

Developing a practically applicable evaluation framework for the Capstone project of a Postgraduate Health Informatics Course

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Abstract

Background

Health Informatics (HI) being an extremely practical subject, the Capstone project of a Post Graduate HI course needs to be practically applicable to the real-world environment. Therefore, it's important to assess such a project with criteria and methods that closely resembles the real-world environment.

Summary of work

A focused group discussion was performed among three specialists in HI, two Clinicians and one Medical Educationist. Important evaluation criteria and methods of assessment were identified as themes. Existing real-world frameworks were referred, to determine similar entities to those identified as themes, and to draft the framework.

Results

A comprehensive evaluation framework was developed using the "Health Matrix Network" (HMN), the mechanism proposed by the World Health Organization for evaluating Health Information Systems [1]. This has six standards and components for a HI system. The components of the HMN was further reinforced by including competency based parameters of assessment for a project [2]. Assessment modes associated with Project Based Learning, such as peer assessment and co-assessment [3], were included to resemble the dynamics of developing a real-world HI project.

Discussion

The developed framework represents the real-world HI solutions in two key aspects. The framework uses a real-world recommendation, the WHO's HMN. Also, the framework replicates the real-world multi-team collaborative environment with the use of Project Based Learning tools. It ensures completeness by assessing learning objectives of all modules with the inclusion of competency based assessment.

Conclusions

As the Phase 2 of the study, this framework will be used to assess, more than 50 final year student projects from the first entrants of a newly developed postgraduate HI course.

Take-home messages / implications for further research or practice

An evaluation framework of a practical subject should include components that are used in the real-world practice of that subject.

References (maximum three)

[1] Health Metrics Network and World Health Organization, 2008. Assessing the national health information system: an assessment tool. World Health Organization.

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[3] Van den Bergh V, Mortelmans D, Spooren P, Van Petegem P, Gijbels D, Vanthournout G. New assessment modes within project-based education-the stakeholders. Studies in educational evaluation. 2006 Jan 1;32(4):345-68.