

# Reviving the Classroom: The Compelling Case for Embracing In-Person Learning Once Again

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## Abstract

**Background:** Deteriorating Patient Simulation (DPS) scenarios are low-fidelity yet realistic simulations designed to mimic the progression of real-life medical cases [1]. DPS workshops provide undergraduate medical students with an opportunity to work in small groups and make evidence-based decisions in realistic scenarios. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the in-person DPS workshop was paused in 2020, adapted to online delivery in 2021, but switched back to in-person in 2022 and 2023.

**Summary of work:** Our project aims to evaluate lessons learned from transitioning the DPS workshop to/from online and in-person delivery, while concurrently contributing to curriculum development. We obtained medical students' post-DPS evaluation of the workshop and instructors via a questionnaire from 2019 to 2023. Descriptive/inferential statistics and thematic analysis were applied to quantitative and qualitative data, respectively.

**Results:** We received 132 responses. Despite minimal curricular modification, student assessment ratings for both the DPS workshop and instructors were statistically significantly higher for in-person sessions (2019, 2022, 2023). Students' self-reported achievement of workshop learning objectives increased from 4.31 to 4.64 out of 5 after switching from online back to in-person. Students' qualitative feedback revealed a preference for in-person small-group learning and for instructors who fostered an engaging and safe learning environment.

**Discussions:** In-person workshops were more effective in delivering learning objectives and facilitating positive learner experiences. Students' qualitative input triangulated our quantitative analysis where some students attributed this to the safe and engaging learning environment endorsed by the instructors.

**Conclusions:** Lessons learned from this multi-year DPS workshop evaluation provided a unique insight into how in-person learning environment for simulation-based training might influence medical students' learning experiences.

Take-home messages: In-person settings, small group sizes, and engaging instructors contributed to a safe and effective learning environment for the DPS workshop. This project will help guide the quality improvement of simulation-based workshops for undergraduate medical education.

**References (maximum three)**

1. Wiseman J, Snell L. The Deteriorating Patient: a realistic but 'low-tech' simulation of emergency decision-making. *The Clinical Teacher* 2008;5:93-97.