A Blended Learning Approach in a Pre-Matriculation Course for Incoming Medical Students
Brandon G. Twombly, OMS II, Kathleen Ackert, OMS II, Marina D'Angelo, PhD

INTRODUCTION

Technology in medical education can be used to efficiently deliver content of academic courses. TISSUE (Teaching Introductory Study Skills Utilizing Experience), a pre-matriculation course for incoming first-year medical students at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM), utilized a blended online/in-person course format to increase outreach and remove time and distance barriers to learning. The TISSUE program was created to provide exposure to the anatomical sciences for students who had not taken courses in anatomy and/or histology. Second year medical student (OMS 2) facilitators of the course engaged students on topics such as academics, study strategies, time management, and student wellness.

METHOD

To connect the in-class and online TISSUE participants, BlueJeans, a video, audio, and web conferencing software, was used to deliver live lectures to a virtual audience. The screen-sharing and chat functions made it possible for students listening online to interact with the class or a TISSUE facilitator. To ensure a connection between the in-class and online groups taking TISSUE, one facilitator would be teaching content at the front of the classroom while a second facilitator ran the video conference and managed that chat making sure that questions posed by the online audience were voiced and answered.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Of the 97 students who participated in TISSUE course, 66 of the students attended online. TISSUE facilitators had to work together to deliver content to both in-class participants and online participants. Using BlueJeans and Tegrity, TISSUE facilitators could teach important concepts to incoming first year medical students through a blended learning approach in the classroom in Philadelphia and online in a variety of other locations.

In a follow-up survey, students reported anonymously on the course in an open ended format:

- “The flexibility; I was working 20-30 hours a week while taking the course but could still go back and watch the Tegrity lectures.”
- “I love how the Tegrity lectures are still available for viewing so I can go back and watch them at my leisure/use them to prep for school.”
- “Organizing the classes and topics, answering all of our questions, providing helpful tips and resources.”
- “You integrated the live and online folks well throughout lecture! You provided all of the materials for review within 24hr”
- “I appreciated the student and teacher perspectives on first year success as well as the content and guidance on how to study in each of the subject areas. Thank you for making the course available to online students.”
- “appreciated the intentional engagement of the online class with quiz questions.”

CONCLUSION

- The use of BlueJeans and Tegrity made it possible for TISSUE to reach a maximum amount of students and eliminate time and distance barriers to education. The use of bluejeans eliminated distance barriers to education by allowing students who had not yet moved to Philadelphia to view all the content in the TISSUE program.
- Tegrity removed the time barrier to education. Tegrity allowed students to view all the lectures at a later date. Students who could not watch the lecture when it was being given live could still get all the content at a later time.
- A blended in-person/online course format can increase outreach and remove barriers to education.
- For more information on the development of TISSUE by our M2 group, please attend TISSUE: A Pre-matriculation Program Developed by Medical Students for Incoming Medical Students and Development of Educational Course Objectives for a Pre-matriculation course: TISSUE.

REFERENCES


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