

That's SLICK! - A Learning Community Approach to Supplemental Instruction

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BACKGROUND

- Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a peer-led academic support program supporting active students enrolled in historically difficult courses.¹⁻² Lipscomb University College of Pharmacy adopted an SI program in 2017 to address issues of academic challenge and attrition.³ Historically, program year one (PY1) students were given the opportunity to attend a SI session corresponding with up to three courses (Table 1) for an hour and a half each per week (Figure 1).
- SI peer leaders were assigned a single course in a 1:1 ratio and were responsible for the design and execution of the 90-minute weekly session, communication with the teaching faculty members, and providing academic peer mentorship for active students in their assigned course.
- Recent initiatives to ease the PY1 student experience precipitated the redesign of SI at Lipscomb to a SI learning community (SLC) which embraced a peer-led collaborative study session for the same duration as a traditional session; however, only one night per week during the academic semester.
- A pilot study following the first year of implementation was developed to evaluate the primary goal of the SLC approach to reduce the time burden on students and perform a similar academic support function to the traditional SI model.

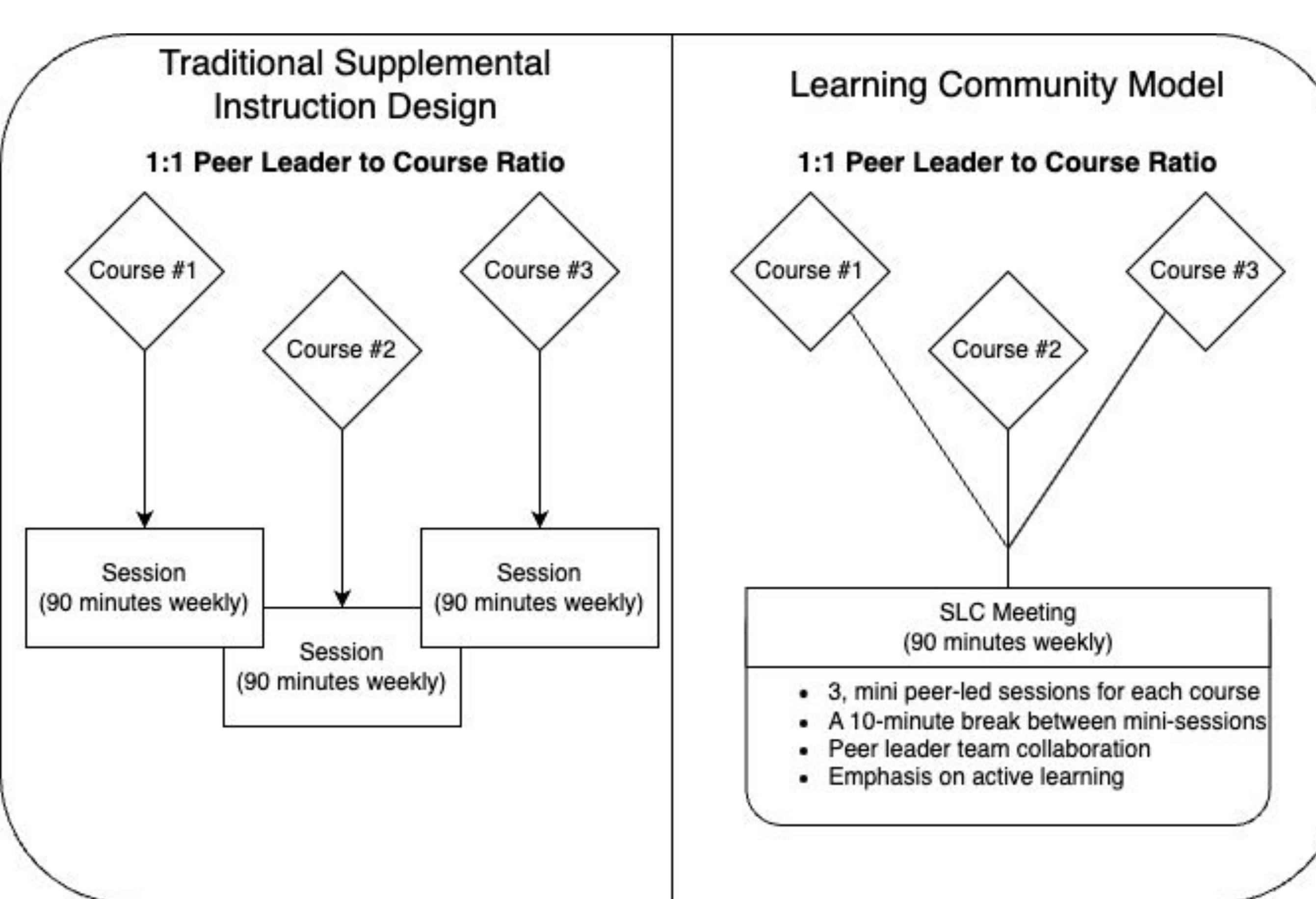
Table 1 - Courses Receiving Peer-led Academic Support

Course	Cohort Year – Semester
Physiological Basis of Therapeutics I (Physio I)	PY1 – Fall
Microbiology and Immunology (Micro/Immuno)	PY1 – Fall
Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry (MedChem)	PY1 – Fall
Physiological Basis of Therapeutics II (Physio II)	PY1 – Spring
Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics I (Pharm I)	PY1 – Spring
Biopharmaceutics (BioPharm)	PY1 – Spring

OBJECTIVE

Create a weekly SI learning community (SLC) approach to address the learner time burden and investigate the SLC model as an effective alternative compared to a traditional SI approach.

Figure 1. Traditional SI Design vs SLC Model.



RESULTS

Figure 2- SLC Utilization.

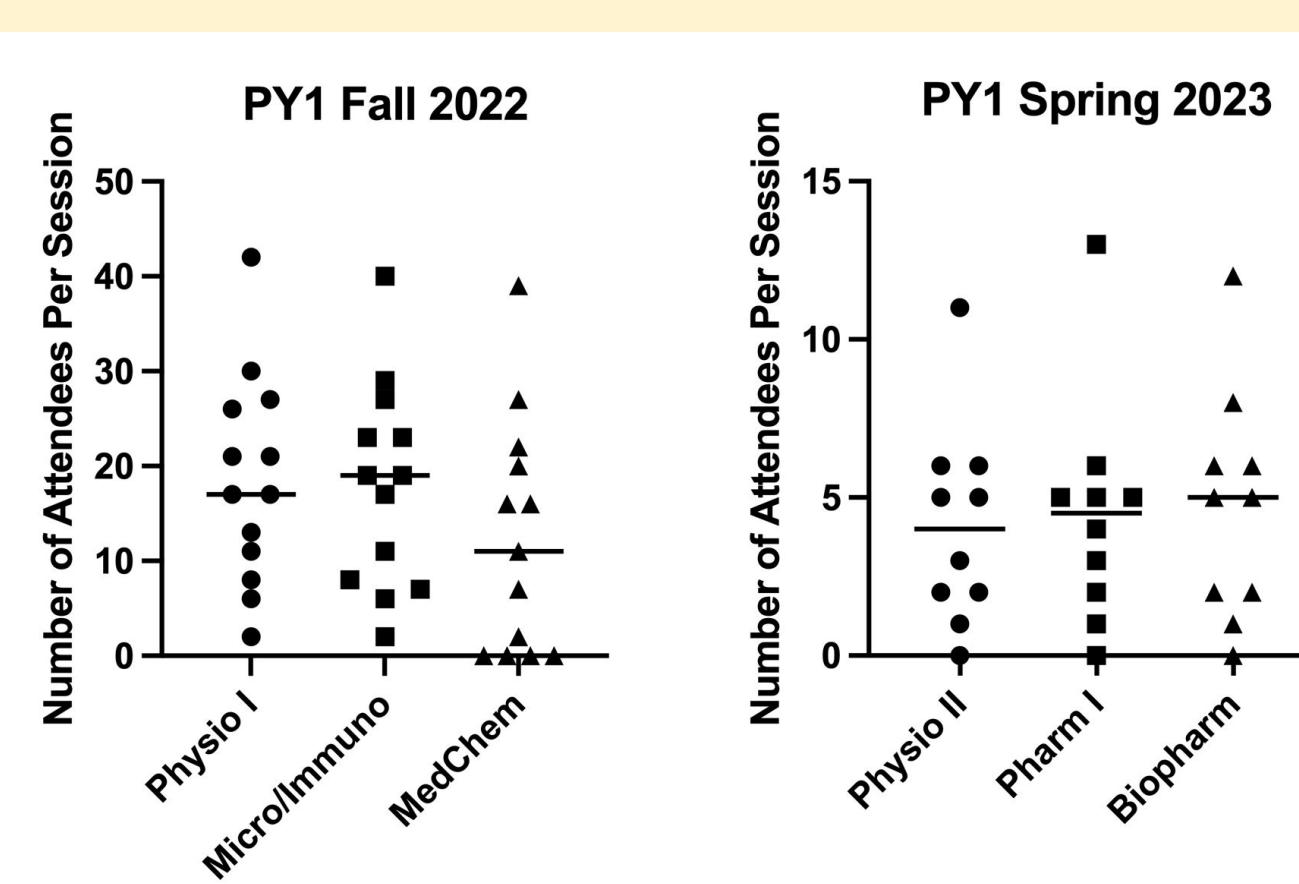


Figure 3- Academic Performance by Course Supported by the SLC.

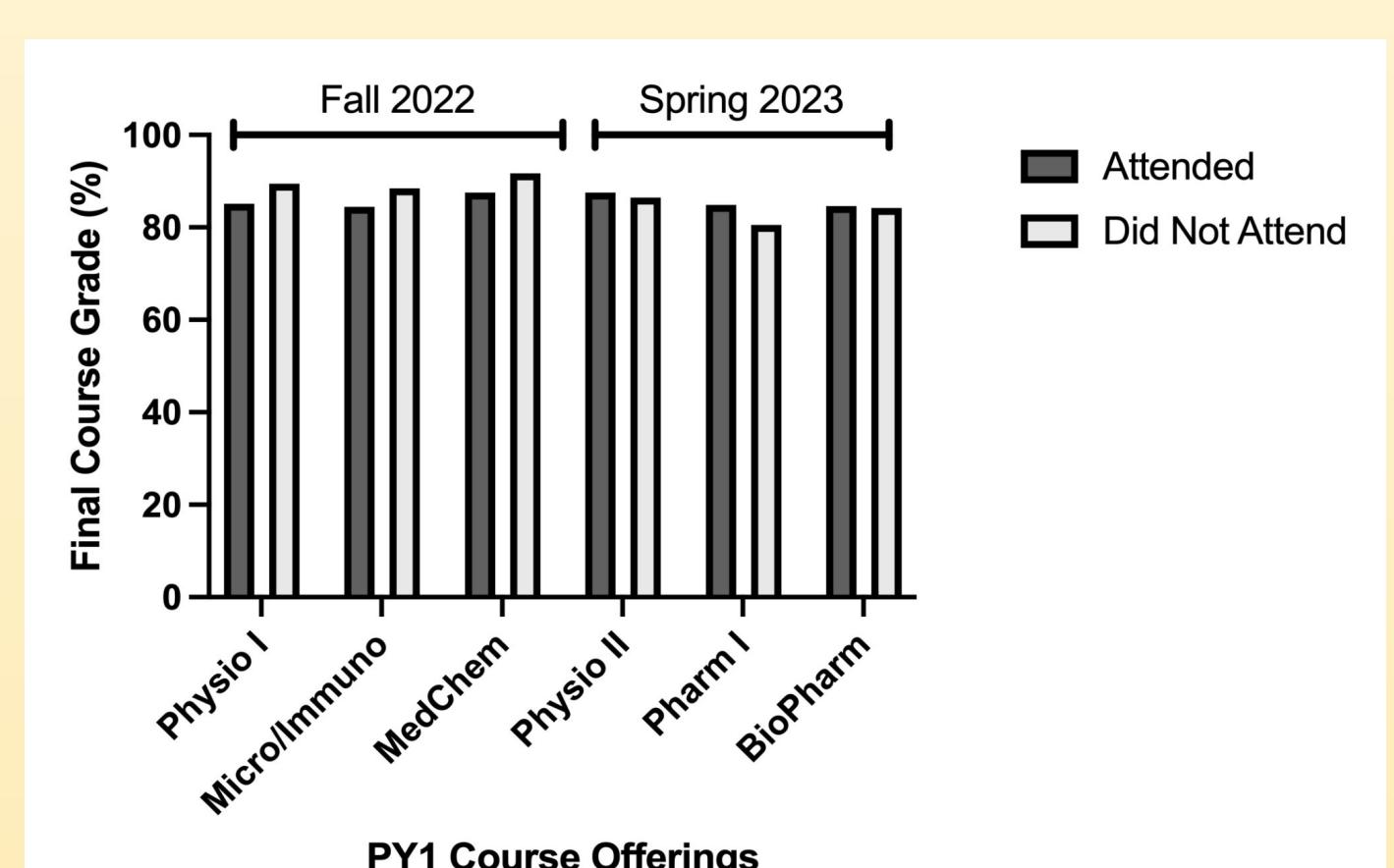


Figure 4. Exploring Trends Between SLC Attendance and Final Course Grades in the (A) Fall and (B) Spring.

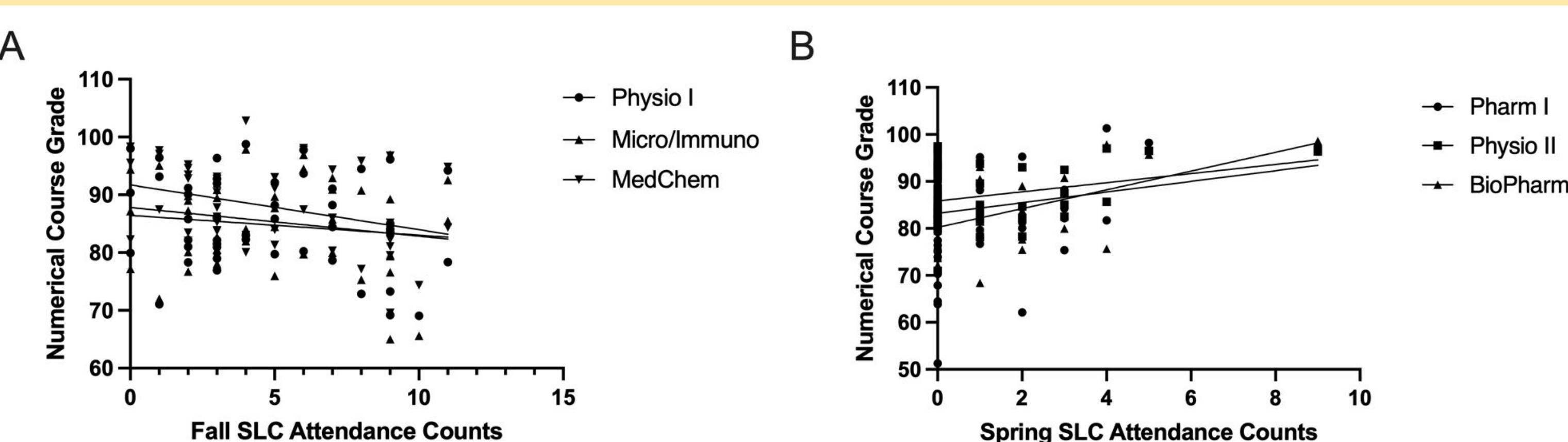
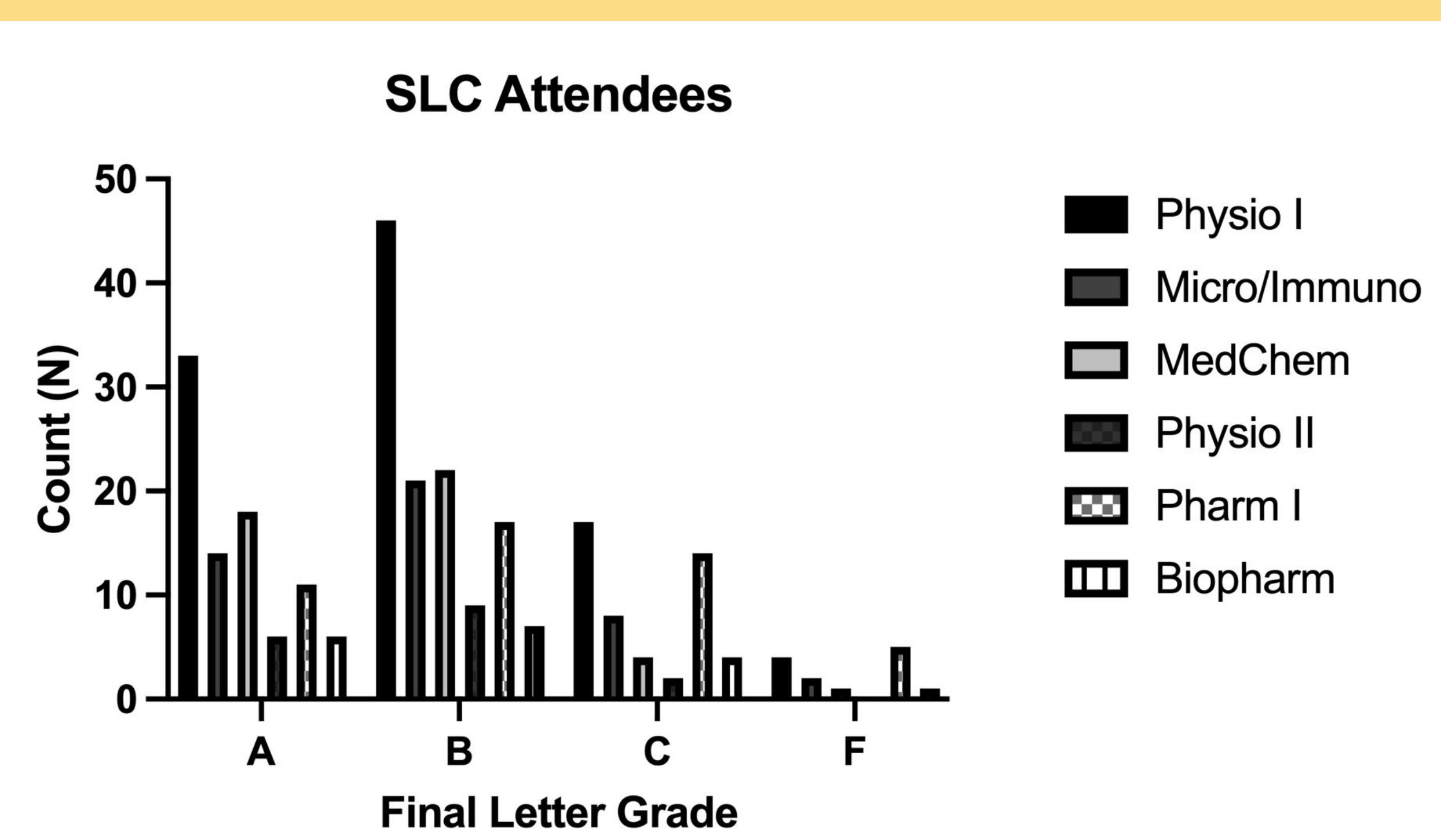


Figure 5. Assessing the Frequency of Letter Grades Among SLC Attendees by Course.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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WHAT THE PEER LEADERS DID...

The collaborative nature of the SLC model enabled peer leaders to explore creative active learning exercises and support one other in facilitating concept review and addressing misconceptions. Some examples included choreographing TikTok videos, creating online dating profiles of various immune cells, Kahoot! audience polling quiz competitions, tactile and kinesthetic experiences with Playdough, and resource creation (i.e. worksheets, tables, handouts, etc.).



I discovered that fostering collaboration and active participation can significantly enrich students' learning experiences. By cultivating an encouraging and inclusive environment, I noticed substantial progress in their understanding of course material. In addition to improved comprehension, I observed enhanced engagement, increased retention and recall, and elevated confidence in their abilities. – BioPharm Peer Leader

PEER LEADERS SAY...

This approach personally impacted me as a peer facilitator by providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of collaboration and active participation. – BioPharm Peer Leader



My time as a peer mentor has been extremely rewarding. I have learned how to work as a team with other mentors to give the P1s a well rounded session that allows them to grow as students, ask questions, and express concerns in a safe and comfortable setting. My time as a peer mentor has helped me make new connections in the pharmacy community and has even helped guide my future career path. – Micro/Immuno Peer Leader

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- The SLC model met the primary outcome of reducing the time of active students by more than 50% compared to the Traditional SI approach. Moreover, an increase in peer leader collaboration and support was achieved.
- SLC sessions were utilized by PY1 students in AY 2022-2023; however, utilization frequencies were lower for Spring courses.
- In the limited pilot sample, SLC session attendance did not statistically impact overall course performance compared to non-attendees. Ancillary benefits to the student experience including impact on connection, mentorship and professionalism remain unexplored.

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