Checking personal competences in veterinary students: contrasting self-evaluations of students’ competences to theoretically defined ideal competence levels

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Introduction

- Competence Check (kompetenzcheck@vetmeduni.ac.at): A tool developed 2013 at Vetmeduni Vienna.
- Online screening tool for monitoring teaching process.
- Evaluating the outcome of curricular changes of a “new” competence-based curriculum (started in 2014).

Methods

- March 2015, students of “old”, content-based curriculum.
- Self-ratings of students’ competencies related to an aligned curriculum, results were presented at Grazer Konferenz 2016.
- Five different competence areas (cf. figure 2): Knowledge, Skills, Competent transfer of knowledge and communication, Professionally oriented competences, Teamwork.

Results (cf. figure 3)

- 6th semester students (out)reach defined ideal levels: We compared the perceived competences to ideal levels of competences.
- 10th semester students reach higher levels, but (out)reach fewer defined ideal levels: As observed in figure 3.
- Students perceive an increasing growth of personal competencies during their studies.
- Students with “ideal” and “real” competences.
- Students with “knowledge”, “skills”, and “competence based” curriculum.

Discussion

- Students perceived an increasing growth of personal competencies during their studies.
- “New” competence-based curriculum aims to close the gap, e.g. by implementing communication skills.

Conclusions

- Competence Check allows aligning students’ perceived competences to ideal levels of competences.
- In 2016, data from 6th semester students can be used to evaluate the teaching process in the new competence-based curriculum. Results will inform stakeholders to make evidence-based decisions.
- Lecturers/instructors to enhance teaching quality.
- Students about their individual competence profile.

Outlook

- Alignment: teaching process – competences in all five competence areas.
- Curriculum evaluation: What was taught?
- Ratings from students, teachers, instructors.

References:


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Figure 1: Results and ratings on personal competences.
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Introduction: The Competence Check, i.e. an online screening tool that allows continuous monitoring of the teaching process and the students’ competencies, was developed at the University of Veterinary Medicine Vienna in 2013 to meet the challenge of evaluating the outcome of curricular changes of a competence-based curriculum in regard to relevant competence areas, such as “personal competence”, which subsumes 11 specified personal competencies (e.g., “communication with animal owners regarding diagnosis and treatment options”).

Methods: One cornerstone of evaluation by the Competence Check is relating self-ratings of students’ competencies to ideal levels of relevant competencies on the two dimensions “knowledge” and “skills” at two time points (6th and 10th semester of studies). In March 2015, N=227 students of the “old”, content-based curriculum (N6th semester = 126; N10th semester = 101) volunteered to fill out the Competence Check and evaluated their personal competencies (response rate: rr6th semester = 65.6 %, rr10th semester = 61.2 %).

Results: From the students’ point of view, 6th semester students (out)reach the defined ideal levels in 8 (out of 11) personal competencies for the dimension “knowledge”, and in 7 for the dimension “skills”. For the 10th semester students, the gap between (higher) self-rated achieved personal competencies and the (even higher) defined levels seems to broaden: the amount of reached levels decreases to 5 (out of 11) for the dimension “knowledge” and 4 for the dimension “skills”.

Discussion: Positively, students perceive an increasing growth of their personal competencies during their studies. However, there is room for improvement in regard to the theoretically defined levels of personal competencies. The new curriculum aims to close this gap, e.g. by implementing communication skills courses.

Conclusions: The Competency Check allows aligning students’ perceived competencies to ideal levels of competencies. In 2016, data from the cohort of 6th semester students can be used for the first time to evaluate the teaching process in the new competence based curriculum and such to inform the rectorate/senate to make evidence-based decisions, lecturers/instructors to enhance their teaching-quality, and students about their individual competence profile.