

Does Distance Teaching Impact Faculty Evaluation Ratings?

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Introduction

The Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine launched two new extension campuses in which students experience live, synchronous learning activities. Instructors teach primarily from one site, while up to two other sites watch from a distance. Research to date has focused on the effect of distance learning via video conference on student academic performance^{1,2}, student perception of the teaching modality^{3,4}, and student evaluations of lectures⁵, with no analysis to our knowledge of student evaluations of faculty. We therefore investigated the effect of synchronous teaching via video conference on student evaluations of faculty by comparing differences in evaluations from local and distant medical students.

Methods

Design: Compared teaching evaluations of 37, 41, and 37 faculty members from the main and extension campuses in academic years 2013-2014, 2014-2015, and 2015-2016, respectively.

Participants: There are on average 140 and 50 students at the main campus and extension campuses, respectively. Approximately 90% of these students completed the evaluation for each of the faculty evaluation data used in this study.

Instrument: The faculty evaluation survey is an 8-item Likert scale (1=strongly Disagree, Strongly Agree=6).

Procedure: The data in this study was collected from three cohorts of students over a period of three academic years. The overall faculty mean evaluation scores was calculated by averaging the score for the 8 items for each faculty member. Overall faculty mean evaluation scores were further split by campus (main campus score & extension campus score) then coded as local or distant – local if students were evaluating faculty on their local campus and distant when student were evaluating faculty teaching them from a different site.

Analysis: Paired-sample *t* tests examined if faculty evaluation ratings differed between campus sites and local vs. distant student-faculty location conditions.

Conclusions

Preliminary findings of this study suggest that both *distance* and *site affiliation* may influence students' learning experiences.

- Students at a distance submit lower teaching evaluations than those watching the same lecture locally.
- Many students may have watched recordings of lectures rather than attending in person. Thus, the effects of distance learning may also be influenced by site affiliation; students may rate local faculty higher than distant faculty, even when viewing a video of the activity. Additional research is needed to investigate this possibility.

Teaching evaluations overall decline with the addition of off-site campuses, and presents a faculty-independent variable in regards to student evaluations of teaching effectiveness.

Acknowledgements

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Videoconference Learning Environment



Extension campus



Main campus



Extension campus

Results

Figure 1. Mean faculty ratings by number of campuses for matched student-faculty location (local) and mismatched student-faculty location (distant). Error bars represent stdev. * Denotes $p < 0.05$

# of Campuses	Local Students	Distant Students
1 (AY '13-'14)	5.23 ± 0.36 (37)	-----
2 (AY '14-'15)	5.29 ± 0.30 (41)	5.02 ± 0.40 (41)
3 (AY '15-'16)	5.39 ± 0.34 (37)	5.11 ± 0.45 (37)

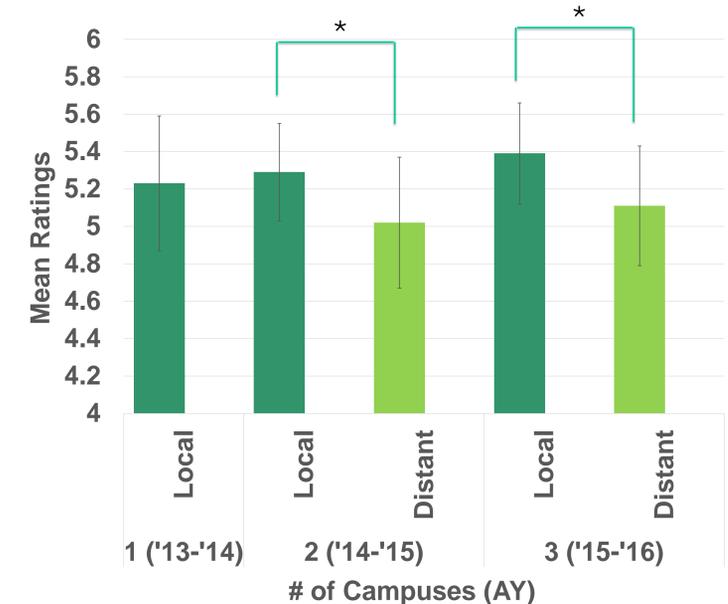
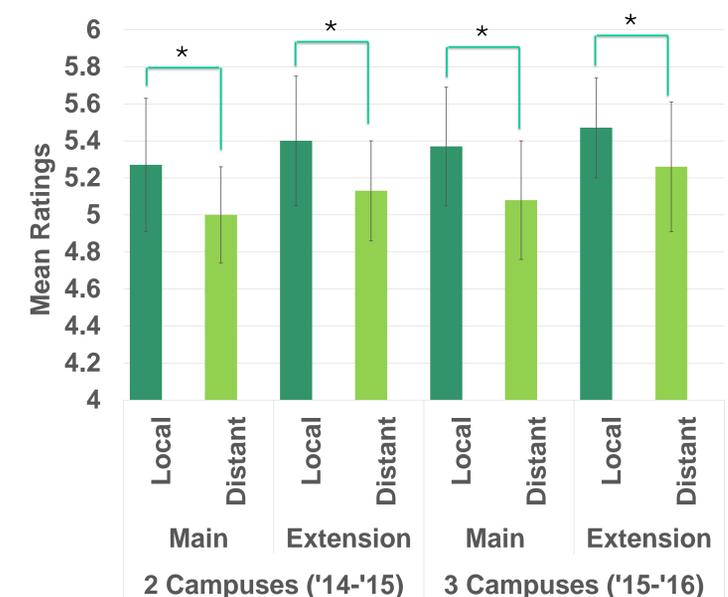


Figure 2. Mean faculty ratings by number of campuses and campus location (main vs extension) for matched student-faculty location (local) and mismatched student-faculty location (distant). Error bars represent stdev. * Denotes $p < 0.05$

# of Campuses	Main Campus		Extension Campuses	
	Local Students	Distant Students	Local Students	Distant Students
1 (AY '13-'14)	5.23 ± 0.36 (37)	-----	-----	-----
2 (AY '14-'15)	5.27 ± 0.30 (35)	5.0 ± 0.42 (35)	5.4 ± 0.25 (6)	5.13 ± 0.21 (6)
3 (AY '15-'16)	5.37 ± 0.35 (32)	5.08 ± 0.47 (32)	5.47 ± 0.27 (5)	5.26 ± 0.26 (5)



References

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