ASSESSING GERONTOLOGY COMPETENCIES: A PILOT STUDY

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BACKGROUND/RATIONALE

Twenty years ago the seminal work, Core Concepts and Principles of Gerontology, (Hochheiser & Smith, 1979) was released. Since that publication, a number of professional gerontologists have identified the need for the development of competency-based education programs. Such programs, as detailed in Damron-Rodriguez, J.A., 2006, Moving forward: Developing competency-based education programs, are essential to ensuring the quality of training for those entering the aging field.

Scholarship and Research

Aging Studies Instruction

• Develop statements of relationships between problems and solutions
• Match theories with situations in which theories would be applicable
• Work effectively with other professionals to provide necessary services and resources for aging citizens
• Evaluate popular media for scientific accuracy to provide appropriate expert opinion to clients
• Interpretations of the various aging processes for the public and other professionals
• Conduct, utilize and disseminate applied research to improve practice
• Behave ethically in relation to clients, colleagues and the profession
• Relate personal, social and/or professional value systems in research and practice
• Identify current ethical issues in the field of aging

APPLICATION/PRACTICE

Operationalizing Competency Standards

Each of the 15 essay questions was operationalized for specific gerontological knowledge and skill categories. The essays were first analyzed by the first author and then independently reviewed by two others. This is a strategy for measuring the gerontology skill outcomes they identify for graduates of professionally oriented programs. Specifically, it operationalizes their skill outcomes by creating a strategy for measuring the gerontology skill outcomes they identify for graduates of professionally oriented programs.

Validation of Scoring Rubric

The next phase of the study involves assessing the construct validity of the Wendt et al. (1993) competency domains in a future phase of the analysis. The psychometric properties of the current scoring rubric should be examined as a developmental pilot study, the numbers of student respondents and essay answers are quite acceptable for developing the scoring rubric and for other purposes, and the scoring rubric is replicable. Wendt, Peterson & Douglass Corez Organizing Principles (Domains) and Skill Outcomes for Graduates of Professionally Oriented Programs

Structure/Contexts/Heterogeneity

Methods and Procedures

Responsible students (N=40) enrolled in the San Francisco State University (SFSU) Department of Sociology were asked to develop essay questions on a variety of topics related to gerontology (i.e., scientific, philosophical, ethical, and social). These essays were then analyzed for quality.

CONCLUSIONS, NEXT STEPS

The initial results point in a number of areas that demonstrate the potential of using a scoring rubric for assessing the quality of student responses to essay questions. This methodology will be used in the future to assess the validity of the essay questions and assess the construct validity of the competencies. A number of additional raters will be added to this study to increase the reliability of the findings. As a result of the findings, this study is being expanded to include other raters (i.e., professionals in the field of aging) to assess the validity of the essay questions and assess the construct validity of the competencies.