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Health Professions Education **I** (**IIII**) **III**-**III**



Using Competency-Based Curriculum Design to Create a Health Professions Education Certificate Program the Meets the Needs of Students, Administrators, Faculty, and Patients

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Abstract

Introduction: Health Professions Education (HPE) programs emerged to train faculty in teaching and learning within the higher education context. HPE programs are motivated by the belief that faculty trained in teaching and learning will ultimately improve patient care through improved preparation of future practitioners and improved test scores that impact the careers of health professionals and the prestige of the institutions.

Methods: We followed a modified Delphi method for data collection and analyzed data from two in-person focus groups with faculty who work within the health professions at SRU, a collaborative document where health professions faculty filled out information about class types within HPE, an intensive literature review of over 100 policy and research on health professions education needs and best practices, a review of existing health professions education certificate and graduate degree program curriculum, and a review of promotion and tenure handbooks for Dental, Medical, and Nursing faculty at SRU.

Results: Analysis of course evaluations and stakeholder feedback suggested that the redesigned HPE curriculum meets the needs of HPE faculty, aligned with literature, and was competitive with similar program across the United States.

Conclusions: A curriculum that meets the needs of practitioners, administrators, and industry should prepare faculty to gain competency in each of the core domains of health professions education: Professional Foundations (specific to Health Professions Education), Working with Students, Planning and Preparation, Instructional Methods and Strategies (Clinical and Classroom), Assessment and Evaluation, and Evidence-based Practice/Research.

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1. Introduction

Historically, faculty in the health professions have been specialists with little to no background in teaching, learning, instruction, or curriculum development. Health professions faculty were often not trained in education and primarily delivered content via lecture, a method that research suggests is not the best way to engage students and promote knowledge retention.^{1,2} In response, Health Professions Education (HPE) programs emerged to train faculty in teaching and learning within the higher education context. HPE programs are motivated by the belief that faculty trained in teaching and learning will ultimately improve patient care through improved preparation of future practitioners and improved test scores that impact the careers of health professionals and the prestige of the institutions.³ The primary purpose of HPE programs is an improvement in instruction and professionalization of the educational activities of health professionals for faculty in colleges of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, physical therapy, and other health professions schools.⁴

Created in this vein, the HPE certificate program at Southern Research University (SRU; pseudonym) specifically focuses on improving strategies in teaching, learning, and instruction for educators in the schools of medicine, nursing, dentistry, public health, and allied health professions. Although primarily designed for health professions faculty, the program is for anyone involved in education in a healthcare setting. The program consists of four graduate level courses that culminate in the credential of a certificate offered through the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies. Created as a partnership between SRU's College of Education and Human Development and their School of Medicine, recent trends in enrollment and feedback from the School of Medicine indicated that the core audience of the graduate certificate was not satisfied with the current offerings. In response, we conducted a program evaluation to establish if the current HPE curriculum was meetings the needs of Health Professions Education student, administrators, and faculty.

Through a data collection process that included a review of the literature on Health Professions Education, existing HPE program across the United States, policy documents on health professions education, promotion and tenure documents for health professions faculty at a southeastern research university, and focus group interviews with faculty from medical and nursing education, we redesigned a curriculum to meet the needs of HPE stakeholders (students, faculty, and administrators), aligned with literature, and was competitive with similar programs across the United States. Through a description of our methods, we describe competency-based curriculum review and design in the development of HPE programming. In doing so, we identify HPE competencies, provide a step-by-step guide to using a competency-based curriculum design process, and craft a HPE certificate curriculum outline.

1.1. Health professions education

HPE programs can take the forms of seminars, fellowships, short courses, workshops, and longitudinal programs.⁵ Generally, content is guided by the goal of improving teacher effectiveness. A majority of HPE program curriculums focus on instructional strategies to help faculty move from a teacher-centered model to learner-centered techniques.^{1,2} Additional topics covered in HPE programs include motivation and engagement,⁶ helping skills,⁷ classroom management,⁸ and curriculum design.⁸ Notably, content in many HPE programs has recently expanded to include faculty development in research and administration.⁹

Although HPE programs come in many forms, the general consensus is that more robust programs over a longer period of time lead to better results for faculty.^{1,10} For this reason, as well as an increasing pressure for the professionalization of education within the health professions, many schools prefer certificate and master's degree programs.^{10,11} Programs often reflect the needs and the culture of the host institution. Most programs focus on individual faculty, but teambased and institution-focused approaches are growing in popularity.³

Research suggests that degree and certificate programs focus on the diverse array of teaching modalities that exist in health professions training as possible.⁹ HPE program graduates should be able to move seamlessly from large-group teaching and productive lectures to teaching clinicians-in-training by the bedside.⁹ Second, HPE programs should include health care delivery, quality improvement, patient safety, and understanding patient populations.¹² Third, some suggest that participation frameworks should move from voluntary participation to required.¹ Fourth, HPE programs should connect the resources of the health professions to the communities in which they reside through service in order to help people who would not otherwise be able to afford service and to increase learning.¹³ Through these methods, HPE programs have the opportunity to lead to better teaching, increased collegiality, and creativity in achieving

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