



Small TLEF Project – Final Report

Report Completion Date: (2016/07/25)

1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1. General Information

Project Title:	Perceptions of the Medical School Learning Environment in a Distributed Education Program: Identifying the Key Elements of Positive Learning Environments		
Principal Investigator:	Shayna Rusticus		
Project Initiation:	2015/02/17	Project Completion:	2016/07/22

1.2. Project Summary

UBC’s distributed medical education program across four program sites creates a unique opportunity to explore how different program sites within one institution can potentially lead to different learning experiences and environments. We used a mixed methodology to explore the key elements of positive learning environments. First, we conducted semi-structured interviews with students across all four program sites and all four years of training to identify the dimensions of the learning environment that are essential for successful learning. These results, in conjunction with a review of the medical education learning environment literature, were used to develop items for a new learning environment tool that can be used to regularly assess and monitor the quality of the learning environment. Three pilot tests were conducted with the new tool to delete, revise, and add items until a final 30 item version of the tool was achieved that measured six key dimensions of the learning environment: (1) peer relationships, (2) faculty relationships, (3) clinical skill development, (4) work-life balance, (5) educational setting and resources, and (6) performance expectations.

1.3. Team Members – (Please fill in the following table and include **students**, undergraduate or graduate, who participated in your project).

Name	Title/Affiliation	Responsibilities/Roles
Shayna Rusticus	Statistical Analyst, Evaluation Studies Unit (ESU)	Lead project coordinator; Led item development and the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data; led write-up of results for publication
Derek Wilson	Interim Director, ESU	Contributed to the development of items for the new tool and provided feedback on qualitative themes
Oscar Casiro	Professor, Pediatrics	Contributed to the development of items for the new tool and provided feedback on qualitative themes
Chris Lovato	Professor, School of Population and Public Health	Contributed to the development of items for the new tool and



		provided feedback on qualitative themes
Kevin Eva	Senior Scientist, Centre for Health Education Scholarship	Contributed to the development of items for the new tool and provided feedback on qualitative themes
Lisa Hazlett	Evaluation Assistant, ESU	Contributed to the development of items for the new tool and provided feedback on qualitative themes
Tricia Lewchuk	Research Assistant, ESU	Assisted in the coding and analysis of qualitative data; Assisted in the write-up of the qualitative data for publication.

1.4. Student Impact – Please fill in the following table with **past**, **current** and **future** courses that have been or will be impacted by your project, including any courses not included in your original proposal. [Note: Adapt this section to the context of your project as necessary].

Course	Section	Enrolment	Term
Faculty of Medicine Undergraduate Medical Program	All four years of the program	~ 1200 students annually	

2. PROJECT EVALUATION

2.1. Project Outcomes – Please list the intended outcomes or benefits of the project for students, TAs and/or instructors.

The expected outcome of this project was a learning environment tool that can provide reliable and valid data regarding the learning environment in a distributed medical education program.

2.2. Findings – Briefly describe the methods and findings of your project evaluation effort: to what extent were intended project outcomes achieved or not achieved?

A thorough literature review and qualitative study were conducted to inform the development of the items for the new tool. Thus, the new tool was grounded in theory and in the voices of the students. Three pilot tests were conducted to refine the items of the tool into a final version. The original intent was to only conduct 1-2 pilot tests and then have a final validation study as part of the routine evaluation of the medical program in the spring of 2016. However, a third pilot test was needed to develop a fully robust measure of the learning environment (i.e., to target intended dimensions identified in the literature and qualitative study) and thus the final validation study has been delayed until the spring of 2017.

2.3. Dissemination – Please provide a list of scholarly activities (e.g. publications, presentations, invited talks, etc.) in which you or anyone from your team have or intend to disseminate the outcomes of this project.



Two presentations were conducted at the CHES Celebration of learning in October 2015: one on the qualitative portion of the project and one on the tool development portion of this project. We still intend to publish the results of the project and we anticipate two papers based on the qualitative portion of the study and one on the tool development portion.

3. TEACHING PRACTICES – *Please indicate if **your** teaching practices or those of **others** have changed as a result of your project. If so, in what ways?*

At this point teaching practices have not changed. As the tool continues to be used for evaluation purposes of the undergraduate medical education program, it has the potential to identify areas where the learning environment could be modified to promote better student outcomes, and this could include teaching practices.

4. PROJECT SUSTAINMENT – *Please describe the sustainment strategy for the project components. How will your work be sustained and/or potentially expanded (e.g. over the next five years)?*

This tool will be used annually by the Evaluation Studies Unit in the Faculty of Medicine to evaluate the learning environment of the undergraduate medical program. As part of the regular evaluation of the program in the spring of 2017, additional data will also be collected to further validate the new tool. Discussions are also underway about using the tool within other programs (e.g., nursing).