

Frontiers in Medical and Health Sciences Education 2020

Identifying and articulating the student learning experience in the MBBS 130 curriculum Enrichment Year in HKU

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Acknowledgement



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- Participants in the focus groups and survey
- This study obtained ethic approval by IRB HKWC UW 19-585

Introduction



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- **'The Enrichment Year (EY) is a new curriculum** held in Year 3 of the six-year MBBS programme at the University of Hong Kong in **2016/2017**
- It is **compulsory** for **undergraduate MBBS students** to design their own learning experiences in **Hong Kong and/or overseas** from a combination of :
 - intercalation or exchange programme (IC)
 - research attachment (RA)
 - service and humanitarian work (SH)
- **First cohort** of EY students returned to Hong Kong to continue their MBBS studies in 2019/2020
- This study aimed to explore the barriers, enablers, and overall student learning experiences from the first cohort of EY students to inform its future development.

Methodology



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- An exploratory sequential mixed-method design
 - Qualitative and Quantitative Approach
- Qualitative Approach
 - Focus group interviews with semi-structured interview guides
 - 3 x focus groups (6 to 7 students in each group)
 - Each focus group interview audiotaped and lasted between 70-90 minutes
 - A conventional thematic analysis was employed
- Quantitative Approach
 - Themes from the qualitative results were used to design a questionnaire
 - Descriptive statistics was conducted to summarise barriers, enablers and perspective of their experience on EY.

Result (1)



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Qualitative Part

Three focus group interviews with 20 students (9.7% of the cohort)

Four main themes

1. **Expectations** - personal benefit, academic considerations, foreseen hindrances
2. **Enables** – financial, programme content, administrative process
3. **Barriers** – financial, communication, preparation, application, academic and assessment.
4. **Benefits** - personal, social, academic and career

Result (2)



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Quantitative Part

63 participants completed the online survey

Table 1. Characteristics of participants

	Overall
Age, years	21.4 (0.61)
Male	27 (42.9%)
Any scholarship	38 (60.3%)
Any Non-local program	54 (85.7%)
All faculty-coordinated module	27 (42.9%)
Any multi-category experience	25 (39.7%)

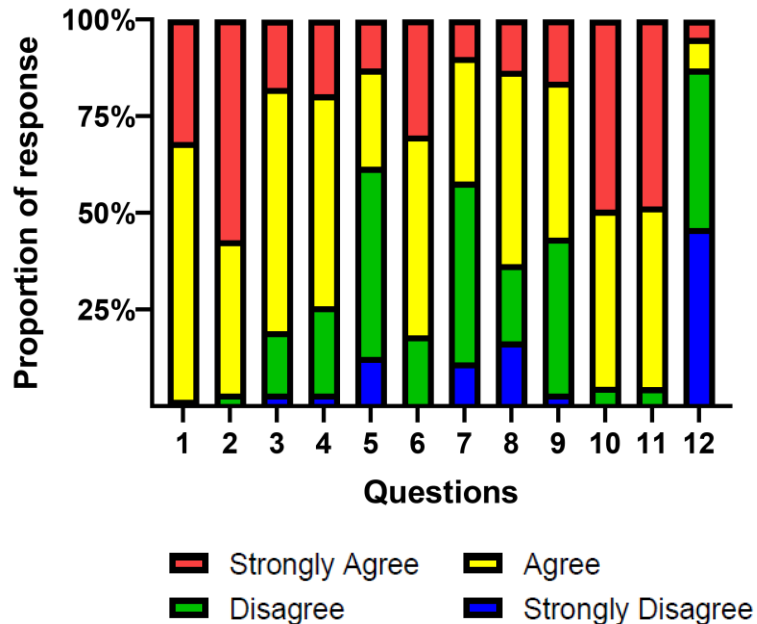
Result (3)



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Quantitative Part



A. To what extent do you agree with the following PERCEPTIONS about EY?

1. EY broadened my networks and improved my interpersonal relationships.
2. EY benefited my personal growth and development the most, as compared to other benefits.
3. I feel greater motivation and confidence in my studies after the EY.
4. I have a clearer picture on my future planning after the EY.
5. Academic outcomes from the EY were not beneficial to my future.
6. EY is placed at an appropriate time in the MBBS curriculum.
7. EY hindered my readiness for the Clinical Foundation Block.
8. EY is a gimmick for student admission.
9. EY should be compulsory for all students.
10. EY was worthwhile.
11. My EY experience was more worthwhile than I had expected.
12. I wanted to skip it.

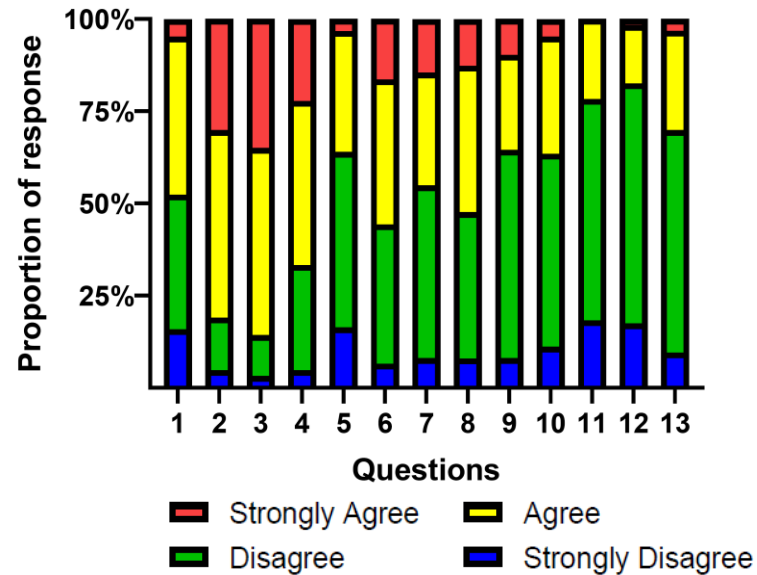
Result (4)



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Quantitative Part



B. To what extent do you agree that the following issues were BARRIERS for your EY?

1. Lack of motivation to prepare for the EY.
2. Information exchange barriers with the Faculty and EY activity providers.
3. Lack of guidance for the preparation of EY activities.
4. Excessive competition for EY option vacancies.
5. Unable to fulfill the EY option admission requirements.
6. Financial difficulties in supporting desired EY activities.
7. Difficulties in transferring academic credits.
8. Limited flexibility in choosing courses and EY activities.
9. Discrepancy between the EY activity descriptions and the actual execution of content.
10. Sense of powerlessness or uncertainty in achieving the learning objectives.
11. Onsite adaptation barriers (e.g. cultural differences and adaptation, unsatisfying living conditions).
12. Communication barriers with onsite individuals/colleagues/groups.
13. Narrow assessment criteria on EY outcomes.

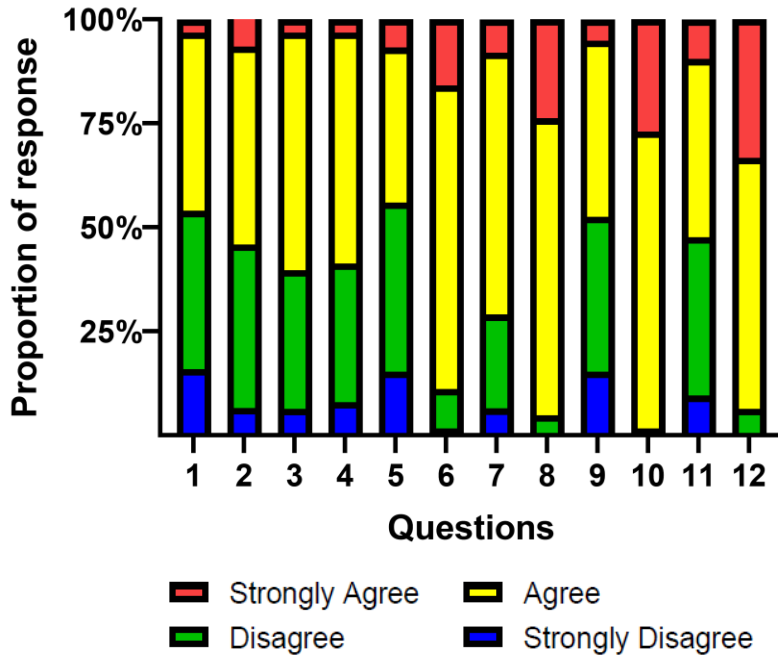
Result (5)



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Quantitative Part



C. To what extent do you agree with the following ENABLERS for your EY?

1. User-friendly EY online application platform.
2. Sufficient programme options provided from the faculty.
3. Sufficient time for executing plans including back-up plans.
4. Staff supports from the Faculty.
5. Scholarship or official subsidies.
6. Good programme/course quality.
7. Light programme/course-related workload.
8. Good and welcoming atmosphere in the programme/course.
9. Previous preclinical study including laboratory, and new induction courses.
10. Personal adaptability and problem-solving skills.
11. Individual supports from my seniors and EY supervisor.
12. Individual supports from peers or my family.

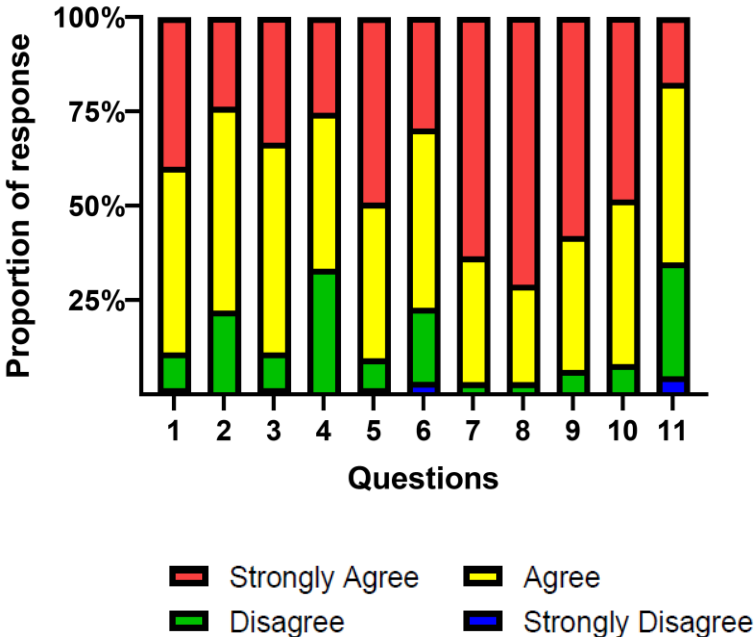
Result (6)



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Quantitative Part



D. To what extent do you agree with the following IMPROVEMENT and SUGGESTIONS on EY?

1. More active role of the Faculty during preparation stage of EY.
2. More passive role of Faculty after EY begins.
3. More effective and efficient communication between the Faculty and students.
4. More guidance and sharing sessions on different EY activities.
5. More freedom and flexibility on EY options.
6. Lower admission requirements of EY activities.
7. Launching Faculty-based exchange opportunities.
8. More EY scholarships and subsidies.
9. Earlier announcement and distribution of EY scholarships and subsidies.
10. Less EY assignments from the Faculty.
11. Assessing personal growth and development as EY outcomes.

Discussion



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- Most of students in the survey agreed that EY was worthwhile and more rewarding than they had expected. EY was well perceived especially on personal growth and interpersonal relationship.
- Financial difficulties but not cultural adaptation was the most notable barriers identified
- Administrative process and scholarship are most significant and essential enablers

Limitations



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- The focus group interview findings were based on self-reported data from the participants
- Participant recruitment was on voluntary bases. Therefore, less-motivated participants who might have more negative comments on EY might not be recruited to participate in the focus group interviews and survey
- A small proportion of students (30-40% of total number of Year 4 MBBS students) participated in the survey, and thus potential selection bias may affect the findings and variances within subgroup may not be highlighted by analysis.

Conclusion



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- Except cultural adaptation, similar to most of the findings found in western countries on the barriers of the voluntary based enrichment activities, the Hong Kong students had faced all types of barriers.
- The biggest barrier was the financial difficulty causing unfair learning experiences.
- The most obvious benefits were on the personal growth and development that EY nurtured a more mature cohort of medical students.



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