EPA Thinking Survey Starters

# General comments:

In order to facilitate the collection of QI data, I have included some suggested survey statements with informed consent included. The statements are born out of my own experience with the Expert Skills Program and, more recently, with the EPAs. The material is subdivided for easier searching. I will add to this page as I gain more experience.

# Comments on educational research:

Research in medical education has significant barriers beyond the unintelligent IRB requirements. Because it usually attempts to apply linear scientific thought (reductionism) to non-linear systems (human beings). As such, it becomes a (non-pathological!) version of a Rorschach test where “we reveal our own inner prejudices, motivations, and personal/interpersonal perceptions.”(Adapted from Rorschach Test, Wikipedia, 2019).

* The strong input of subjectivity when interpreting correlation data reduces reliability and validity because cause-and-effect are easily misinterpreted.
* I would encourage the approach taken by non-linear (complexity) science and study the “strange” attractors that are in themselves persistent influences, or causes, that affect learning. The emphasis on surveys and QI studies is a step in this direction.
* In contrast, correlation data using exam performance is a logistical trap. It usually winds up with the rationale that “it is the best we can do.” Another way of viewing the best we can do is in not denying reality!

# Sample survey statements:

Version 1

“Please complete the survey below. We wish to report these results at educational conferences and in journal publications. As such, all responses are reported as de-identified grouped data consistent with the omnibus consent form that all students are asked to sign during first year orientation. If you chose not to participate in such surveys, this is a voluntary activity and you may abstain.”

Version 2

Members of the Class of 20xx,

We are asking for your responses to this survey to improve the ESP concepts taught in the ESP Prematriculation Block. We want to gather your reactions and attitudes in order to more effectively introduce future classes to the new concept of “how to learn in medical school.” Future surveys designed to correlate exam performance with admissions data and with degree of participation in the ESP will be administered separately from these opinion surveys.

The confidentiality of your responses will be protected since the data for each survey completed will be aggregated and reported anonymously. Your completion and submission of the survey will acknowledge your permission to use this data.

# Sample survey questions:

Current status evaluation of experience with the ESP *Prematriculation* Block.

[Best administered prior to start of classes]

Which of the following best applies to you?

1. I completed the study guide for the entire block.

2. I looked over the materials and only completed part of the block.

3. I familiarized myself with the materials but have not completed, or been able to complete, the block.

4. I don’t find the ESP Prematriculation Block to be interesting and am waiting to see if I should learn about it.

5. I think that if I was smart enough to get into medical school, I am smart enough to do well without additional help.

Survey questions:

1. I expect the ESP principles to enable me to perform better in the medical education curriculum.
2. I expect that integrative learning is within my capability.
3. I expect ESP to help me educate myself to develop the thinking needed for entering residency.
4. I expect that learning with students of different personality types will help improve my patient communication skills.
5. I expect to solve clinical problems more by how I think than what I remember.
6. What is one thing that you have learned from the ESP website that is new to you? (If not familiar yet, please indicate.)

{Narrative text block provided here for student comments}

Rationales for interpreting survey questions:

1. I expect the ESP principles to enable me to perform better in the medical education curriculum.

* [ESP Rationale: Does the student understand how metacognition is different from teacher-directed learning? Does the student comprehend what succeeding in medical school involves?]

1. I expect that integrative learning is within my capability.

* [ESP Rationale: Does the student understand that their approach to learning will require more energy but will only draw on what they do anyway?]

1. I expect ESP to help me educate myself to develop the thinking needed for entering residency.

* [ESP Rationale: Does the student understand that the learning environment is no longer a checklist? Does the student have a vision that connects changes they make now to their long-range?]

1. I expect that learning with students of different personality types will help improve my patient communication skills.

* [ESP Rationale: Does the student see that the way they learn will directly affect the way they communicate with their patients? Do they see that they will be teachers of their patients, and this will require them to be self-directed learners?]

1. I expect to solve clinical problems more by how I think than what I remember.

* [ESP Rationale: Does the student understand that how they think will determine what they remember? Do they connect ESP thinking with EPA thinking?]

1. What is one thing that you have learned from the ESP website that is new to you? (If not familiar yet, please indicate.)

{Narrative text block provided here}

* [ESP Rationale: Does the student understand that a transition course is necessary to adjust themselves to a new way of thinking and to help them recognize that new way of thinking?]

ESP Survey Questions

1. My enthusiasm during a question analysis activity was highest when the answer choices for the study questions led to the most integration with other concepts.

2. Analyzing question answer choices with a group improved my test taking skills by giving me insight into incorrect answers.

3. I found material covered during the sessions relevant

4. Through the sessions, I gained experience in decision making process

5. Analyzing question answer choices made me aware of other ways people can learn the same concept.

Midyear Survey for Participants (Note the forced choice requiring thoughtful decision)

Instructions: Please evaluate each of the items below and include comments for “strongly” held responses

1. My experience in the curriculum so far has been satisfactory

a. strongly agree

b. agree

c. disagree

d. strongly disagree

{text box}

2. My academic performance so far is mostly due to:

a. my native intelligence

b. working smarter.

c. both intelligence and working smart

d. strongly disagree

{text box}

{text box}

3. Most of the time, my learning strategies are:

a. decision-based activity (group question analysis, concept mapping)

b. concept/fact-focused activity (reading/flash cards).

c. a mixture of both

d. strongly disagree

{text box}

4. I manage my learning time by following a standard daily and weekly protocol:

a. strongly agree

b. agree

c. disagree

d. strongly disagree

{text box}

5. Based on my experience so far, I would be interested in taking a refresher workshop on concept mapping (using examples from current topics in Organ Systems block).

a. strongly agree

b. agree

c. disagree

d. strongly disagree

{text box}

6. Based on my experience so far, I would be interested in taking a refresher workshop on question analysis (using examples from current topics in Organ Systems block).

a. strongly agree

b. agree

c. disagree

d. strongly disagree

{text box}