**BACKGROUND**

Community colleges and universities play a major role in training our future workforce in gerontology, nursing, and social work. Competencies within these disciplines guide the development of curricula and set standards by which we evaluate individual learning and skill performance. In January 2007, The California Geriatric Education Center (CGEC) was funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE). This intra-system project, A Systems Response to Improving Education in California (SAGE), includes five partnering institutions: UC Los Angeles, Santa Barbara City College, CSU Channel Islands, CSU Northridge and Ventura College.

SAGE Project Objectives include the following:

1. Assess gerontologic curriculum in nursing, social and gerontology in community college, California State Universities and University of California
2. Rate how well current curricula incorporated national competencies and standards by discipline.
3. Identify core competency areas across these disciplines.
4. Develop curricula to fill gerontologic content gaps and infuse competency-based teaching principles and assessments into the programs.
5. Host faculty development training programs.

This poster describes the processes and materials that were developed to analyze programs that educate students that may ultimately care for our older adults in California.

**CORE COMPETENCY SOURCES**

**GERONTOLOGY**

Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, Core Principles and Outcomes of Gerontology, Geriatrics and Aging Studies Instruction (1993)

Example Ethics #18: Know and accept the ethics of professional practice in the field of aging.

**NURSING**

American Association of Colleges of Nursing and the John A. Hartford Foundation, Older Adults: Recommended Competencies and Curricular Guidelines for Geriatric Nursing Care (2000)

Example Ethics #19: Apply ethical and legal principles to the complex issues that arise in care of older adults.

**SOCIAL WORK**

California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC), Aging Initiative: Aging Competencies

Example Ethics #6:7: Apply social work ethical principles to decisions on behalf of all older adult clients with special attention to those who have limited decisional capacity.

**WORK TO DATE**

1. Identified 12 broad competency areas that were relevant for all three disciplinary areas:
   - Critical Thinking
   - Communication
   - Assessment
   - Technical Skills (Direct Service/Care)
   - Health Promotion/Disease Prevention
   - Illness & Disease Management
   - Information & Health Care Technologies
   - Ethics
   - Human Diversity
   - Global Health Care
   - Health Care System Policy
   - Role Development

Noted much variation in specific competencies within above themes, and several gaps where competencies needed to be developed, e.g. no health promotion competency in current gerontology standards.

2. Designed and Used Program Level Mapping Tool to assess how well courses in Associate Arts and Bachelors’ Nursing, undergraduate gerontology minor and masters in social work address and incorporate competencies.

Example of Nursing Mapping Tool:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Supported by courses</th>
<th>Student Evaluation Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N252 N254A,B</td>
<td>Multiple Choice Test, Nursing Care Plans, Clinical Conference, Faculty Observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize one’s own and others’ attitudes, values, and expectations about aging and their impact on care of older adults and their families</td>
<td>N461 N463</td>
<td>N465 N467</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Geriatric and Gerontology content gaps:

**GERONTOLOGY**

- Evidence-based practice
- Use of technology
- Global healthcare
- Health promotion and wellness
- Improving communication

**NURSING**

- Nutrition and normal aging
- Pain assessment and management
- Frailty and continuum of care
- Functional assessment tools
- Measurement of competency educational outcomes

**SOCIAL WORK**

- Appreciating the differences in types of work between and within disciplines.
- Being flexible in team decision-making.
- Change in partner institutions and core faculty.
- Competency based teaching is new approach in these programs.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Project will provide models of assessing competencies in curricula, gap identification, and curricular materials that can be adapted and adopted by other institutions.
- Two year and four-year nursing programs use exactly the same standards for nursing student competencies.
- By using competency-based teaching methods and student assessments we will have a clearer understanding of how well we are preparing graduates to do their work in the field of aging.