

Daisy Volmer

Universitu of Tartu

Use of a learning portfolio in student professionalism education

Introduction

Portfolios are used to provide evidence about learning and development. In healthcare professions learning portfolios are important tools for promoting reflective practice and self-education. The aim of this study was to evaluate how learning portfolio as a study method helps pharmacy students to identify, learn and develop their professionalism.

Materials and methods

Social pharmacy and drug safety (SPDS) I is a 6 ETCS course for 4-th year pharmacy students providing information about operation of healthcare system including pharmacy sector in Estonia and EU. In 2016/17 fall semester students (n=22) filled in their learning portfolio every week and described existing knowledge, acquired knowledge and analysed how new information contributed to their perceptions about professional roles of pharmacists. In addition students received a drawing assignment to picture competent professional in pharmacy. Content analysis was used to evaluate learning portfolio data and drawings. Questionnaire was applied to gather students' feedback about a learning portfolio as tool to educate professionalism.

Results

A learning portfolio contributed to students' evaluation and analysis of existing and acquired knowledge about healthcare system and handling of medicines. Drawing assignment clarified several professional roles of pharmacists. Students favoured pictorial presentation of professionalism as it helped better understand professional competence in pharmacy. Pharmacy students considered a learning portfolio as a moderate to slightly beneficial tool for evaluation and analysis of acquired knowledge and addressing students' learning needs.

Conclusions

A learning portfolio was used first time to support professionalism education of pharmacy students at the UT. This tool presented structured information about development of students' professional knowledge. In the future, repeat use of a learning portfolio would help to understand the impact of self-reflection and self-analysis in professionalism education.