Using Learning Communities to Support Students' Individualized Learning Goal Construction about EPAs in Years 1 and 2

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Research and Innovation Abstracts

Oral or Poster

Innovation

Few studies exist on how best to structure a learning goal support system. In fall 2015 the University of Utah School of Medicine implemented a longitudinal individual learning plan for Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) using learning communities (LC) in the clinical method curriculum (CMC). Continual faculty and student development on goal setting was necessary as more practice is needed in translating what was learned in the SMART/ABCD goals training session to the one-on-one sessions.

Abstract: Problem Statement
A key component of life-long learning is individual goal construction. Research suggests a moderate to poor relationship between medical students’ self-assessment and performance [1], thus making it difficult for students to create meaningful learning goals. Few studies exist on how best to structure a learning goal support system and no study has investigated goals setting for MS1-2s.

Approach
In fall 2015 the University of Utah School of Medicine implemented a longitudinal individual learning plan for Entrustable Professional Activities (EPAs) using learning communities (LC) in the clinical method curriculum (CMC). Specifically, students completed an EPA self-assessment and faculty members completed the same assessment on their LC students. Assessment results informed the learning plan, which was completed during one-on-one sessions with each student and LC faculty member 4-5 times in years 1 and 2. Students and faculty received prior training on SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) and ABCD (audience, behavior, condition, degree) goals. Goals are revisited to gauge how well students are progressing.

Lessons Learned
Comparing students’ and faculty members’ assessment helped generate goal formulation. The most challenging part was helping students identify actions that would get them to the set goal. Continual faculty and student development on goal setting was necessary as more practice was needed in translating what was learned in the SMART/ABCD goals training session to the one-on-one sessions.

Next Steps
We will determine if scaffolding can be used such that these students are ready to create individualized learning goals without faculty support in year 3. A rubric will be used to evaluate the quality of the goals.

Significance
If students become adept in the development of learning goals this will save time and resources later for residency programs that need to ensure trainees’ have life-long learning skills.

Level of Audience: Early-career


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