Piloting Standardized Immediate Student Evaluation of Lectures in Pre-Clinical Years

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Et al.
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BACKGROUND

- At UMass, pre-clinical students evaluate faculty 4-5 weeks to months after delivery which may impact recall and evaluation
- Delays in faculty receiving feedback may impact their ability to institute change
- Sampling can reduce evaluation demands on students yet preserve reliability and validity
- Literature shows students are motivated for intrinsic reasons when: courses are well planned, materials’ relevance clear and their teachers are enthusiastic and engaged

METHODS

- 34 second year students (goal of 25-30) self-identified to participate after email solicitation to 140 (24.2%)
- Questionnaire developed based on educational literature and reviewed by student focus group and faculty curriculum committee
- Focus group assessed time to complete questionnaire, clarity of questions, & new topics
- Questionnaire consisted of 20 items using 4-point likert scale plus 3 open-ended response questions
- Questions based on 5 elements of an effective lecture – clarity, interaction, task orientation, enthusiasm, and organization
- Students completed questionnaire after each lecture in 2 weeks (21 unique faculty, 33 lectures)
- 397 total questionnaires submitted, range 2-23 per lecture
- Mean 12 questionnaires per lecture, median 10
- The questions were clear
- Mean ‘Overall’ Rating for Each Lecture

Lecture Evaluation: Likert Data

- 5 Major Themes: Clarity, Interaction, Task Orientation, Organization, Overall
- 34 minor themes per major theme
- Response Rate for open-ended questions:
  - 60% for specific questions regarding organization and engagement
  - 5% for Overall question
- Range of examples:
  - Clarity: Craving for Clinical Correlations
  - Interaction: Engaged & Enthusiastic
  - Excellence: "Excellent infectious enthusiasm"
  - Great enthusiasm! Makes me want to continue attending this class."
  - Engaged & Enthusiastic: "Great enthusiasm! Makes me want to continue attending this class."
- Range of examples:
  - Interaction: Delivery suggestions for improvement
  - Communication with faculty: "Student’s ability to tailor questions for their lecture"
- Sample of Faculty comments
  - "I feel very helpful and will certainly impact my lecture next year.
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  - "I feel very helpful and will certainly impact my lecture next year."
- Sample of Student comments
  - "The post-exam feedback is too distant to be very useful and couldn’t be used to improve the course in real time.
  - "I feel very helpful and will certainly impact my lecture next year."
  - "Some professors really responded to the comments, which made me feel that they really did care about our learning."
- Conclusion: Students need to see value in evaluating each lecturer; in other words, they need to see changes implemented due to feedback

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS

- No statistical difference between Overall mean (3.15) & Calculated mean (3.19), P>0.121
- Lecturers given “overall” poor or fair (N=97) received range of questions on individual questions: poor - excellent
  - Students able to pinpoint ways to improve, but also report strengths
- Most questions calculated/overall mean>3 (range 2.79-3.34)
  - Used a variety of teaching methods mean 2.79; Possible confusion of definition – students interpreted as variety of methods
- Per question responses left blank ranged 1-28 (mean 9)
  - Demonstrates students could complete survey
- 28 blanks for “Responded appropriately” likely due to students needing NA
column
  - 18.21% blanks for questions about “objectives” possibly due to student confusion of definition or ambiguity in faculty’s presentation of objectives

LIMITATIONS

- Recruited 34 students though lecture attendance and thus response rate varied, some lectures had as few as 2 or 3 responses
- Students who volunteered may have more interest in giving feedback
- NA was not included as an option for the likert scale portion of the questionnaire
  - Faculty received data in raw format, no summary statistics
- Few faculty had repeat lectures thus unable to track how frequently students re-take the survey
- Few faculty repeated lectures thus unable to accurately gauge the usefulness of giving feedback after every lecture taught

NEXT STEPS

- Revising questionnaires, specifically adding NA option and removing overall questions
- Adapting questionnaire to be online
- Planning implementation of questionnaire in pre-clinical years, determining:
  - Number of students needed
  - How to divide students into groups
  - Frequency in which students complete questionnaire
  - Frequency & format in which faculty & questionnaire are disseminated
- Considering a system where faculty could provide a personal response to an anonymous evaluator
- Evaluating possibility of providing faculty ability to color questions for their lecture
- Investigating piloting this method of feedback for clinical years’ lectures

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