

Interprofessional Education in Dental Hygiene Associates Degree Programs in Virginia

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Abstract

Introduction: Interprofessional collaboration has been increasing throughout all healthcare professions to provide higher-quality care to patients. Dental hygienists are an essential part of interprofessional collaboration and gain their education through dental hygiene school. *Problem:* The proposed study will be a questionnaire to examine how interprofessional education is being experienced at the dental hygiene associates degree level in Virginia. The study will focus on interprofessional education activities that are being done at the associate's degree level.

Methodology: The dental hygiene students will be recruited from Virginia community colleges that are in their senior year. The students will receive a link to access the Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey (ICCAS). *Implications:* The results of this study may impact the way interprofessional education activities are incorporated into the associate's program. Also, it will give additional feedback on the student learner's perceptions of how the interprofessional education activities changed their behavior and competencies. Knowledge of this information will lead to profound interprofessional education in dental hygienist and in their future interprofessional collaboration careers.

Keywords: dental hygiene, interprofessional education, associates degree,

Interprofessional Education in Associates Degree Programs in Virginia

Introduction

According to World Health Organization (WHO) (2010), “defines interprofessional education (IPE) as students from two or more professions learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration to improve health outcomes” (p.7). Dental hygienists’ collaboration in IPE is essential because of the oral-systemic link (Tolle et al., 2019). The Commission on Dental Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs states that “graduates of a dental hygiene program should be competent in interprofessional communications, collaboration, and interactive with other health care professionals” (Commission on Dental Accreditation, 2022, p. 26).

Formicola et al. (2012) reported that United States and Canadian dental schools’ dental hygiene students were not getting interprofessional education and experiences to interact efficiently with other healthcare professionals (p. 1266). Furgeson et al. (2015) described that dental hygiene schools with an associate degree had less collaboration with other healthcare programs. The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) (2016) revised the dental hygiene standard 2-15 to include interprofessional education explicitly in the curriculum (CODA, 2017). Furgeson & Inglehart’s (2018) survey showed that after the revision of CODA Standard 2-15 from 2014 to 2017, there was a decrease in IPE interactions (p. 12). Furthermore, the survey reported that program directors did not think their graduates needed to be competent in IPE behaviors at all degree levels.

Significance of the Problem

Tolle et al., (2019) reported that interprofessional education activities were higher in bachelor’s degree programs than in associate programs. It was explained that bachelor programs

at universities have more opportunities with other major healthcare programs than the associate programs at community colleges (Tolle et al., 2019). One of the major problems of incorporating interprofessional activities is having the faculty members to take charge of these roles and develop an innovative curriculum. According to the same study, the associate degree programs had a lower level of agreement on resources and personnel to teach IPE courses (Tolle et al., 2019).

Statement of the Problem

In the study of Furgeson, D. & Inglehart, M. R. (2017), barriers that interprofessional education have are lack of knowledge of other health care disciplines, time, and other participating healthcare programs. In the study by Tolle et al. (2019), there are several problems that prevent interprofessional education (IPE) from being taught in associate programs including the inclusion of IPE activities, time, availability of more IP faculty and IP workshops, and coworkers' opinions about IPE. More research is needed in evaluating individual dental hygiene associate programs and identifying the attitudes and barriers (Tolle et al., 2019). This study intends to address the problem of competencies when interprofessional education activities are implemented.

Research Question

1. Do Virginia dental hygiene associate programs incorporate interprofessional education activities into their curriculum and the competency of the students?

Definition of Variables

The independent variable in this study is associate degree dental hygiene students and interprofessional activities. The dependent variable in this study is the student competence in interprofessional collaboration.

1. Interprofessional activities: Activities that are completed with multiple healthcare students to improve their education and future quality of care for their patients.
2. Interprofessional collaboration: multiple healthcare workers work together to provide the best quality of care for their patients (World Health Organization, 2010).
3. Associate dental hygiene degree student: Students actively enrolled in a community college associate dental hygiene degree in Virginia.

Hypothesis

Associate degree seeking dental hygiene students will have an increase in interprofessional collaborative competence after engaging in IPE activities as measured by, Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey (ICCAS). (p=0.05)

There is no statistically significant difference in dental hygiene students' interprofessional collaborative competence before compared after participating in interprofessional activities, as measured by Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey (ICCAS). (p=0.05)

Rationale for Proposed Study

The future holds a strong and valuable place for dental hygienists in interprofessional education settings (Theile, 2017). According to Furgeson & Inglehart (2019), accreditation standards should require collaboration when treating patients and that future practitioners are competent to engage in interprofessional collaborations. The purpose of this research study is to investigate the incorporation of and competence of interprofessional activities at the dental hygiene associates' program.

Review of Literature

An in-depth literature review was conducted to provide existing fundamentals and importance for this study. The information that supports this literature is presented in the following topics: interprofessional education in dental hygiene programs, strengths, and weaknesses of the current interprofessional education and dental hygienists' interprofessional education and collaboration experiences.

Interprofessional education in dental hygiene programs

In 2016, Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) revised Standard 2-15 incorporating interprofessional education (IPE) (Commission on Dental Accreditation). Common usage of IPE incorporated into dental hygiene programs include case studies, on and off campuses clinical activities, patient stimulations, service learning, standardized patients, health mentors, or a combination of methods (Bagge, et al., 2021, p. 33). According to Furgeson & Inglehart (2019), the study means results about program directors asking questions about their graduate IPE-related competencies were found to be less important in 2017 than in 2014 (p. 10). In conclusion from this study, IPE accreditation standards should treat patients collaboratively which would result in graduating future healthcare professionals engaging with other healthcare professionals (Furgeson & Inglehart, 2019, p.13).

Strengths and barriers of the current interprofessional education

In an article by Theile (2017), it states that baccalaureate degrees students had more IPE activities than associate degree students. One of the weaknesses of the current interprofessional education is dental hygienists receiving minimal IPE in their entry-level curricula (Theile, 2017, p 42). In the article Tolle et al (2019), one strength that was observed in a study was IPE being incorporated into the established into instructions even though the highest frequency was 30% (p.

15). Overall attitudes about IPE being administered into the program were generally reported as favorable. (Tolle et al., 2019, p.17) Other identified weaknesses are time, programs, faculty, scheduling, curriculum, and students (Tolle et al., 2019, p.18). According to the article by Bagge (2020), a graduated dental hygienist, barriers to IPE included lack of need, lack of time, and not in the job description/not allowed (p. 37).

Dental hygienists' interprofessional education and collaboration experiences

In an article by Coan, Wijesuriya, & Seibert (2018), the aim of this study was to implement and evaluate interprofessional competence in dental hygiene and nursing students in hospital settings (p. 654). The students were to take pre and post activity surveys using the Collaborative Competency Attainment Survey (ICCAS). The result of this study showed that the mean self-reporting scores improved the student's attainment of the competencies. The two results that showed no significant improvement included the patient/family in decision making and addressing the conflict in a respectful manner (Coan, 2018). The conclusion of this study reported that interprofessional activities in schools do improve interprofessional education and competence.

The oral-systemic link is providing more comprehension roles for healthcare professionals to communicate with one another. Bagge et al. (2020), found that 90% of dental hygienists and other healthcare providers believed interprofessional collaboration was important. Dental hygienists reported on average that they have four monthly collaboration experiences with other healthcare providers (Bagge, 2020). Open-ended questions were asked to dental hygienist about the most important factor in learning IPE and the most frequent response was better health outcomes for patient care. In addition, dental hygienists that had experiences in IPE in collaborative environments had a more positive outlook on IPE. According to Bagge et al.

(2020), dental hygienist that did not have formal IPE education collaborated at a lower rate than dental hygienist that had previous IPE education.

Methods, Research Design, and Data Analysis

Research Design

The research design will be experimental with One-Group Pretest-Posttest design with convenience sampling with nonrandomization. The dental hygiene students will take a pre-test and post-test online survey, Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey (ICCAS). Each question in the survey will allow the participant to select an answer based on 5-point Likert scale. The students will participate in an interprofessional activity with nursing students. The interprofessional educational activity will require dental hygiene and nursing students to create PowerPoint about a systemic disease that they are treating a patient for. The students will be placed into groups of four: 2 nursing and 2 dental hygiene. The researcher will analyze the results from the survey.

Sample Description

In this study, 36 senior dental hygiene and nursing students at Northern Virginia Community College will be invited to participate in an online survey and activity. There will be a total of nine groups of four students completing the interprofessional education activity. The activity will take two months to complete the assignment. The pre and post survey will be available one week before and after the activity. Each participant will receive a two-time code to enter to have access to the survey. A letter will be developed for the university to explain the survey and the interprofessional education activity. An incentive prize for taking the survey online will ask for the participant to enter their name for the new IO Oral B toothbrush kit. The

names are kept confidential by the researchers and an Oral B representative will handle the drawing and mailing of the kit. By doing interprofessional activity, credit will be incorporated into their grade for the semester.

Methodology

The survey will be presented on a secure website that will require a one-time code that will be given to the students individually. This will control any extraneous variables. The study will be taken at the school in testing centers which will be monitored. If colleges do not have testing centers, the participants can take the survey in the classroom setting. It will be expressed through the letter emphasizing the importance of this survey and the need for the participants to accurately respond. The interprofessional education activity will be conducted online between the nursing and dental hygiene students. It is optional for these students to meet in person and complete the assignment. The presentations will be conducted online during a zoom meeting at the end of the four weeks. The purpose of this study is to gather baseline data regarding interprofessional education activities being delivered in the dental hygiene associate degree program.

Instrumentation

The participants will rank their responses on the Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The participants will access the survey by logging into a secure link to survey software on a computer at the testing center or laptop in the classroom setting. The participants will be given 10 minutes to complete each question as truthfully as possible. According to the study by Olaniyi, A.A. (2019), “five-point Likert-type scales were high reliability and internal consistencies, measured by Alpha values” (p. 5).

Limitations

The following are limitations were identified as possible threats to the internal and external validity of and reliability of this investigation:

1. Participants will be able to complete the survey at any time. This could prevent the participants from completing the survey and limit the number of responses.
2. Participants may only be taking the survey to be eligible for the new IO oral B toothbrush and not answer the questions truthfully.
3. Participants can have events happen outside of the pretest and posttest that could affect the dependent variable.
4. Participants being exposed to the pre-test might make them perform better on the post test.
5. Hawthorne Effect: Participants performing better by knowing they will be participating in a survey.
6. Participants are not randomly selected.

Data Analysis

When all surveys have been completed at the end of the week, the researcher will use statistical software to organize and analyze the results. Statistics and tests will be utilized to evaluate the comparisons between variables and explore mean differences between groups based on differences of student and the interprofessional educational activity. From the results, the researchers will be able to conclude the interprofessional education activities among the dental hygiene students.

Human Subjects

Before implementing this research study, the research proposal will be submitted for approval to the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at Old Dominion University.

1. **Subject Population:** The proposed research will require the participation of dental hygiene students and faculty from one Virginia Community College associate's program.
2. **Potential Risks and Benefits:** The potential risk may include a data breach in the survey because of it being online. To minimize this risk, the participants will not have IP addresses collected or any personal data. The main benefits are their participation to help contribute to improving interprofessional education in academia and the chance to win a prize by completing the survey.
3. **Withdrawal Privilege:** Participants will be fully aware of the potential risk and benefits of taking this survey. Participants will have the liberty to choose to participate or to stop at any point during the survey.
4. **Protection of Subjects Rights:** All the data collected will be completely anonymous to researchers. At the end of the survey, the prize will be the only thing that will not be anonymous, but researchers will not have access to this information. There will be no identifying markers on the survey about which associate program or personal information. The data will be treated like it is under HIPAA and any violation will be notified of programs.

Project Impact/Summary

The future impact of this study could significantly improve interprofessional education activities in the associate dental hygiene program. According to Coan, et al. (2018), "Interprofessional education activities/experiences in school can be necessary for

interprofessional interactions after graduation” (p. 661). The interprofessional education activities will give these students experiences with other healthcare professionals which can improve their patient’s overall health. With more excellent competency activities, the students will be more confident and profound in collaborating with other health care professionals.

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Appendices

Survey Instrument

Schmitz, C. C., Radosevich, M. D., Jardine, P., MacDonald, C. J., Trumpower, D., & Archibald, D. (2016). The interprofessional collaborative competency attainment survey (ICCAS): A replication validations study. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*. 31(1), 28-34. DOI: 10.1080/13561820.2016.1233096

ICCAS – Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey

For your unique anonymous participant code, please provide your mother's first name initial, the day and month of her birthday: _ - _ _ _ _ _
 Please indicate your profession: _____
 Please indicate if you are: a student _____ year of program _____ or practitioner _____

Please answer the following questions by filling in the circle that most accurately reflects your opinion about the following interprofessional collaboration statements:
 1= strongly disagree; 2= moderately disagree; 3=slightly disagree; 4= neutral; 5=slightly agree; 6=moderately agree; 7= strongly agree; na= not applicable

Please rate your ability for each of the following statements:

	Before participating in the learning activities I was able to:							After participating in the learning activities I am able to:								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	na	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	na
Communication																
1. Promote effective communication among members of an interprofessional (IP) team*	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Actively listen to IP team members' ideas and concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Express my ideas and concerns without being judgmental	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Provide constructive feedback to IP team members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Express my ideas and concerns in a clear, concise manner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaboration																
6. Seek out IP team members to address issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Work effectively with IP team members to enhance care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Learn with, from and about IP team members to enhance care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Roles and Responsibilities																
9. Identify and describe my abilities and contributions to the IP team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Be accountable for my contributions to the IP team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Understand the abilities and contributions of IP team members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Recognize how others' skills and knowledge complement and overlap with my own	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Collaborative Patient/Family-Centred Approach																
13. Use an IP team approach with the patient** to assess the health situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Use an IP team approach with the patient to provide whole person care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Include the patient/family in decision-making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict Management/Resolution																
16. Actively listen to the perspectives of IP team members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Take into account the ideas of IP team members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Address team conflict in a respectful manner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Team Functioning																
19. Develop an effective care*** plan with IP team members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Negotiate responsibilities within overlapping scopes of practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*The patient's family or significant other, when appropriate, are part of the IP team.
 **The word "patient" has been employed to represent client, resident, and service users.
 ***The term "care" includes intervention, treatment, therapy, evaluation, etc.
 © MacDonald, Archibald, Trumpower, Jelley, Cragg, Casimiro, & Johnstone, 2009.

Senior Dental Hygiene Students NEEDED!!

To improving future interprofessional education.

WHAT: A survey study on interprofessional education activities. Interprofessional education activity with nursing students.

WHERE: Northern Virginia Community College

CHANCE TO WIN!!!!

Participant and have a chance to win the new ORAL B IO
kit.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

“THE MORE YOU READ, THE MORE THINGS YOU WILL KNOW, THE MORE
THAT YOU LEARN, THE MORE PLACES YOU GO”