Author's response to reviews

Title: Integrated Problem-Based Learning in the Neuroscience Curriculum- The SUNY Downstate Experience

Authors:

   Brian Trappler (kbmdbtt@omh.state.ny.us)

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Author's response to reviews:

My new manuscript addresses some of Dr Albanese's comments:

The students response was 80%. It was collected at the end of the Neuroscience Block without incentives.

The qualitative responses were gathered from the 8 student elected student body at the formal feedback session with the Block Directors.

The fact that this was the first year of a curriculum change and the implications are discussed in the discussion section.

Response to Reviewer Dr Kwizera:

The article is reconstructed to better integrate the research results with the conclusions.

The impression previously given of a bias against PBL is unfortunate. The new manuscript takes much effort in presenting PBL as an educational challenge using two constructs in the same student population. The different outcomes are addressed as issues relevant to how faculty respond to curriculum reform mandates.

Including more recent literature citations not only makes the case for PBL but collaborates some of the difficulties experienced at SUNY Downstate.

Since much of the findings relate to a process phenomenon, the intense and very thorough feedback session with the official student representative body is given much attention in the findings and discussion.

While the questionnaires provide some hard data, the study didn’t lend itself that well to be data-driven. Nevertheless, the data obtained did correlate with the verbal feedback from the student body.

The findings that PBL works better, at least in the beginning with expert mentors, is meant to alert faculty that they cannot expect junior mentors to automatically transition into a new teaching mode without special training, as was the finding by Dr Azer at the University of Melbourne.