

Orienting health promotion course structure to maximize competency development

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Author biography

Dr Maycock is a senior lecturer at Curtin University. He has a history of dedication to teaching which has been recognized by numerous university awards and is fortunate in that he is surrounded by colleagues who are as dedicated to student success as he is. He is experienced in the delivery of public health programs internationally and has worked in Brunei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, and Singapore.

Abstract

This paper outlines how nationally identified health promotion competencies have been used to guide the development and review of the Bachelor of Science degree in Health Promotion at a leading Australian university. This research is unique in that no other University in Australia has used the competencies in this way.

Each unit within the Bachelor of Science (Health Promotion) was assessed to determine the extent to which it contributed to the development of health promotion competencies. The range of competencies was mapped and gaps identified. Student and expert advisory committee feedback was sought and compared to the mapping results. This process led to changes in course content, the sequence of units and the processes of assessment and class interaction. Students were orientated to the concept of reflective practice and have been encouraged to map their own competency development through the use of an evidence guide.

The changes resulted in enhanced student outcomes and changes in student and staff culture. It resulted in improved synergy between units and a focus on developing competent practitioners. The use of identified national competencies has enhanced the content, sequence and processes used in the training of health promotion professionals. Students graduating from this program are able to demonstrate to employers the competencies desirable in a health promotion practitioner. Further the exposure to the concept of reflective practice should ensure they are life long learners. Consideration should be given by other trainers to ensure that graduates of health training programs meet minimum competency requirements.