DEVELOPMENT OF A CAPSTONE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT FOR EVALUATION OF FOURTH YEAR VETERINARY STUDENT HISTORY AND PHYSICAL EXAMINATION SKILLS

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Introduction

- NC State College of Veterinary Medicine has recently developed an Equine Primary Care (EPC) clinical rotation.
- The EPC rotation has a week-long campus based training focused on refreshing technical and communication skills, and a three-week-long community-based clinical training.

**The need:** a capstone assessment, or a single opportunity to critically assess students’ history and physical examination skills AND deliver real-time objective feedback, at the end of the campus-based training week.

**The solution:** a pre-purchase examination simulation using teaching herd horses and clinicians and staff as facilitators and simulated owners and a detailed rubric for evaluation prior to the community-based portion of the course.

Methods—Rubric Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equine Prepurchase Examination</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Development Required</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Areas of Strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>History Taking (61)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>History taking, handling, physical examination, analysis of examination findings, disposition summary, and overall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proficiency levels: exemplary, satisfactory, development required, and unsatisfactory</td>
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<td>Specific examples given for each proficiency level, as well as space for specific strengths and concentrated practice details</td>
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</tbody>
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Results

- **Facilitator feedback on experience, rubric performance**
  - Prompts immediate, practical feedback
  - Inherent focus on client communication, exam organization
  - Rubric’s grouped skills keep focus on the major components
  - Specific proficiency examples help maintain evaluation continuity
  - Disposition summary category not utilized
  - Needs more space for comments

- **Common student strengths:**
  - communication skills, horse handling, communication of examination findings

- **Common student weaknesses:**
  - use of medical terminology, lack of organization, incomplete physical examination, inaccurate conclusions drawn regarding findings

- **Student feedback on experience**
  - “Unique opportunity for a focused assessment of my history and physical exam”
  - “Pushes you out of your comfort zone”

Discussion

- **Ease of implementation:** little orientation necessary for facilitation
- **Inherent variability:** horse behavior, multiple facilitators
- **Rubric improvements:** digital, add space for overall comments, add an analog scale for each major concept, and a checklist of specific physical exam findings
- **Experience improvements:** create library of physical exam findings for each of the teaching horses for facilitators’ use, incorporate student self-evaluation before and after, additional initial assessment experience using peer evaluation

Figure 1. Communication skill portion of the developed rubric