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Education Research

Poster Title

Listening to the Teacher Within: Measuring Insight in First Year Physician Assistant Students

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To measure the insight ability of first year PA students.

BACKGROUND: Self-assessment, a core professional competency, is essential if clinicians are to accurately judge their knowledge and skills, identify areas that need improvement, and plan effective learning strategies. Reflection is a necessary, but not sufficient, part of the self-assessment process. Effective self-monitoring requires insight. However, individuals, especially poor performers, inaccurately judge their abilities. Insight requires a progression of metacognitive processes: awareness of behavior and emotion; exploration of those behaviors and emotions; identification of a conflict; and critical analysis of that conflict.

METHODS: A mixed methods study was conducted. A sample of first year PA students (n=38) from 2 classes participated in a standardized patient medical interview and recorded their performance with an iPad. They compared their performance to a benchmark interview and critiqued performance in an essay. Essays were coded and analyzed. The Self Reflection and Insight Scale (SRIS), a 5-point Likert survey, was deployed. Results were analyzed and meta-inferences drawn.

RESULTS: The most common code applied was "awareness of behavior," which was applied to every essay. Students considered strengths more often than weaknesses, and rarely identified or explored emotions. Only 6 (15%) of essays were insightful. Students classified as unaware described behaviors but did not take next steps needed to critically analyze performance. Insightful students identified cause and effect, explored behavior and emotion, and elaborated. PA students reported having a personal reflective practice (3.49, SD 0.5), needing to understand the self (3.9, SD 0.81), and being insightful (3.8, SD 0.78).

CONCLUSIONS: PA students consider themselves insightful and were able to distinguish between their performance and that of the expert; however, measured insight ability varied greatly. This skill needs to be developed within the curriculum if students are to accurately assess skills and knowledge, and develop a mature professional practice.

References

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