Experiential Benchmarking - An Assessment Tool to Improve Pharmacy Students' Progress and Achievement

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Abstract

Objective: Preceptors' opinions and suggestions play crucial roles in the improvement of the experiential and didactic components of a curriculum. Although regular Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences (APPE) evaluations are instrumental in evaluating student achievement, they do not benchmark students' performances. Preceptors were surveyed to evaluate students learning and benchmark our students' performances with their peers from other pharmacy institutions. Methods: A series of APPE competencies was extracted from the ACPE Standards to generate a preceptor survey. The survey comprised of quantitative and qualitative questions which were organized into three sections: i) learning competencies, ii) professional competencies; and iii) preceptors' general impressions of students' knowledge and skills. Results: Thirty preceptors responded to the anonymous survey. Approximately 80% of preceptors stated that our students perform as effectively as other pharmacy students. Forty percent of preceptors indicated that our students' professionalism, maturity, motivation, and enthusiasm skills and attitudes stand out among their peers from other pharmacy institutions. In addition, 25% stated that knowledge, confidence, productivity and responsibility also stand out. Furthermore, while 50% of the preceptors stated that student performance met their' expectations, 47% stated that our students' knowledge and skills exceeded their expectations. Implications: Experiential benchmarking plays an important role to identify a need for experiential and didactic improvement and is a supportive tool to the APPE regular evaluations. The experiential benchmarking process is of particular interest for new pharmacy institutions that have not yet graduated their inaugural class and, as a result, do not have external comparable data for students' achievement.

Keywords
assessment, preceptor, benchmark, experiential, rotation

Disciplines
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Comments
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Introduction
Background
- Preceptors play a crucial role in the continuous improvement of the Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum at Pacific University.
- Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experience (APPE) evaluations are vital in assessing individual student achievement of program outcomes; however, they do not benchmark performance against student peers from other academic institutions.

Objective
- Survey APPE preceptors to assess our students’ performance relative to that of student peers from other Pharmacy Programs.

Methods
Survey Development
- School of Pharmacy Assessment Committee (SOPAC) prepared preceptor survey instrument that was organized into 3 sections:
  I. Learning Competencies
  II. Professional Competencies
  III. General Impressions of Students’ Knowledge and Skills
- Utilized ACPE Standards – Appendix C as foundation for survey question development.
- Expert consultation provided by the Advanced Experiential Director and Pharmacy Practice Faculty in survey instrument development.

Survey Dissemination
- Invitation sent to 143 APPE preceptors to participate in anonymous web-based survey.

Response Rate
- 30 Preceptor Respondents
- 21%

Results
Precepting Experience of Respondents (n = 30)
- 1 to 2 students: 17%
- 3 to 5 students: 37%
- 5 to 9 students: 23%
- > 10 students: 23%

Preceptors’ General Impressions of Student Knowledge and Skills (n = 30)
- Exceeds my expectations: 47%
- Meets my expectations: 50%
- Does not meet my expectations: 3%

Student Characteristics that Make them Stand Out to Preceptors
- Motivation: 0%
- Professionalism: 20%
- Maturity: 20%
- Enthusiasm: 20%
- Academic Knowledge: 20%
- Confidence: 20%
- Productivity: 20%
- Responsibility: 20%
- Service Oriented: 20%
- Commitment to Profession: 20%
- Time Management: 20%
- Critical-Thinking Skills: 20%
- Empathy: 20%
- Leadership Ability: 20%
- Trustworthiness: 20%
- Self Assessment Ability: 20%
- Problem Solving Skills: 20%
- Lifelong Learning Skills: 20%
- Accuracy: 20%
- Ethics: 20%

Limitations
- No standardized objective measurements.
- Unknown comparators for preceptors’ impressions.
- Response rate.

Impressions
- Our students are meeting the expectations of APPE preceptors relative to students from other pharmacy programs.
- Experiential benchmarking may have particular utility for recently established pharmacy programs that do not otherwise have comparative data to assess aggregate student progress.

Discussion

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