Since January 2020 Elsevier has created a COVID-19 resource centre with free information in English and Mandarin on the novel coronavirus COVID-19. The COVID-19 resource centre is hosted on Elsevier Connect, the company's public news and information website.

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Unmasked: Senior Dietetic Students Reveal Their COVID-19 Experiences through the Arts

Author: H. Huye; The University of Southern Mississippi

Learning Outcome: Upon completion, participant will be able to incorporate humanities activities into course content to enhance students’ self-reflection and empathy skills.

The humanities and arts provide a unique perspective of the human condition related to physical and mental health. Through humanities activities, students can develop observation, empathy, and self-reflection skills, all of which are necessary for the provision of humane healthcare, especially during a pandemic. The purpose of this course project was to explore the use of creative and reflective writing and visual arts to enhance students’ empathy and self-reflection skills. Students (N=21) were provided opportunities to convey their reactions and physical and emotional outcomes related to COVID-19 through writing 55-word stories, journal entries, and creating and analyzing artwork. Upon completion of the course, the students delivered a group virtual presentation related to the impact of the pandemic on health status and how the findings in the literature aligned with their own experiences. The presentation content was intertwined with students’ stories and artwork and applications for future practice. A content analysis of students’ writings, artwork, and the presentation revealed students’ feelings of anxiety, depression, and displacement. Many students expressed their fear of unknown ramifications of the virus as well as their grief over the loss of loved ones. Through their self-reflections, students recognized a need for self-care and were able to empathize with patients/clients and make recommendations on how to cope if they were experiencing similar difficulties. Results of this exploration showed how incorporating humanities activities can help students engage in self-reflection and enhance empathy skills for future practice as well as give students a voice in an unprecedented time.

Funding source: None

Use of Design Thinking to Meet Knowledge Requirements of DPD programs

Author: E. MacQuillan; Grand Valley State University

Learning Outcome: Upon completion, participants will be able to implement a design thinking experience into DPD programs to meet new 2022 Knowledge requirement #5.5.

Design thinking has been used since the 1960s to collaboratively and creatively solve complex problems in many disciplines, including economics, engineering, and marketing. Problems related to food and nutrition are often multi-faceted and complex and, therefore, provide an appropriate canvas for practicing design thinking skills, including empathy, collaboration, and iteration and testing of solutions to a problem. The 2022 ACEND standards introduce a new knowledge requirement, KRDN 5.5, “Promote team involvement and recognize the skills of each member.” The design thinking process represents an innovative way to ensure that DPD students meet the knowledge requirement through their participation in a practical, problem-solving experience. In Fall 2021, a new undergraduate course within the DPD program at Grand Valley State University was launched, requiring students to work in groups to gather data, ideate and iterate solutions, develop and test solutions, and finally to present a final prototype. Groups of 4-6 students each met to gather information from the campus dining administrators and campus registered dietitian about current issues of concern identified in the provision of food to students on campus. Next, student groups performed observations and conducted interviews with student users of the food vendors on campus. Brainstorming and iteration of solutions followed, with initial design ideas tested through focus groups with student users. Finally, revised design ideas were presented to members of the campus community.

This project represents an idea for experiential learning that can be used by DPD programs to meet the new knowledge requirement through a unique problem-solving experience.

Funding source: None

Update of Competencies, Knowledge, and Skills for Effective School Nutrition Assistants/Technicians

Author(s): K. Rushing1, A. Rainville2; 1Institute of Child Nutrition Applied Research Division, 2Eastern Michigan University

Learning Outcome: Upon completion, participant will be able to describe the research process used to update competencies, knowledge, and skills for school nutrition assistants/technicians.

School nutrition (SN) assistants/technicians are the foodservice employees who work in a local SN program under the direction of an SN manager. This research to update the competencies, knowledge, and skills (CKS) needed by SN assistants/technicians was conducted in three phases with a diverse group of SN directors and supervisors (n=41) from districts of varied sizes in all seven USDA Food and Nutrition Service regions as follows:

- Phase I included a literature review, four case study site visits, collection and review of job descriptions, and an electronic expert work group of SN directors (via email) whose members identified functional areas for SN assistants/technicians.
- Phase II included a face-to-face, expert work group tasked with developing CKS statements for the identified functional areas. The expert work group recommended six functional areas: Equipment Care & Use, Food Production, Food Safety & Sanitation, Personal Characteristics, USDA Meal Program Requirements, and Workplace & Employee Safety. The expert work group reached a consensus to include 15 competencies and 36 knowledge and skill statements within the functional areas.
- Phase III included an electronic review panel who evaluated a CKS draft resource (via email), a face-to-face expert work group who identified content for instructing users on how to best utilize the CKS resource, and an electronic review panel who evaluated a nationwide survey for training needs. The CKS resource developed from this research can be used as a guide for writing job descriptions, conducting interviews, planning training sessions, mentoring SN assistants/technicians, and conducting performance appraisals.

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