Student Experience in Optometry Education in Mozambique: Initial Challenges in an International Collaborative Program

Kajal Shah

Technological University Dublin, kajshah@aol.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://arrow.tudublin.ie/otpomcon

Part of the Optometry Commons

Recommended Citation


This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License.
Introduction

The Mozambique EyeCare Project, a collaboration between the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), International Centre of Eyecare Education (ICEE), the University of Ulster (UU) and the University of Lurio (UL), is developing and implementing a sustainable model for optometric education and eye-care service delivery in University of Lurio in Mozambique. The project aims to train Mozambique’s first professional optometrists, who will be part of a sustainable and comprehensive eye-care system as an integral part of the national health system.

Aim

The aim of this research is to analyse the model of optometric education by evaluating the student experience and relating it to student performance, with a view to:

a) creating best practice in the education of health professionals in a developing world environment.

b) informing the course coordinators and partners on how to better structure and develop the educational programme and course.

Methods

Results from the questionnaire and interviews were analysed in relation to exam results to determine if student performance was affected by student experience.

Questionnaire: A questionnaire was completed by the first cohort (A) of 16 optometry students in relation to five course modules, and by a second cohort (B) of 24 students in relation to a single module. The questions asked the students to rate their experience of the module, the lecturer and the assessments.

Interviews: Semi-structured focus group interviews were carried out with the 40 students from the two cohorts and the first two members of faculty. The interviews aimed to get qualitative information about the strengths and weaknesses of the modules.

Results

a) Questionnaire

i) Rating of the module

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Lecturer was well prepared</th>
<th>Lecturer was well delivered</th>
<th>Understood the language used in lectures</th>
<th>Appropriate use of teaching resources</th>
<th>Enquired questions and clear discussion</th>
<th>Available to offer support outside of lecture times</th>
<th>Gave feedback on my progress</th>
<th>Made clear the objectives of the module</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Optometry (I.O a) Cohort A</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Optometric Procedures (COP) Cohort A</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological Optics (PO) Cohort A</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophthalmic Optics Practical (OOP) Cohort A</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophthalmic Optics Theory (OOT) Cohort A</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) Interviews

Three themes emerged:

a) Student and lecturer preparation for the module

None of the students had any prior knowledge of Optometry or the nature of the course before they began. One of the faculty had no prior experience of teaching.

b) Language: All the students have Portuguese as their first language. 3 out of 5 students from Cohort A said they did not understand the language of the notes (English). All 10 students said they understood the language used by lecturer (a mix of Spanish and Portuguese).

c) Lecturer support: The overall response from both cohorts was that the tutor was very good at explaining concepts that were completely new to them.

Analysis

Student interviews and feedback suggested a concern about language of instruction and the lack of prior knowledge and experience of Optometry. However, analysis suggests that this did not make significant difference to performance (see figure 6).

Conclusions

• Overall lecturer support and feedback seems to have the greatest effect on student performance.

• The evaluation has helped the partners to recruit and retain multilingual lecturers and to ensure they understand the importance of supporting students.

• It has assisted the module writers to develop international curriculum for developing countries where few students if any have any knowledge of Optometry.

• Evaluations on how these changes will affect the overall clinical competencies of the students when they graduate is still on going. The first students will graduate in December 2012 and have their clinical competencies will be compared to World Council Of Optometry competencies. This research will inform the course coordinators and partners on how to better structure and develop their educational programme.

References


For further information

[Please contact kajshah@aol.co.uk for more information on this and related projects can be obtained at www.eceedu.net]