Gerontology & Geriatrics Education

Foreword

The Three-Legged Stool: Linkages among Education, Research, and Practice in Gerontology and Geriatrics
Patricia Kolb

Articles

Design, Delivery, and Outcomes From an Interprofessional Fall Prevention Course
Jason A. Dauenhauer, Susan Glose, and Celia Watt

This article describes the development, delivery, and outcomes from an interprofessional evidence-based falls management course for undergraduate and graduate students. The 3-credit elective course was developed by a gerontological social work and nursing faculty member in partnership with community-based housing and case management organizations. Creation of the course was in response to a mandate by the Health Resources and Services Administration, funding source for federal Geriatric Education Centers, to train interprofessional students using an evidence-based approach while tying the outcomes to improved health measures in the target population. Therefore, this article describes student competencies pre- and postcourse completion and outcomes of community-dwelling older adults completing a Matter of Balance (MOB) program delivered by these students. A total of 16 students completed the course which included delivery of the MOB program to 41 older adults. Results indicate statistically significant improvements in student outcomes from a pre/post falls knowledge test. For older adult participants, many screened positively for fall risk factors pre-post MOB participation showed statistically significant improvements in falls efficacy, control, management, and overall mobility. Opportunities and challenges associated with course delivery are also described.
Crossing Boundaries: The Design of an Interdisciplinary Training Program to Improve Care for the Frail Elderly
Klodiana Kolomitro, Denise Stockley, Rylan Egan, and Michelle L. MacDonald

The Technology Evaluation in the Elderly Network (TVN) was funded in July 2012 under the Canadian Networks of Centres of Excellence program. This article highlights the development and preliminary evaluation of the TVN Interdisciplinary Training Program. This program is based on an experiential learning approach that crosses a multitude of disciplines including health sciences, law, social sciences, and ethical aspects of working with the frail elderly. Opportunities within the program include mentorship, interdisciplinary online collaborative projects, external placements, academic products, pre-grant submission, trainee-driven requirements, Network meetings, online modules/webinars, and most importantly active involvement with patients, families, and their support systems. The authors have 120 trainees from approximately 23 different disciplines including law, ethics, public policy, social work, and engineering engaged in the program. Based on our evaluation this program has been perceived as highly valuable by the participants and the community.

Roles for Education in Development and Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices for Community Programs for Older Adults
Patricia Kolb and Francine Conway

It is essential for key stakeholders in evidence-based practice (EBP) to be informed about barriers and achievements in EBP and collaborate in developing and implementing EBP. This article provides information to assist educators, students, practitioners, clients, and researchers who are stakeholders in use of EBP in community-based aging programs to understand barriers to EBP and approaches for developing and implementing EBP. Highlighting roles of education in EBP, the authors describe barriers to EBP; use of education to address gaps among research, education, and practice for EBP; cultural competence; and educational approaches for community-based implementation. EBP has been central to development of quality health and social services for older adults, but challenges remain in translation of research findings into EBP. Examples of programs in which research, education, and practice are linked for provision of EBP, as well as educational resources and tools for developing and implementing EBP, are identified.
Integrating Education, Research, and Practice in Gerontological Social Work: Lessons Learned From the Reclaiming Joy Peer Support Program
Rosemary K. Chapin, Alicia Sellon, and Carrie Wendel-Hummell

The practice-to-research gap has been attributed to many factors, including differing goals and priorities, differing knowledge bases and skill sets, and lack of recognition of limits of agency and community resources. Although many scholars have called for more collaboration between educators, researchers, and practitioners, these challenges can make collaboration difficult. The authors illustrate how the application of the strengths perspective, by acknowledging and building on the strengths and goals of researchers, practitioners, and educators, can help to mitigate some of the barriers that contribute to the research—practice gap and to create more relevant research. The Reclaiming Joy Peer Support Program is offered as a case study in gerontological social work to demonstrate how the strengths perspective can be applied in a real-life research setting.

Co-Learning With Home Care Aides and Their Clients: Collaboratively Increasing Individual and Organizational Capacities
Naoko Muramatsu, Jessica Madrigal, Michael L. Berbaum, Vida A. Henderson, Donald A. Jurivich, Joseph Zanoni, David X. Marquez, and Katya Cruz Madrid

Changes in health care provide unprecedented opportunities for collaboration across research, education, and practice for the common goal of enhancing the well-being of older adults and their caregivers. This article describes how a pilot project, Promoting Seniors’ Health with Home Care Aides, has synergistic education, research, and practice effects that enhance individual and organizational capacities. This pilot is an innovative partnership with home care aides to deliver a safe physical activity program appropriate for frail seniors in a real-life public home care program. The intervention and research occur in older adults’ homes and thus provide rare opportunities for the research team and partners to learn from each other about dynamics of home care in older adults’ life contexts. Co-learning is essential for continuous quality improvement in education, research and practice. The authors propose to establish “teaching home care” to ensure ongoing co-learning in gerontology and geriatrics.
This article describes how research, practice, and education were integrated in a National Institutes of Mental Health-funded clinical trial for treating depression in nursing homes. Involving undergraduate and doctoral students in this clinical trial supported the development of key competencies, expanded the professional pipeline, and provided an avenue for disseminating the treatment to other settings. The clinical trial served as a teaching laboratory for sixteen undergraduate and six doctoral students to (1) observe the culture of older adults in nursing homes, (2) develop and adapt clinical skills to a challenging patient population, (3) refine skills for collaborating in multidisciplinary teams, and (4) appreciate the relationship between science and practice. Dissemination of the intervention to nonresearch settings was served when the students took their skills to the settings where they launched their careers. Involvement of trainees in clinical trial research expands and enriches the capacity of the health care workforce in evidence-based practice and practice-informed research.