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How COIVD19 aided culture change during the implementation of a new curriculum – success stories for students and staff at University of Sydney.

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In 2018, the Sydney Medical Program started a two year program of curriculum review, renewal and structural redesign in the teaching for the MD program. The plan was to consolidate pre-clinical teaching into one year and increase the clinical immersion experience for students. The traditional lecture-based didactic teaching model of Year 1 and 2 teaching was also to be transformed to a new flipped learning model.

While 2020 brought many challenges to higher education, it also brought about a radical change to how we thought about teaching. Through solid planning, an agile Medical Education team and highly enthusiastic academic staff and student body, the University of Sydney pivoted to remote teaching over one weekend and successfully implemented the innovative MD curriculum as planned with no major disruptions to teaching.

Purpose: The purpose of this PeArLs session is to discuss how COVID19 assisted the rapid pivot from didactic teaching to a new forum format that included components that encouraged active, experiential learning and cross-disciplinary teaching models.

We will briefly outline our approach to faculty development, guided learning strategies for students and real-time course improvement through the use of Staff-Student Partnerships that led to our improved delivery of the new MD2020 program during the pandemic.

The following issues and questions will be explored and discussed.

1.   How to transform your lectures to interactive forums?
2.   What are the essential components of faculty development, consistency in teaching and establishing a model of site champions of change?
3.   How to generate buy-in from students who are used to learning in a traditional on-campus learning environment using didactic lectures?
4.   What is a Staff-Student Partnership Program and how does it provide a forum for two-way communication required for course improvement?
5.   How do you plan for return to campus while experiencing random site specific closures?