



Introduction

Teaching Physician Assistant (PA) students to use an inclusive approach when caring for patients with diverse backgrounds is important and required by the Accreditation Review Commission.¹ There are, however, limited resources to guide curriculum design, or to recommend best practices. Very few published studies have measured opinions or performance of students after learning about using an inclusive approach with specific patient populations.²⁻⁴ Patients with vision loss are a prevalent population that requires PAs to use an inclusive approach.⁵ There are currently no studies that evaluate training in PA education to use an inclusive approach for patients with visual impairments.

Purpose

To evaluate and compare PA students' opinions and knowledge after attending a case-based lecture versus a traditional lecture on inclusive language and resources when caring for patients with a visual impairment.

Methods

Population: 92 PA students in their 2nd didactic year.

Design: Students were randomly and evenly assigned to attend one of two lectures.



Outcomes: Pre and Post Lecture Surveys

- Opinion Survey: Interest, value, confidence using inclusive language when interacting with patients with a visual impairment
- Knowledge Quiz: 10 multiple choice questions

Statistical Analysis: Independent samples T-test compared differences between the groups and a paired t-test was used to test for significant changes within the groups. A p-value ≤ 0.05 (*) was considered to be statistically significant.

IRB approval: Obtained from MCPHS University IRB.

Results

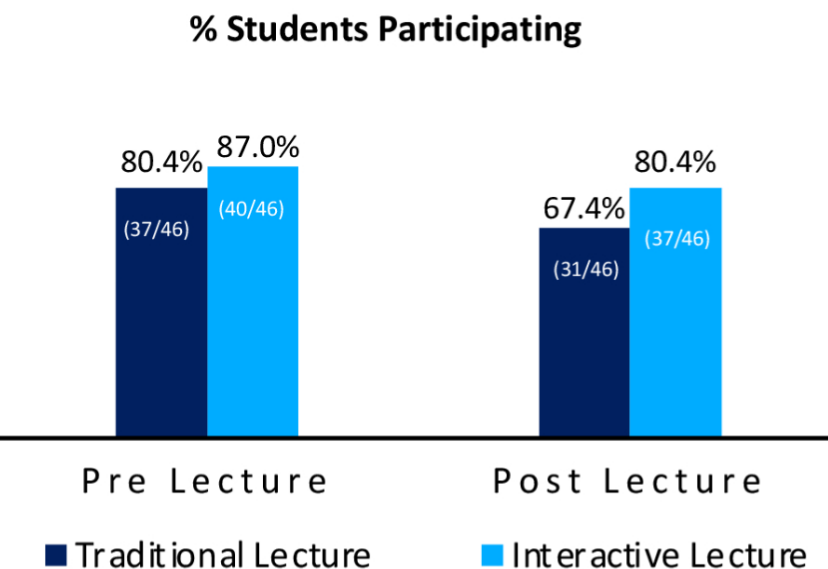


Figure 1. The figure shows the students participation percentages in the two lecture models.

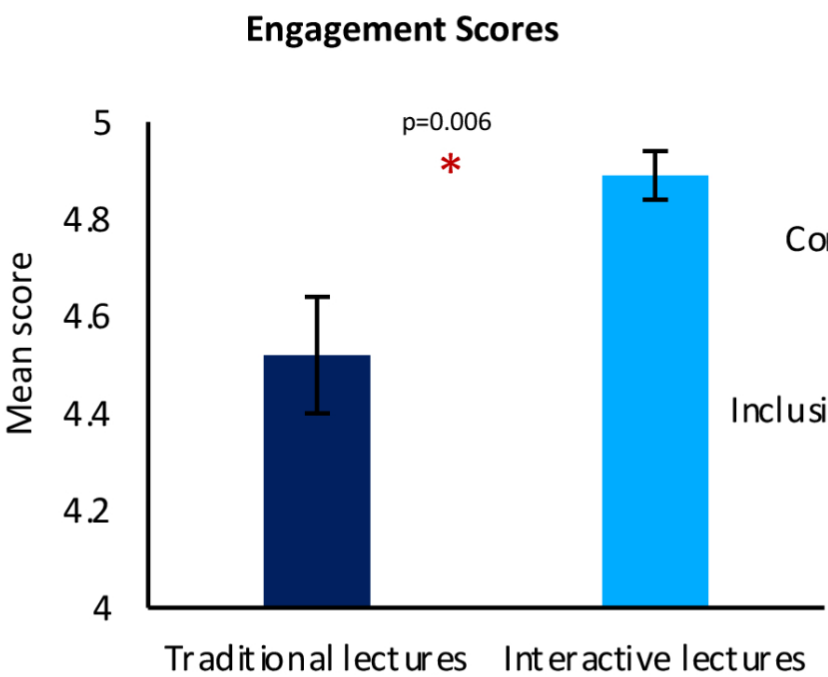


Figure 3. The case-based lecture group also found their experience interviewing a person with visual impairment to be more engaging than the traditional lecture group.

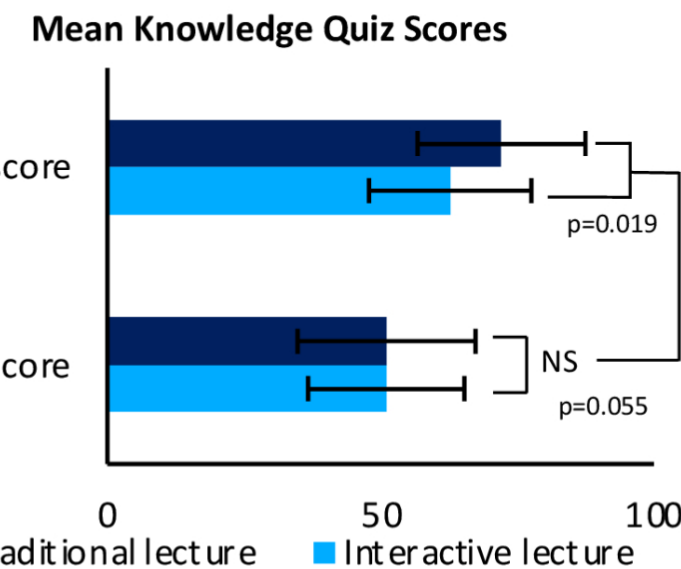


Figure 2. Both groups scored significantly higher in the quiz taken after each lecture (*p < 0.001) and the change score was significantly higher for the traditional lecture group (p = 0.019).

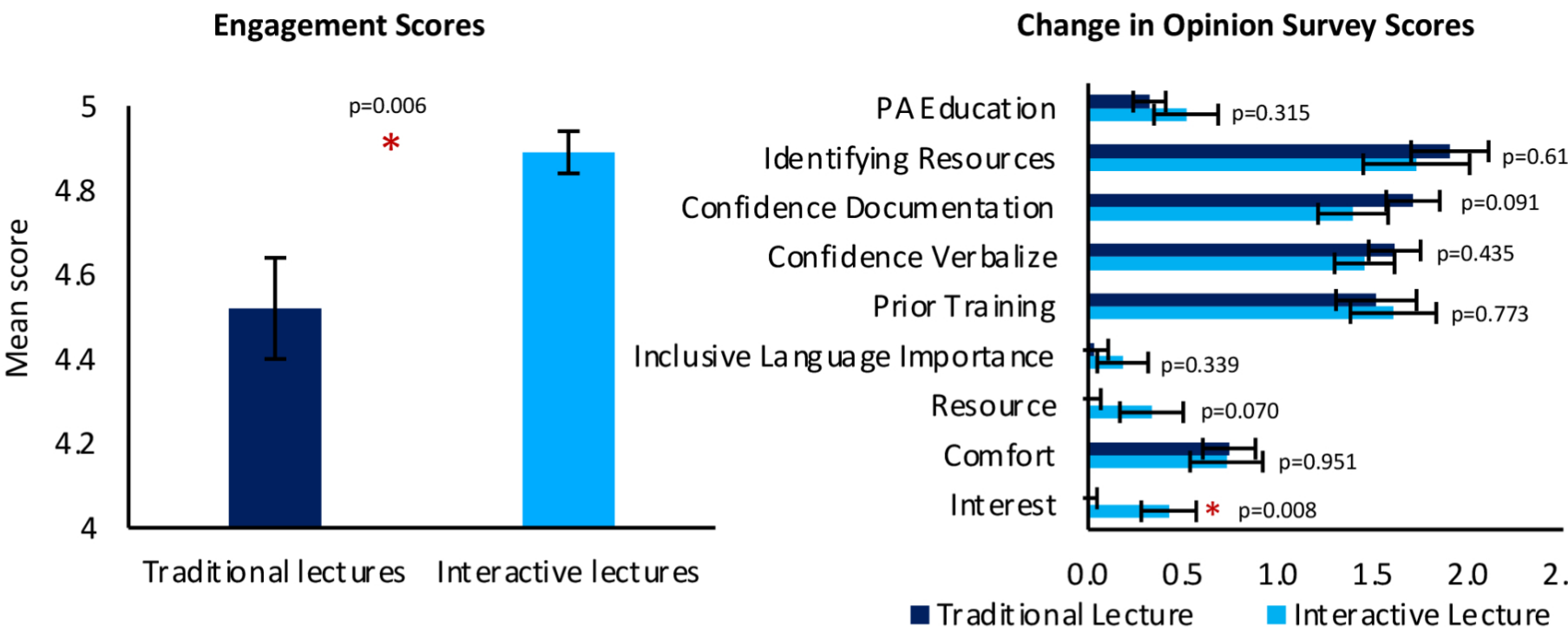


Figure 4. Student interest in using inclusive language to communicate improved significantly more in the case-based lecture group than the traditional lecture group.

Key Findings

- Response rates were high and similar between groups.
- Both lectures showed improvement in knowledge regarding the approach for caring for a visually impaired patient.
- The students felt more engaged in the case-based lecture than the traditional lecture format.
- Irrespective of the format, students' opinions improved regarding: including this topic in PA education, confidence in verbalizing and documenting, identifying resources, valuing the importance of inclusive language and comfort levels in approaching a patient with visual impairment.

Conclusion

In teaching PA students the importance of inclusive language and resources when caring for a patient with visual impairment:

Interactive Lecture

- Improves student engagement
- Increases interest to utilize inclusive language
- Significantly improved their quiz scores

Traditional Lecture

- Higher performance on the quiz

We conclude, teaching about inclusive approach for patients with visual impairment is valuable to include in PA education and can be achieved via case-based learning.

References

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