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Building Communication and Collaboration Skills through Inter-professional Simulation Design Challenges

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Recommended Citation

Huelskamp, Amelia and DuBois, Chase (2023). "Building Communication and Collaboration Skills through Inter-professional Simulation Design Challenges," *Academic Chairpersons Conference Proceedings*. <https://newprairiepress.org/accp/2023/trends/6>

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Category: Emerging Trends in Higher Education

Exploring new and pressing developments in higher education including subjects like campus culture, diversity, new technologies, new interdisciplinary opportunities, impacts of the growth in distance education, economic stresses on the field, changing roles and demands, etc.

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Title: Building Inclusion and Collaborative Skills through Interprofessional Simulation Design Challenges

Presenter Info:

- Primary presenter bio sketch or CV required.
- Upload as separate document in “Additional Files”

Abstract: (20-25 words)

This presentation focuses on the benefits of interprofessional education, provides an overview of a sample project, and offers recommendations for interprofessional collaboration in higher education.

Keywords: Interprofessional, Interdisciplinary, Collaborative, Cross-curricular, Simulation

Main Document: (500 word limit)

Providing students with opportunities to participate in interprofessional (IP) collaborative activities during their education can deepen their learning, increase their awareness of and respect for professionals in other roles, and strengthen their communication skills (Burgess, van Diggele, Roberts, & Mellis, 2020). Additionally, studies have shown that students who participate in interprofessional education (IPE) report increased confidence and improved attitudes towards teamwork (Nichols et al., 2019, Koukourikos et al., 2021). These attributes can help students transition smoothly from higher education to the workforce, and possibly increase student satisfaction with the quality of their education. Unfortunately, instructional collaboration between academic units or between institutions presents challenges. This presentation focuses on the benefits of IPE experiences, provides an overview of an IPE project involving faculty from

three academic units, and offers recommendations for facilitating IP collaborations in higher education.

At the University of North Carolina Wilmington, faculty from three schools within the College of Health and Human Services collaboratively developed a “Mega-Sim IPE Design Challenge”. In the Design Challenge, faculty and students from the Schools of Nursing, Social Work, and Health and Applied Human Sciences formed interdisciplinary teams to design healthcare simulations. These simulations demonstrated how each field contributes to holistic patient care by showing multiple aspects of the recovery process, including acute care, physical and psychological assessments, rehabilitation, and health education. Students worked in interdisciplinary teams to design their simulations, with each student acting in a professional role. Their simulations were recorded and edited to produce final video presentations for an audience of faculty, administrators, and staff. Based on the results of pre/post surveys administered to Design Challenge participants, this project increased student self-efficacy and perceptions of preparedness for their future careers. Results showed higher self-ratings of competency in all 20 of the professional competencies included in the survey.

For leaders of academic units seeking to establish IP collaborations at their own institutions, consider ways to establish a culture that values interdisciplinary work. For example, highlighting IPE projects at other institutions might be a way to create enthusiasm and interest in creating something similar. IP collaborations can also be incentivized using a system of recognition for IPE projects. For example, academic leaders can feature IPE projects in a school or college newsletter, create new teaching awards for IPE projects, or offer interdisciplinary co-teaching opportunities. For institutions with clearly defined expectations for reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT), it might also be possible to add IPE projects to RPT expectations, or to give faculty the option of using IPE projects as artifacts to demonstrate excellence in teaching. IPE projects also have the potential to serve as a strategy to enhance diversity and inclusion in courses. Inter-mural projects or international projects could provide students with opportunities to learn from and interact with students different from themselves, which could further develop their communication skills, help them develop greater empathy and understanding of other perspectives, and prepare them for their future careers.

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