Implementing and Evaluating the Effectiveness of Inter-professional Education in Undergraduate and Graduate College of Health Curriculum

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Introduction

Historically, colleges of health have educated their students in silos, and these same students are expected to function efficiently and effectively in a team-oriented manner in practice. Inter-professional Education (IPE) involves educating students from 2 or more professions with the goal of cultivating collaborative practice (Bridges et al, 2011). IPE is now required for accrediting purposes so it’s imperative that colleges and universities start examining ways to include IPE in their curriculums. The purpose of this project is to implement an IPE program in Clayton State University’s College of Health and later evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Methods

- A descriptive, comparative, cross-sectional research design will be used for this study.
- Ten nursing faculty and 2 dental hygiene faculty will identify 15 undergraduate and graduate students to participate in the program for the first and third year. These students will be the first and second cohorts of AHEC Scholars.
- Following the AHEC format, the suggested material will be loaded into our USG learning system.
- Upon completion of the course, student evaluations for the first 2 years will be reviewed to determine the effectiveness of IPE.
- Each module will also be evaluated and based on the findings, a 3-hour elective course will be created. The second cohort will begin in the third year of our program, but will take an inter-professional elective course for credit.
- The questionnaire used for the study will be an investigative team created and will contain demographic items and Likert-scaled items, with the anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) with higher scores indicating higher effectiveness.

Purpose

The purposes of this study are:

- To implement an IPE program in the College of Health curricula
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the IPE program by examining skills, knowledge, values, and communication of participants
- To use information obtained to create an elective IPE course
- To provide experiential inter-professional teamwork learning experiences
- To produce IPE models that can be applied to other healthcare disciplines

Procedures

This will be a two-fold process.

- IRB approval will be obtained from CSU’s Institutional Review Board.
- Atlanta Health Education Center (AHEC) grant obtained for nursing and dental hygiene students.
- Nursing faculty along with Dental Hygiene faculty attended an intensive training offered by the Georgia AHEC Network.
- Advertised for the program with flyers obtained from AHEC.
- A total of 15 students will be recommended/recruited by faculty and, the course prescribed by AHEC will be taught per their protocol.
- Implementation will begin in November.
- The evaluative process will begin after the 1st cohort has completed the IPE course which will be year 2.
- Evaluations will be completed and this data used to create an elective course. When the 2nd cohort starts which will be year 3 of the program, they will actually take the 3 credit IPE elective course. The course will then be evaluated and results compared between groups.

Research Questions

1. Is a standardized IPE program more effective in teaching the skills required in a collaborative practice-ready graduate when compared to an elective IPE course?
2. Is a standardized IPE program more effective in teaching the skills required in undergraduate students when compared to an elective IPE course?
3. Is a standardized IPE program more effective in improving knowledge when compared with an elective IPE course?
4. Is a standardized IPE program more effective in affecting attitudes when compared with an elective IPE course?
5. Is inter-professional communication among students in the standardized IPE program more engaging compared to students in the IPE elective course?

Results

The data will be analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 25. Descriptive statistics and frequencies will be used to describe the sample. Independent t-tests will be conducted to compare differences among students taking the AHEC course and those taking the elective for credit course. Results from the 1st cohort evaluations will assist the researchers in course development of the elective course for credit.

References