



Use of a board game format to promote interprofessional learning

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ABSTRACT

Interprofessional learning is a fundamental component of healthcare education. In order to promote interprofessional competency, students must understand the roles and responsibilities of the team members. Through the use of an interprofessional board game, the researchers were able to improve student perceptions of learning in the areas of teamwork and interprofessional roles. Significant differences in student perceptions pre and post-game play were noted in the areas of knowledge of roles, requirements for practice of various professions such as licensure, certification, continuing education, and support of other professions. The board game format was readily accepted and provided an adaptable method for introducing, evaluating, and reinforcing concepts related to interprofessional education.

1. Introduction

Collaboration is vital to the successful delivery of quality patient care. Baker¹ states that “teamwork requires a shared acknowledgement of each participating member’s roles and abilities. Without this acknowledgement, adverse outcomes may arise from a series of seemingly trivial errors that effective teamwork could have prevented” (p. 14). Teaching collaborative care presents new challenges for educators in the health professions while best practices for interprofessional education (IPE) are not fully developed. This mixed methods research project focused on evaluating a game format for delivery of interprofessional education concepts.

Utilizing games in education is not a new concept. According to Crews,² “research supports the use of games in public, academic, and school libraries as a way to engage patrons and students, and to help develop important skills” (p. 10). Nicholson⁵ recommends several game models where multiple players are engaged during each “turn” rather than using the single player per turn, question-answer type of game model. Utilizing a team approach with discussion during game play “would allow players to learn more from one another” (p. 61). The game described in this study utilizes a team approach with questions focused around the Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice.

The Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice³ identifies four critical areas in which students must demonstrate competency in order to function within a healthcare team. Competency Domain 2 focuses on the healthcare provider’s ability to identify and understand his/her role as well as the roles of others on the team.

Effective teaching methods regarding professional roles and responsibilities are needed. The IPE Challenge game presents a possible method for providing education on the Core Competencies in a unique way to promote interprofessional education.

2. Format

The *IPE Challenge!* game format was modeled loosely after similar entertainment games such as *Trivial Pursuit* (HASBRO) where players move a game pawn around a board and collect tokens by answering questions related to each category. The researchers created a customizable game board template (see Fig. 1) and obtained color-coded game tokens representing each healthcare profession. Researchers also created various question cards (see Appendix A) and surveyed faculty from different professions to obtain ‘correct’ answers to be used during the game.

Students from different professions met during a required classroom activity utilizing the *IPE Challenge!* game. Interprofessional teams were formed and each were provided with game directions for the *IPE Challenge!* game (see Appendix B). Gameplay began with an empty “silo” (coin tube) for each team. A player or team “turn” consisted of rolling the dice, moving the game pawn around the board and answering a themed question from a question card (see Fig. 2) related to interprofessional roles and responsibilities corresponding to the square on the game board where the game pawn landed. Players on the same interprofessional team were allowed to discuss each question and reach a consensus for the answer. If the team answered correctly, the team would be awarded a color-coded game token related to the profession

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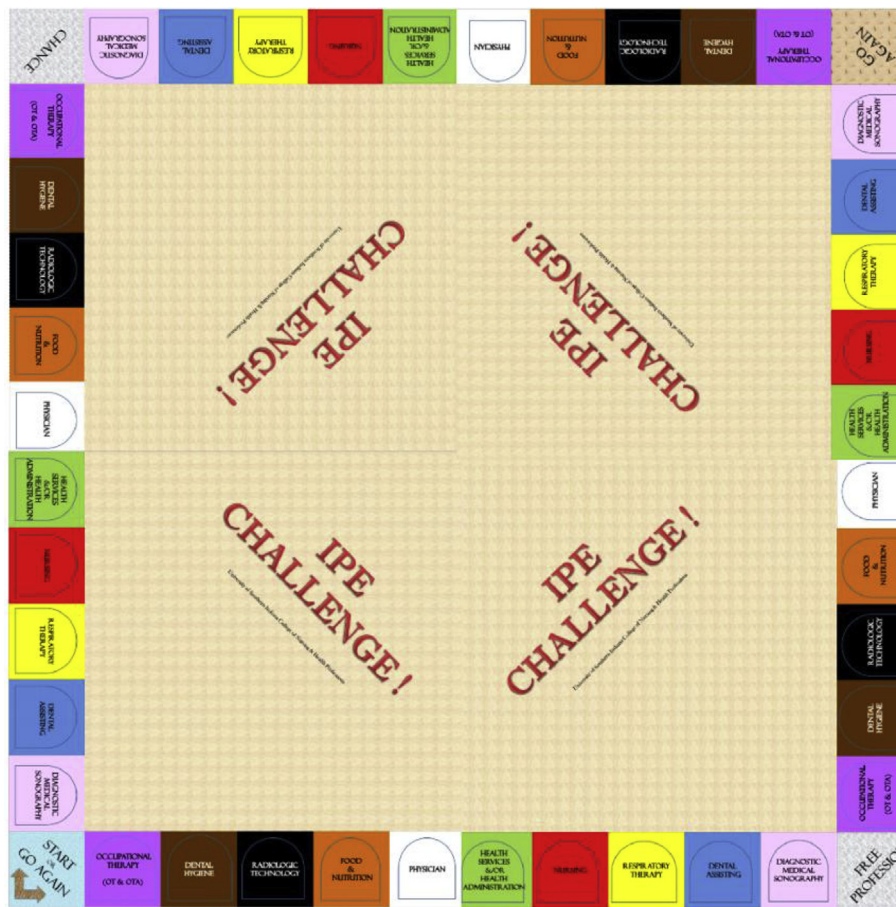


Fig. 1. Layout of IPE Challenge! game board.

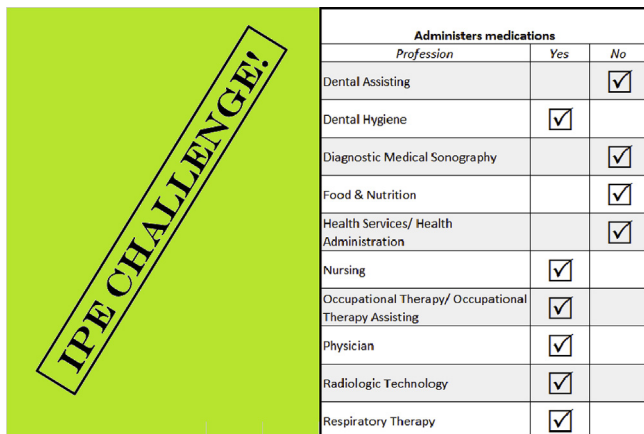


Fig. 2. Sample question card back and front. These cards can be reused for each of the different professions included in the game.

for which the question was asked (e.g. Radiologic Technology tokens are black). Each team collected color-coded game tokens representing each of the professions and symbolically filled the team's interprofessional multicolor silos (coin tubes) by the end of the game. Faculty served as facilitators by briefing participants on the purpose of the game, answering questions and guiding team interaction. As game play progressed, student teams interacted with each other to answer questions and resolve disputes. Faculty resolved minor disputes regarding question clarity or disagreements regarding answers on the question cards. Debriefing followed game play in order to facilitate reflection on what was learned as well as discuss attitudes toward the game format.

3. Target audience

The undergraduate radiologic technology (RADT), respiratory therapy (RESP), and occupational therapy assistant (OTA) programs each have 16, 14, and 30 students respectively. During game play, students were asked to self-select teams with no more than two occupational therapy assistant students, one radiologic technology student and one respiratory therapy student in order to promote interprofessional support and teamwork. A total of 57 students, 15 first year radiologic technology students, 13 first year respiratory therapy students and 29 first year occupational therapy assistant students, were in attendance and volunteered to participate in this study. Institutional review board permission was obtained prior to the study and students consented to voluntary participation in the study.

4. Objectives

The primary objective of the *IPE Challenge!* research project was to provide a unique and engaging interprofessional learning experience for students in a variety of professional programs. The researchers sought to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the tool related to student learning by gathering data through voluntary written anonymized pre-game and post-game surveys (see Appendix C) and discussion related to the following objectives:

1. Students will identify and understand their role as healthcare professionals as well as the roles of others on the healthcare team.
2. Identify through survey responses how utilizing an active learning approach in a game environment positively impacts attitudes toward interprofessional education.

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