

Evaluation of a new, elective course on interprofessional collaboration in the pharmacy technician programme

Authors

Jytte Muszynski¹, Tina Bolvig¹, Mira El-Souri², Bente Anni Sørine Andersen³, Maria Lykke Wollesen³, Mette Ernst³, Mette Madsen³, Noam Hybholt Flaya¹ and Charlotte Verner Rossing²

1 Danish College of Pharmacy Technicians
2 Danish College of Pharmacy Practice
3 University of Copenhagen

Contact information

Jytte Muszynski
jm@pharmakon.dk



The aim of the study is to evaluate the students’ satisfaction with and outcome of the course.

Background

Interprofessional education is essential to prepare health care professionals to collaborate effectively.

A Danish study from 2022 showed that pharmacy technician students benefit from participating in interprofessional programmes but highlighted the need for better integration.

In response, in 2024, pharmacy technician students were given the opportunity to participate in an interprofessional course on almost equal terms with other students in a collaboration between the Danish College of Pharmacy Technicians and University College Copenhagen.

Methods

Seventy-seven students from different educational programmes attended (Figure A).

All were invited to fill in a questionnaire during the first and the last sessions of the course. The questionnaire included the Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS), self-assessed learning outcomes, and satisfaction.

To deepen the insights, one focus group and two individual interviews were conducted, recorded, transcribed, and analyzed in NVivo R1.

Results

A total of 53 students completed the questionnaire at baseline, and 45 at endpoint (figure B). Three pharmacy technician students, two social work students, one social education student and one physiotherapy student participated in the interviews.



Figure A: Educational programmes of participating students.

The students experienced the following outcomes:

- Increased insight into own and each other’s professional roles (figure C)
 - Pharmacy technician students gained concrete insights into health care practices beyond the pharmacy setting and identified potential professional collaborators
 - Group work and the students’ curiosity were key drivers in fostering mutual understanding and recognizing the unique contributions of each profession
- Improved self-assessed competencies in communication and collaboration (figure D).

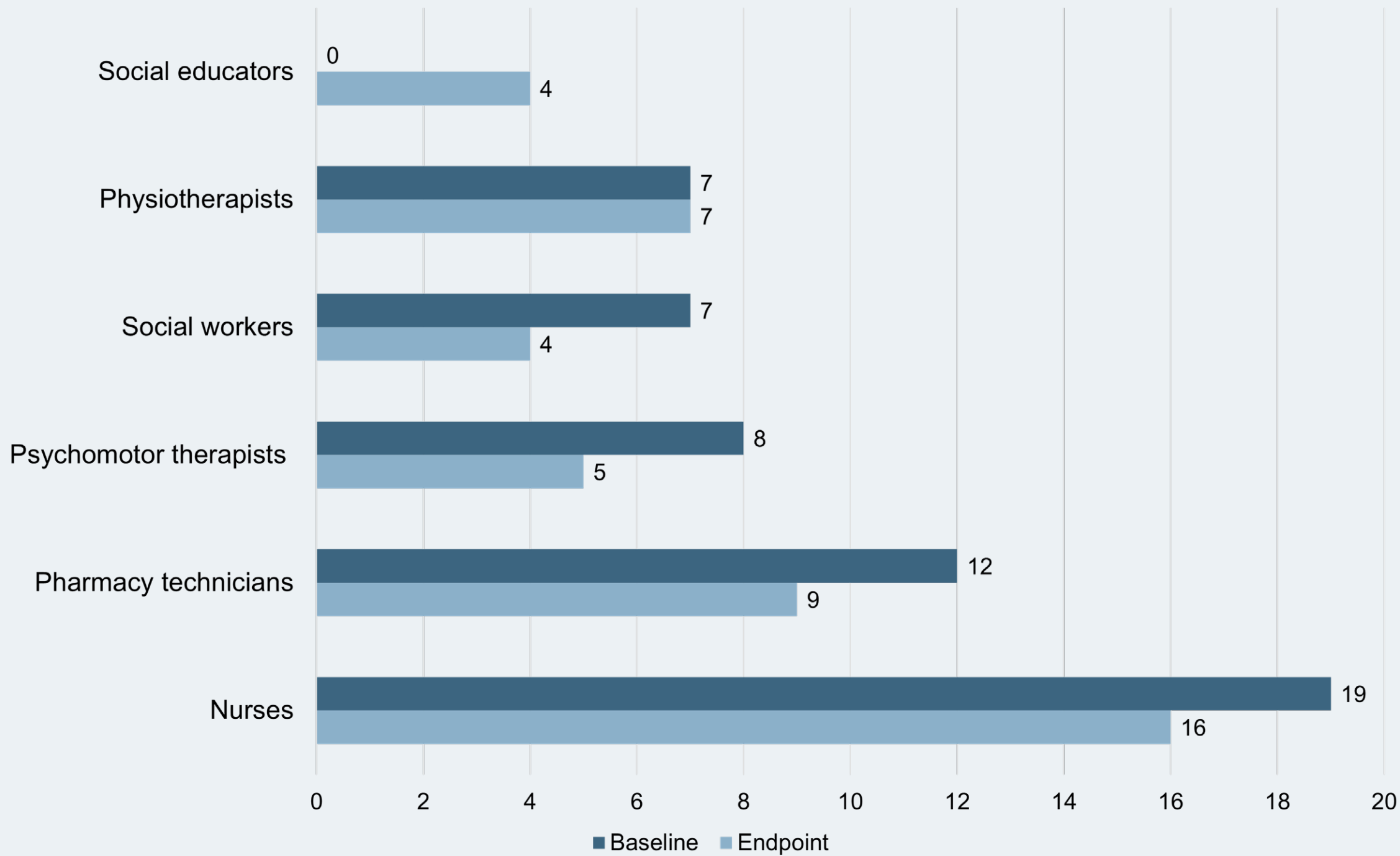


Figure B: Distribution of student responses at baseline and endpoint.

Inconsistent student engagement due to differences in mandatory attendance policies and the perception of random distribution of cases among students were reported as factors that negatively influenced their satisfaction with the interprofessional course.

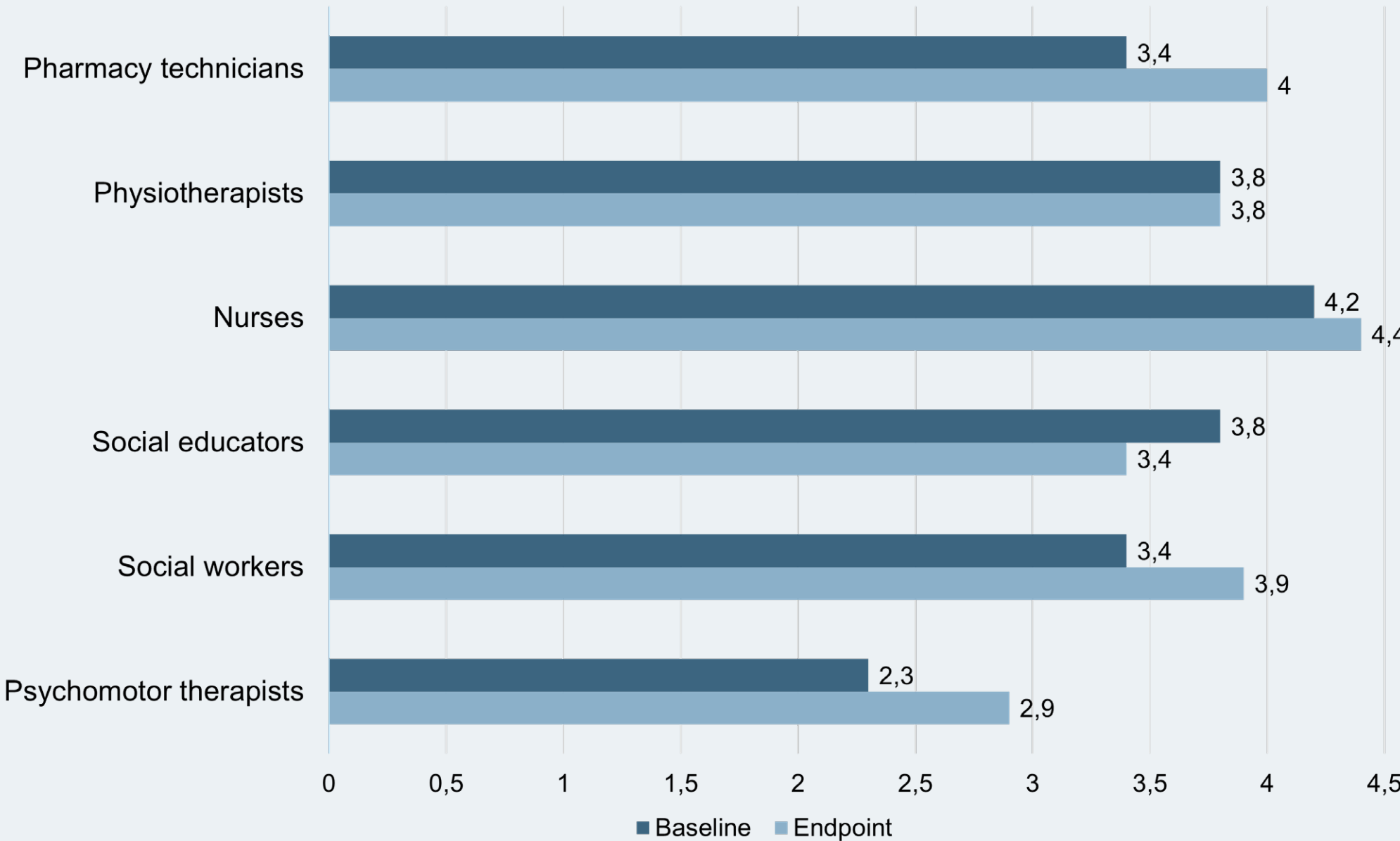


Figure C: Average rating of the item: 'I have insight into the professional roles of the following professions' at baseline and endpoint (on a five-point Likert scale, with 5 representing 'Absolutely yes').

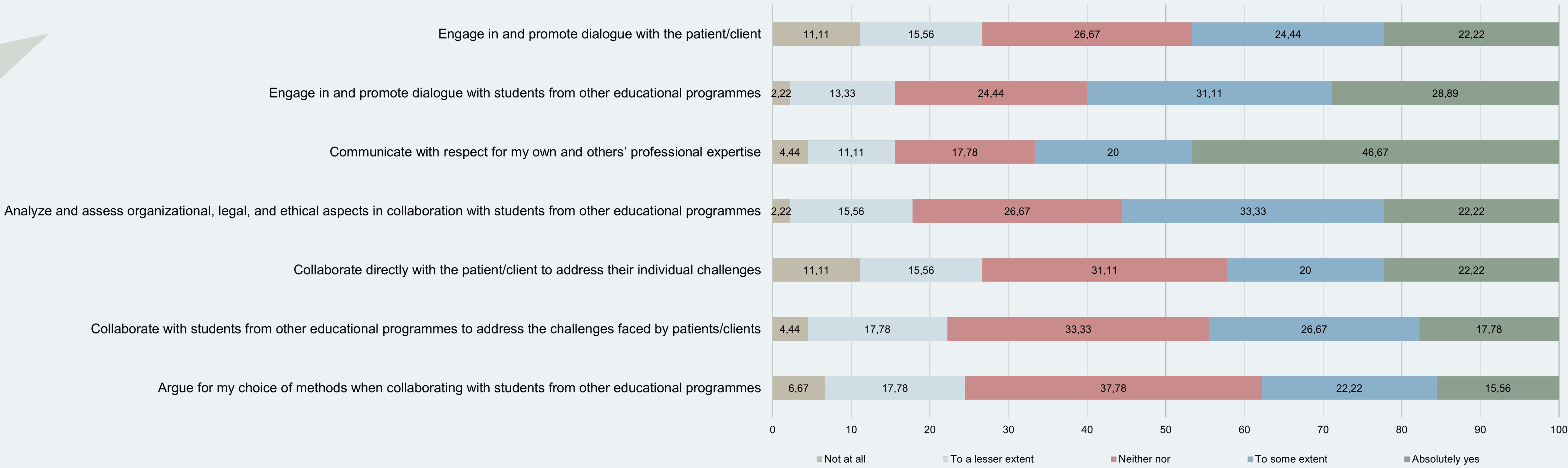
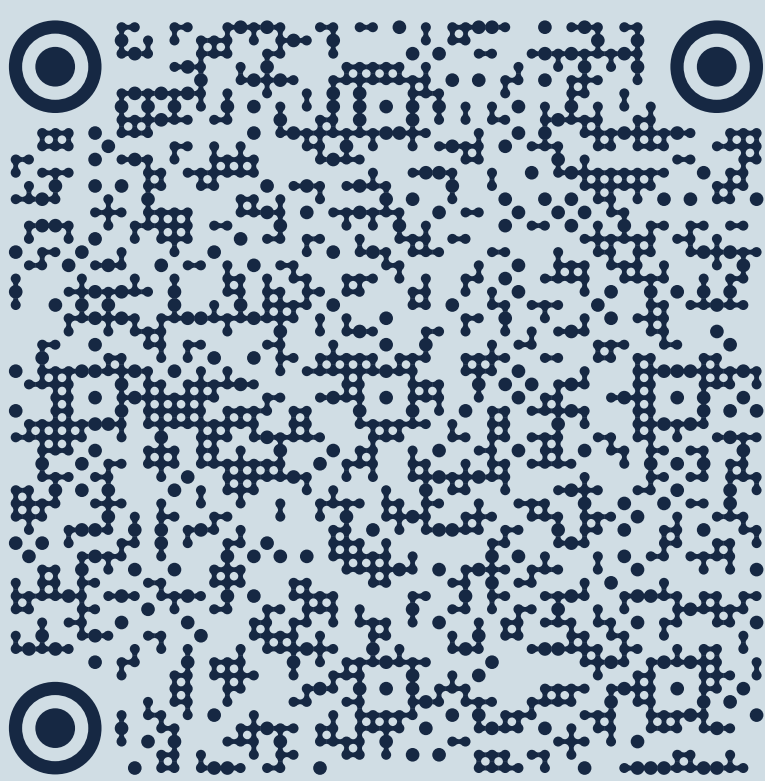


Figure D: Distribution of student responses (%) regarding perceived improvement in specific tasks during the course at endpoint.

“... but also seeing how other professions work –what their daily routines involve, and how we can collaborate and support each other in everyday practice. That was really what I was curious to explore. Because I've had the impression that pharmacy technicians are somewhat overlooked – people don't really know what we do. So, I thought it would be interesting to see what they know about us.”

(Pharmacy technician student)

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Conclusion

The course provided students with valuable insights into their own and each other’s professional roles and improved their communication and collaboration competencies. Pharmacy technician students reported increased understanding of health care contexts beyond the pharmacy and identified new opportunities for interprofessional collaboration. Curiosity and group work were key drivers of mutual learning. However, structural issues such as inconsistent attendance requirements and unclear case distribution negatively affected satisfaction.