Incorporating Qualitative Feedback To Further Improve a Pre-Entry Program for Medical Students

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Background

Introduction

- Students enter medical school with varying degrees of experience and knowledge related to the unique expectations, opportunities and challenges associated with medical education. One way medical schools have addressed this variance is through pre-matriculation or pre-entry programs.
- In 2023, Baylor College of Medicine Office of Student Affairs developed an inaugural pre-entry program. The structured, 2-week program introduced twenty-one incoming medical students to problem-based learning, academic and institutional resources, and professional identity formation, all immediately prior to Orientation.

Evaluation Framework

- Intentional evaluation elements such as pre and post surveys, were incorporated to assess the program's effectiveness and identify student outcomes.
- Following the synthesis of the pre- and post-evaluations, a focus group was developed to garner additional qualitative feedback on the perceptions of students.

Purpose

- Develop a Pre-Matriculation Program that supports student self-efficacy and further development of qualities correlated with medical school success.
- By leveraging a structured approach to participant feedback, qualitative data and focus groups allowed us to more directly explore the experiences of program participants.

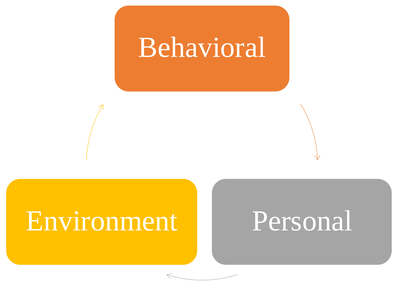
Focus Group Research Questions

- [RQ1] In what ways did the pre-entry program prepare participants for medical school?
- [RQ2] How did the pre-entry program influence participant belonging, self-efficacy and/or metacognition?
- [RQ3] Which aspects of the program influenced the participant's interest in engaging in help seeking behaviors?

Methods

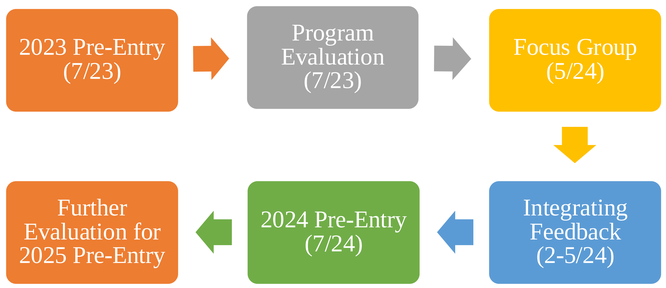
Theoretical Framework

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986)



"Social cognitive theories argue that the uniqueness that each situation brings… can often lead to different learning and performance experiences and outcomes." (Torre & Durning, 2015, p. 105).

Evaluation Plan



Focus Group Design

- Focus group was informed by the pre/post participant feedback
- Results were reviewed to develop purpose, research questions and approach for Focus Group
- 5 students participated (n=5), semi-structured interview questions were posed and responses were video and audio recorded
- Data analysis consisted of unitizing the transcript, conducting an open coding process and deriving themes from patterns of data.

Qualitative Themes

7/18/23 Program Evaluation – Qualitative Feedback Themes

- Appreciating opportunity for community building
- Validation, Reduction of uncertainty or anxiety
- Greater understanding of medical school expectations and strategies for success
- Suggested changes to sessions in order to emphasize certain content areas in the Pre-Entry curriculum

Qualitative Themes (Continued)

5/7/24 Focus Group Themes

[RQ1] Students felt prepared by…

- Building a peer group
- Having a defined time to transition into medical school
- Meeting key resources in a psychologically safe environment

[RQ2] The program influenced students by…

- Increasing belonging, helping learners build connections early with peers and institutional supports
- Introducing students to PBL and best practices in self-directed learning
- Allowing for student and faculty mentors to share their experiences; Validating experiences and further developing self-efficacy

Other Findings:

- Normalizing help seeking behaviors
- Need for further instruction about study tools, such as ANKI
- Additional information about loans and budgeting
- Consider offering a "Med School 101" to provide orientation to milestones

Implemented Changes

- Revisited and consolidated Academic Strategies and Professional Identity Sessions
- Increased opportunities for peer mentorship
- Reviewed the daily schedule format and changed starting date from mid-week to Monday
- Partnered with Financial Aid team to address questions about loans

Conclusion & Future Directions

- Through a structured approach to continuous improvement, the unique perspectives of learners and participants can be systematically incorporated into ongoing programs.
- By understanding these perspectives in a structured manner, the BCM program has improved its programming, with an ongoing goal of supporting incoming cohorts of medical students.

Next steps include:

- Further analyze qualitative data from 2024 Pre-Entry evaluation
- Conduct additional focus group with the 2024 cohort to understand their experience and explore further improvements to the program

References

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