Exit Surveys of Graduating Dental Students: Best Practices of Competency-Based Assessments from two Dental Schools

Dieter J. Schönwetter MA, PhD
Director of Educational Resources, Faculty Development, and Dental Computing Services, Faculty of Dentistry, The University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA

Joanne N. Walton DDS, Dip. Pros., FRCD(C)
Professor of Prosthodontics and Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs, Faculty of Dentistry, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Dentistry, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, CANADA

Objectives
By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
• Identify key components of graduating student exit surveys necessary for accreditation preparation
• Integrate national accreditation standards to create effective exit surveys
• Evaluate and report findings in preparation for a successful accreditation outcomes and strategic planning
• Share innovative exit survey best practices

Outline
1. Definition
2. Purposes
3. Critical Components
4. Accreditation Criteria identification
5. Framework creation
6. Data gathering tools
7. Data gathering
8. Data interpretation
9. Report writing
10. Triangulation
11. Summary
12. Concepts of Learning Outcomes

Group Work
• Create a list of 3-5 concepts
• Definition: Learning Outcomes
Evidence that students have learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real or hard measures</th>
<th>Perceived</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• National Board Exam scores</td>
<td>• Affective – satisfaction, willing to promote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• OSCE</td>
<td>program, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Final Grades</td>
<td>• Cognitive – perceived confidence,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clinical competencies passed</td>
<td>competence, comparison of learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Number of treatments performed</td>
<td>environments impact on student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>successfully</td>
<td></td>
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**Purposes of Outcome Assessments**

- Create a list 3-5 purposes

**The Importance of Outcome Assessments**

- Preparation for Accreditation (Schönwetter et al., 2011)
- Mid-Program Refinements (Schönwetter et al., 2011)
- Student-Centered Approach

**Step 1: Identifying significant reasons for outcome assessments**

- Identify one reason per post-it note
- Organizing Into Major Themes

**Step 2: Identify the Accreditation Criteria**

**Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)**

- 2-7 ...must define competencies needed for graduation, which must be focused on educational outcomes.
- 2-8 ...must employ student evaluation methods that measure defined competencies.
- 2-9 Biomedical, behavioral and clinical science instruction must be integrated and ... ensure achievement of the curriculum’s defined competencies.

**Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC)**

- Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry (ACFD)
- A competent beginning dental practitioner in Canada must be able to provide oral health care for the benefit of individual patients and communities in a culturally sensitive manner.
- 47 statements for beginning practitioners
- 2.3.1 ...must have competencies that describe the graduate of the program. Program-specific competencies must be consistent with the ‘Competencies for a Beginning Dental Practitioner in Canada’
- “Identify the relationship between the program’s competencies and…”
- Student learning outcomes

**Step 3: Create the Framework**

**Group work, brainstorming**

- Assemble the components from Step 2
- Create a model that captures all your needs in conducting an outcome assessment with your graduating students.
Ideal Exit Outcome Study Architecture

Creation of the Manitoba Exit Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is this to your career as a successful dentist?</th>
<th>How confident do you presently feel in this competency?</th>
<th>To what extent did your classroom experience prepare you for this?</th>
<th>To what extent did your clinic experience prepare you for this?</th>
<th>To what extent did your externship experience prepare you for this?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Evolution of the Exit Survey: UBC Adaptation of Schönwetter instrument

- DMD Classes of 2008, 2009, 2010
- Focus on IMPORTANCE of, and CONFIDENCE in, 47 ACFD competencies
  - How IMPORTANT is this competency to your career?
  - How CONFIDENT are you now about this competency?
- Possible answers:
  - Not at all → 1
  - Only a little → 2
  - Somewhat → 3
  - Almost always → 4
  - Very much so → 5
- Included questions about student experience and recommendations for the DMD program

Step 4: Gathering the Data

- Online questionnaire (Lang, et al., 2003).
- Ideal → Face-to-face (Schönwetter et al., 2011).
- Timing
  - Right after board exams
  - Just before graduation (Schönwetter et al., 2011).

Data Gathering (Manitoba)

- Face-to-face
- Right after their board exams
- Just before graduation
- Provided pizza
- All in one room

Data Gathering (UBC)

- Last week of classes
- Scheduled online CoursEval survey for whole class
- Used computers in our clinic during lunch
- Provided lunch incentive
- Students at off-campus rotations or electives could do survey online on own time
- Informed that the questionnaire was designed to assist further development of the DMD program
- Encouraged to respond thoughtfully
- Reassured regarding confidentiality
Step 5: Interpreting the Data

Brainstorming
• What data would be valuable to put into your accreditation report?
• How would you put this report together?

Steps for Creating Your Research Plan
• Identify your needs – what do you want to know about your program?
• What are the critical variables? Competencies? Courses? Clinic? Externships?
• Who are your experts (research? education?)
• Research Plan Timeline

Putting it all Together for Student Outcomes and Accreditation: You are one of the accreditation site visitors:
• What are the connections between the student outcomes and accreditation expectations?
• What indicators represent strengths?
• What indicators represent weaknesses?

Step 6: Writing the Report(s)

Step 7: Taking it To New Heights - Triangulation

Triangulation Brainstorming
• What would you need to triangulate at your school?
• What do you need to collect?

Step 8: Evaluating the Process
• Requires advanced planning = front loading
• Graduate Exit Surveys are an excellent tool
  • Accreditation preparations
  • Strategic planning guidance
  • Curriculum revisiting and refinement

Step 9: The Payoff
• Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): Presentations and Publications
• Collaboration
• Evidence for curriculum planning
• Buy-in by stakeholders; show they’re being heard

Summary
• Number of critical elements
• Important steps
• Triangulation
• Dissemination

References and Useful Resources


