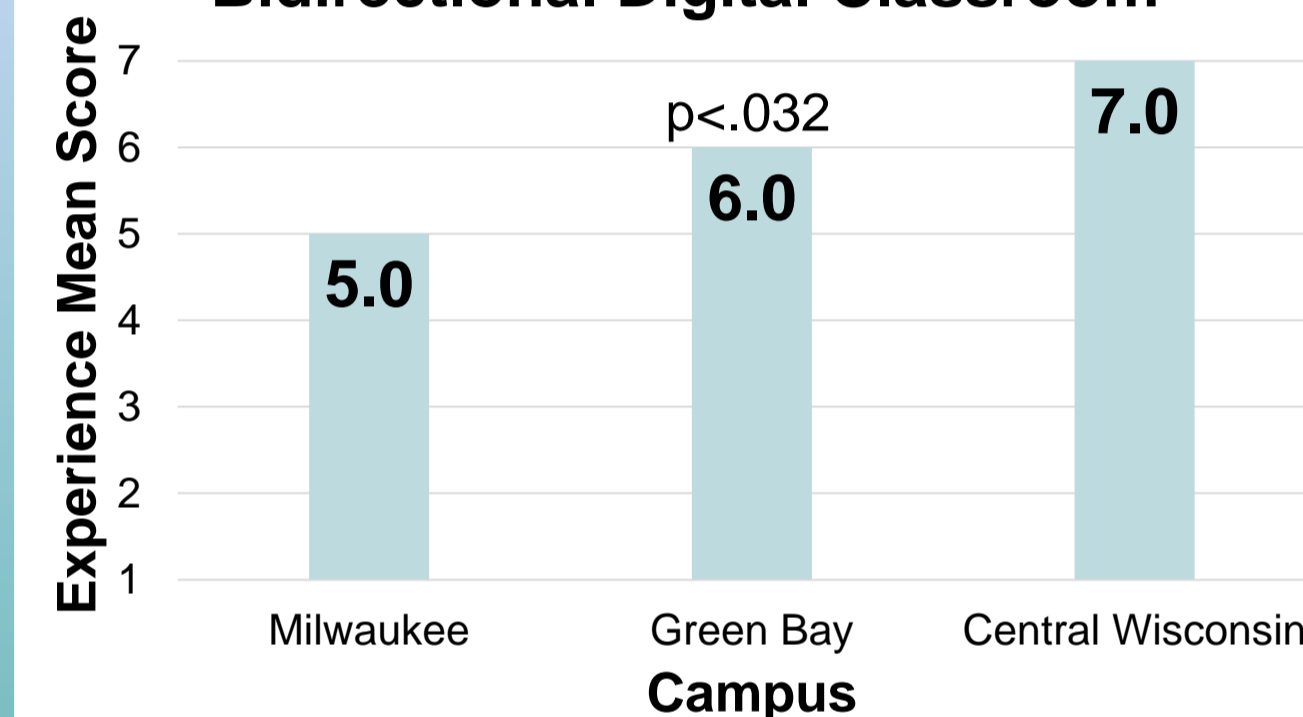
- 28 MKE Students
- 53 GB Students
- 12 CW Students (only 1 focus group in 2017)
- 16 Basic Science Faculty (all 3 campuses)

CONCLUSIONS

- Students at each of the campuses expressed a strong desire for a variance in pedagogical delivery- small groups, targeted, well-constructed audience-response questions, case-based learning, and increased student discussion. However, faculty perceived that medical students prefer more straightforward, lecture-based experiences in order to best learn the content. Overall student experiences rated higher on regional campuses.

SURVEY ANALYSIS

Overall Experience Learning in the Bidirectional Digital Classroom



➤ There was no significant difference ($p < .132$) between overall student (7.2 (1.2)) and faculty experience (6.7 (1.1)) means.

➤ The best predictors of overall experience ($R^2=0.64$, $p < .001$) was learning with multiple sites at one time (beta=0.5), followed by classroom design (beta=0.4).