



COACHING IN PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES

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INTRODUCTION

Pharmaceutical Sciences undergraduate programs traditionally have a high number of laboratory classes, but few curricular units regarding communication and personal skills. However over the years the employer paradigm has shifted and recruitment is focused not only on technical skills and knowledge, but also on personal skills and the potential of growth and development.

Therefore, in 2018/2019, the Integrated Master Degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences of *Instituto Universitário Egas Moniz* IUEM-Portugal, decided to offer, in the last curricular year, a new, and as far as we know unique in Portugal, Optional Curricular Unit (OCU): “Coaching in Pharmaceutical Sciences” (CPS). This OCU aimed to enable the development of students’ personal potential techniques to develop their skills and deepen self-knowledge, allowing the students to be better professionals.

MATERIALS & METHODS

CPS was offered as an optional unit to the 5th year students. Classes were based on a practical methodology, using active pedagogical methods with the aim of integrating student participation, based on self-learning through individual activities, or in pairs so students could train their soft skills.

Teaching methods included **self-diagnosis, case studies and training of competences in different simulations** that culminated in the **development of a personal development plan**.

Exercises aimed to empower students to realize new possibilities, recognize resources, and perceive their self-efficacy.

Syllabus addressed issues such as: **communication, emotional intelligence, leadership, coaching skills and tools, coaching in pharmaceutical scenarios, scenarios, among others.**

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

At the beginning of the semester students were surprised by the new teaching-learning methodology, totally different from the traditional methods used in the other curricular units.

However, during the academic semester, pharmaceutical science students showed an excellent acceptance of all aspects worked in classroom.

Students enrolled in CPS reported in the end that, despite their initial surprise and even some resistance with this new teaching-learning methodology and “out of the box” approach, they greatly valued the CU.

Students shared that they believe that coaching will be a **very important and useful training tool to their future**, and that all Pharmaceutical Sciences students should take it.



CONCLUSIONS

In this era of technology, competition and need for continuous adaptation to new situations and employment opportunities, it is the authors’ conviction that students will benefit from a **CU of “Coaching” geared to their professional field, while empowering the students as skilful individuals.**

It is still early to assess the real impact of this new CU in the training of future pharmacists, however we believe that they will be better able to face the new challenges of the profession, with improved performance, motivation and problem-solving ability.

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