

End-of-Life Education in Context: Assessing Faculty and Student Characteristics for Educational Research

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Objectives

- Identify key characteristics of faculty members and students to assess for research studies focused on end-of-life education
- Discuss the faculty and student characteristic outcomes from a dissertation study assessing end-of-life content integration within a baccalaureate nursing program
- Describe how the faculty and student characteristic outcomes of the dissertation study provided a context for describing the baccalaureate program



Conflicts of Interest/Disclosure

- None to report



Background

- Student characteristics frequently reported
- Faculty member characteristics seldom reported
- Both characteristics offer valuable data to contextualize findings
 - Level of experience of faculty members influences outcomes of the teaching strategy
 - Expertise in a given subject area



Purpose

- 1) Discuss process of identifying critically important faculty and student characteristics from existing literature to guide study design
- 2) Examine results of educational evaluation study in the context of faculty & student characteristics
- 3) Explore the implications of using faculty & student characteristics to interpret study findings.



Theoretical Model

- Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model
- Context data will be the focus of this presentation
- Consisted of faculty and student characteristics
 - Identified by research

- Data for other portions of model available upon request



Literature Review Methods

- A review of end-of-life educational literature was conducted
- Databases searched: Medline, ERIC, CINAHL, PsychoInfo and EbscoHost
- Inclusion criteria: student and/or faculty member characteristics were assessed or discussed in relation to end-of-life education



Literature Review Results

- 25 articles about student characteristics
- 9 articles about faculty member characteristics



STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTIC	LEVEL OF MEASURE	ANSWER CHOICES
Age	Interval	
Semester of enrollment	Interval	
Current courses	Nominal	
Course repetition	Nominal	Yes/No
Religion	Nominal	Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Atheist, None, Other, Prefer not to Answer
Previous end-of-life care education	Nominal	Previous course, Content in other courses, None
Previous experience with the death of a loved one/friend/pet	Nominal	Yes/No
Previous experience caring for a dying loved one/friend/pet	Nominal	Yes/No
Previous experience caring for dying patients	Nominal	Yes/No



FACULTY CHARACTERISTICS

CHARACTERISTIC	LEVEL OF MEASURE	ANSWER CHOICES
Years of teaching experience overall	Interval	
Years of teaching experience in baccalaureate programs	Interval	
Years of clinical practice experience	Interval	
Frequency of the provision of palliative and end-of-life care in clinical practice	Nominal	Daily, Weekly, Monthly, A Few Times per Year, Never, No Clinical Practice
Certifications	Nominal	
End of Life Nursing Education Consortium (ELNEC) training	Nominal	Yes/No
End-of-Life Research Focus	Nominal	Not at all, Mild, Moderately, Strongly, Exclusively, I do not conduct research



Survey

32 faculty members

(42 possible)

- Experienced nurses
 - 17.98 years of clinical practice ($SD= 11.12$, range 3-44 years)
 - 11.38 years of teaching experience ($SD=11.2$, range 1-40 years)
- ELNEC Training: 3
- Research in end-of-life: 12.2%
- Provide end-of-life care at least weekly: 15.2%
- Never provide end-of-life care: 45.5%

176 students

(over 350 possible)

- Age: 21.32 years ($SD=3.2$, range 8-43 years)
- Majority Catholic (30.5%), Protestant (22%) or Other (21.3%)
- End of Life Content Integrated into Education: 73.3%
- Experienced loss of loved one/friend/pet: 81.82%
- Experienced patient death prior to or during semester: 37.32%



Implications for Curriculum

- Topics related to final hours of life, loss/grief/bereavement, and topics of palliative care were the least integrated within the curriculum
- Faculty members' limited expertise with end-of-life care can help to explain the limited integration of these topics into the curriculum
- Assessments of students' perceived competence in caring for dying patients revealed high overall perceived competence across the program.
- Student's prior experiences with death, even for freshman students, could provide an explanation for the high perceived competence across all students enrolled in the program.



Conclusion

- The literature review allowed for the identification of the critical characteristics to assess to provide a rich description of the study sample
- Assessing student and faculty member characteristics relevant to end-of-life care education can provide beneficial contextual explanations for the outcomes of research as well as describing the sample



Future Research

- These faculty member and student characteristics should be incorporated into future end-of-life educational research in order to provide consistent measurement across studies
- Assessing these critical characteristic elements will also allow for greater confidence in generalizing findings to other baccalaureate nursing programs.



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