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The feedback ether: how to make formative feedback truly formative

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Keywords

Education, Medical, Undergraduate; Feedback; Clinical Competence; Formative Feedback; Students, Medical

Abstract

Background: Formative feedback is critical for medical students to appreciate gaps in their own knowledge and skills as well as identify strategies and resources for improvement. Providing formative feedback is essential for educators to prioritize. Despite this, formative feedback often becomes a requirement from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) rather than clearly utilized for its main intention. At our institution, formative feedback is provided to medical students in many ways though most are focused on knowledge. Every semester faculty specifically provide feedback on the students' clinical skills assessment. Formative feedback on such skills has been shown to improve student performance and have high educational value^{1,2}. However, it's not clear in literature how best to deliver such feedback to students. The feedback at our institution is rarely reviewed by the students, despite this feedback being essential to students' patient interview and physical exam skills improvement. This begs the question of how educators can support formative feedback integration for clinical skills assessments.

Study purpose and specific aims

The purpose of this study is to evaluate a newly developed pathway to support formative feedback integration for clinical skills assessments. The pathway includes identifying lowest quartile students to review formative feedback with faculty advisors as well as homework for all students after review of formative feedback to create a SMART goal.

The specific aims include

1. Determine if pathway increases students' viewing clinical skills assessment formative feedback
2. Determine if the pathway increases students' reviewing clinical skills assessment formative feedback with faculty advisors
3. Determine if the pathway improves clinical skill assessment scores

Theoretical framework or learning theory

This study utilizes constructivism learning theory, with students actively processing the formative feedback, in some cases with faculty advisors, to build future learning goals. It utilizes the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition, in which learners develop expertise in patient interview and physical exam skills, overtime through clinical skill's assessments and formative feedback.

References

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