

Project Name

Integrating Mobile Technology to Enhance Geriatric Social Work Training

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Campus Binghamton University

Year of Project 2013

Tier Tier Two

Project Team

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Overview Summary

Mobile technology initiative will provide a platform for enhanced student learning and evaluation through a three-tier training experience related to depression, dementia & delirium in geriatric patients.

Outcomes Summary

Outcomes TBD

Project Abstract

The Integrating Mobile Technology to Enhance Geriatric Social Work Training (IMTEG) project will provide a platform for enhanced student learning and evaluation through a three-tier training experience related to Depression, Dementia & Delirium in geriatric patients. The project will develop a cohesive series of learning modules, a simulated patient experience, and field-related patient encounter.

Social work graduate education curricula, as well as student field placements must prepare social workers to leverage their knowledge and skills in a post-healthcare reform work environment. Primary care, specialty

clinics and behavioral health service systems are in need of staff who have a deep understanding of the interrelationship among mental health, substance use, (i.e., behavioral healthcare) and physical healthcare and who are prepared to address these needs in a coordinated and collaborative team approach. The Council on Social Work Education's 2008 Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards (EPAS) established new standards for SW education based upon a standardized set of practice competencies. Graduate social work education requires students to complete a combination of coursework and a minimum of 450 hours of field practicum (internship).

A current challenge in social work (SW) education is to effectively educate and expose students to the physiological aspects of a bio-psycho-social model of practice. A second challenge is related to faculty being able to evaluate students' application of theoretical learning in field practicum. The currently model of field practicum relies upon volunteer supervisors; however, few of these supervisors are adequately versed in the EPAS 2008 competencies to facilitate appropriate evaluation of student learning. Through the IMTEG project, web-based technology will be used to deliver physiological and neurological material to a specialized geriatric curricula; mobile technology will then be used to enable evaluation of clinical skill development in experiential learning environments.

Project Objectives

1. Establish a cohesive sequence of progressive learning experiences to prepare students to accurately assess and intervene with patients experiencing depression, dementia and/or delirium.
2. Utilize web-based learning modules to expand the scope of knowledge available to MSW students in biological factors related to depression, dementia and delirium.
3. Provide students and faculty a means of observing and evaluating students' application of clinical skills in both simulated and actual practice situations. Evaluation will be based upon an established set of geriatric competencies.
4. Establish a foundation for an Objective Structured Clinical Exam in social work education.

Web-based learning modules will expose students to a broader understanding of the complex and interrelated physiological, neurological, psychological and social factors associated with depression, dementia & delirium. This content is not available to SW students through the current curriculum, and will provide a venue for students to consistently learn from an interprofessional team. IMTEG modules will be developed by an interprofessional team of health care professionals. Such interprofessional teams are difficult to assemble for classroom-based teaching due to the requirements of scheduling and billable hours for full-time providers.

Simulated patients allow students to practice clinical skills without danger of harming real patients. Currently, simulations are conducted using peers to play various patient roles. While being a convenient form of simulating patient encounters, this type of role playing has numerous limitations. By using a standardized patient (an actor trained to play a specific role), we can provide a consistent experience for students in the project. Using digital recordings and mobile technology, an interprofessional team of faculty may evaluate students' performances in the simulation lab. Other health professions, including medicine, physical therapy, and nursing, utilize an Objective Standardized Clinical Exam (OSCE) to assess students' clinical skill development.

Similarly, field-related encounters allow students to apply clinical skills in actual practice with real patients. However, the MSW program uses nearly 200 sites for field practicum, negating the ability of faculty to observe students' practice experiences. Digital recordings using mobile devices will allow students and faculty supervisors to evaluate students' skill application during select encounters in field practicum sites across the Southern Tier.

Student learning measures will be developed as part of the project, but will be derived from the CSWE 2008 EPAS competencies and the Geriatric Social Work Competencies – Scale II. Students will self-evaluate their performance by reviewing the digital recordings. Scales completed by the faculty will be used for comparison with students' self-assessment.

Tier 1: Self-directed Learning Modules re: Depression, Dementia & Delirium

Tier 2: Simulated Patient Encounter

Tier 3: Field-Related Patient Encounter

Materials to be developed during the grant period:

1. Online Learning modules (3)
2. Scenario / script for simulation
3. Student self -assessment of skills instrument (post-simulation)
4. Faculty assessment instrument / grading rubric

The IMTEG project will introduce technology into social work education and enhance the learning environment in ways that cannot be achieved through classroom learning. While web-based learning modules are not a new method of teaching, the content introduced in this project is rarely provided through standard SW curricula. It also provides a venue for MSW students to learn from a physician; again, this is a rare occurrence in SW education. The use of standardized patients in SW training has only been documented by Azura University and the University of Toronto; in both cases, this approach is restricted to baccalaureate students in their first semester as a means of self-assessment before beginning a field practicum. Through IMTEG, we will introduce not only the use of standardized patients, but a mechanism for faculty across disciplines to provide feedback regarding students' assessment of a patient's condition and development of an intervention plan.

Collectively, this sequence of learning experiences provides an innovative method of delivering and assessing graduate student learning and skill development in a professional degree program. Furthermore, it establishes a firm foundation for development of the Objective Standardized Clinical Examination (OSCE) in social work.

Reports and Resources

- [Mid project report](#)

Discipline Specific Pedagogy

- Adult & Continuing Education

Instructional Design

- Student Engagement

Instructional Technologies

- Mobile Learning