

Perceptions of the Medical School Learning Environment in a Distributed Education Program: Identifying the Key Elements of Positive Learning Environments

Shayna Rusticus, Patricia Lewchuk, Derek Wilson, Oscar Casiro, Chris Lovato, Lisa Hazlett & Kevin Eva

INTRODUCTION

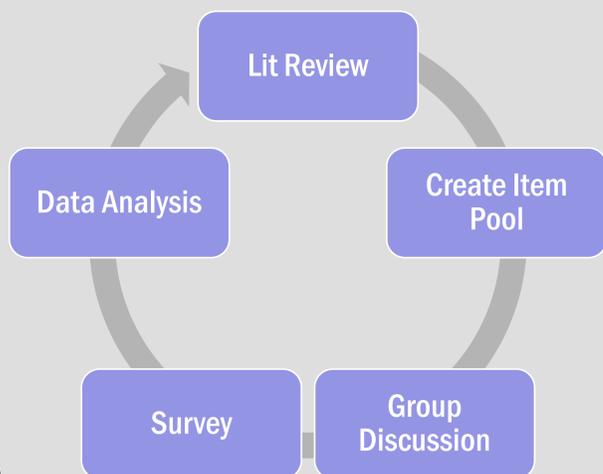
- Schools are increasingly being held responsible for facilitating positive environments (CACMS, 2015).
- This study aims to develop a learning environment measure that is based on theory and student feedback, and is sensitive to identifying program site differences.

METHODS

Qualitative Component:

- 33 semi-structured interviews were conducted with year 1 through year 4 undergraduate medical students across the four program sites.
- Data analysis was done in NVivo and followed the conventions of template analysis.
- All data is being coded by two of the authors and the preparation of the final template is still in progress.

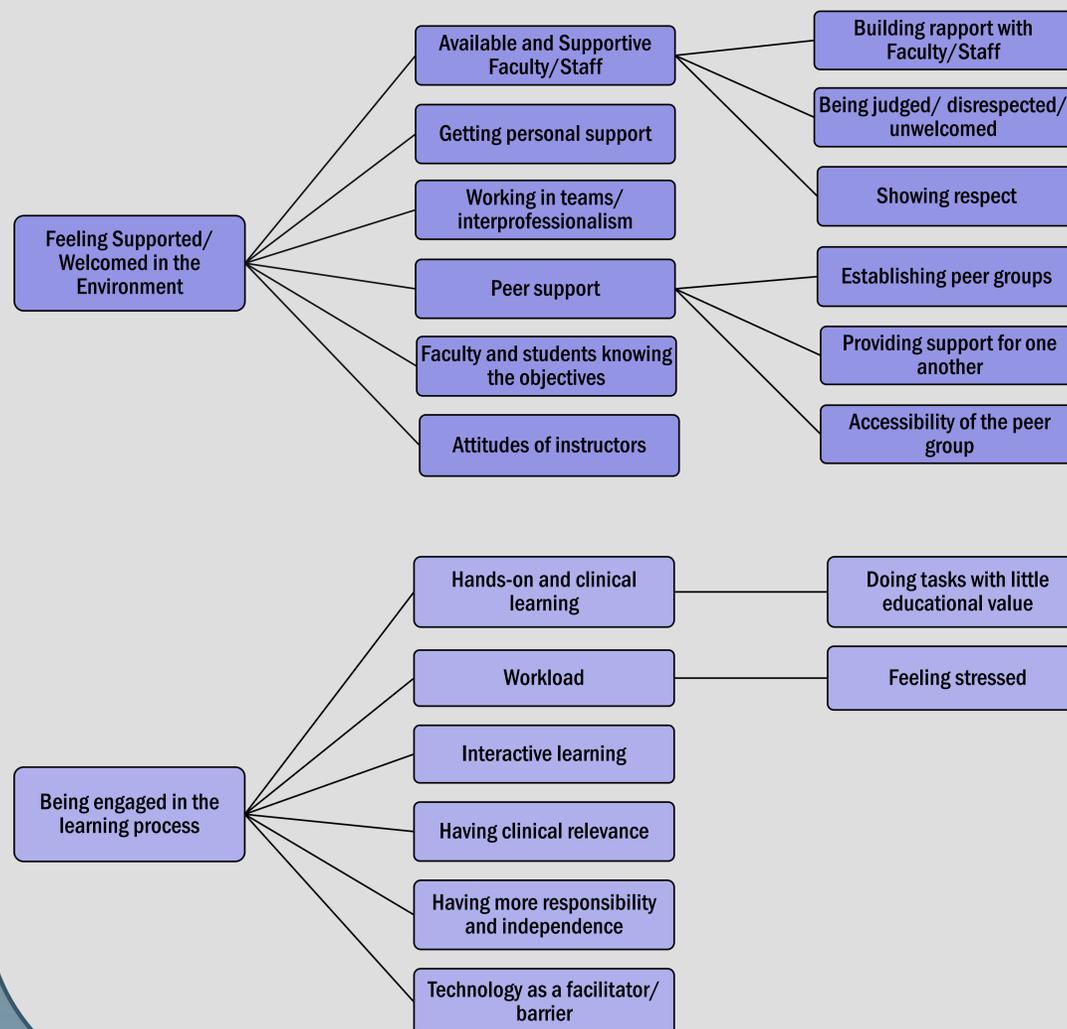
Quantitative Component:



QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Currently, the analysis of the qualitative data has identified two overarching themes related to a positive learning environment:

- An environment that is welcoming to students and in which they feel supported and safe to learn. Peers play an especially important role in the environment.
- An environment in which students feel engaged in the learning process. This engagement can occur via multiple methods.



QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

- 2 pilot tests have been conducted to test and refine the survey.
 - 429 and 268 medical students responded to pilot test s1 and 2, respectively.
- The survey, called the Health Education Learning Environment Survey (HELES), currently contains 46 items and will undergo one more pilot test in May 2016.
- The current dimensions in the HELES are: (1) supportive environment, (2) workload, (3) peer relationships, (4) faculty relationships, and (5) professional development.

Health Education Learning Environment Survey (HELES)

Directions: Reflect back on your overall perceptions of your current year of medical training and indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neither Disagree or Agree	4 Somewh at Agree	5 Strongly Agree
SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT					
1. Staff are readily available to assist me when I need help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I am treated with respect by faculty/staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Policies are consistently applied across students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Faculty are readily available to answer my questions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I am in a safe environment for learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Faculty are supportive when I make mistakes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. There are sufficient support staff in place to meet my learning needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

NEXT STEPS

Qualitative Component: (1) Finalize qualitative template and (2) explore program site similarities and differences.

Quantitative Component: (1) Finalize HELES and (2) conduct a final validation study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support for this project provided by UBC Vancouver students via the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund.