9-28-2018

Overcoming Resistance in Learning: Bridging the Gap Between Educator and Learner

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Recommended Citation
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Objectives
1. Identify the types of resistance in learning demonstrated at UNM SOM.
2. Solicit student feedback regarding strategies to reduce phase 1 resistance in learning.

Background
Block chair faculty organized a book club to gain insight into how to best help students at UNM SOM. “Why Students Resist Learning,” by authors Anton O. Tolman and Janine Kremling became a central resource for faculty. The phenomenon of resistance in learning is a set of attitudes or behaviors that can be overtly or covertly demonstrated by learners in an educational setting and ultimately result in decreased learning and performance. Resistance is a fluid and multifactorial state. Factors include learning environment, individual characteristics of the learner, and teaching style. In order to maximize student learning and success at UNM SOM, we must first identify the types of resistance being demonstrated. In an effort to begin to understand resistance in learning at UNM SOM, we first focused on the student perspective.

Methods
We conducted a focus group using semi-structured questions with both Block Chair faculty and medical students (years 2-4). See question domains below.

Focus Group
Survey

Focus group themes informed an anonymous survey administered to medical students at UNM (years 1-4).

Survey Results
Decreased Motivation to Learn
- Overwhelmed (20%)
- Burnout (31%)
- Too much homework (12%)
- Poor curriculum delivery (13%)

Increased Motivation to Learn
- Learning = Success (17%)
- To be competitive (18%)
- General Curiosity (22%)
- Finding Relevance to patient care or USMLE Step 1 (23%)

Values in Learning

Next Steps
1. Increase student representation in curriculum and block design to help increase consistency across blocks.
2. Collect more data on student burnout and how this relates to curriculum design vs. psycho-social issues.
3. Work to better align delivery of curriculum with the knowledge and skills needed for USMLE Step 1 success.

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