

Assessment of Intercultural Learning within an Interdisciplinary Empathy Course within an Honors College

Objective: The objective was to assess the intercultural learning of students enrolled in an interdisciplinary, active learning course with a focus on empathy and healthcare within an Honors College.

Methods:

This 2-credit course met twice weekly for active-learning session for 16 weeks. Topics covered included cultural dimensions, mindfulness, learning styles and four intercultural core competencies. Assignments included an intercultural development plan, on-line discussion board reflections for three required service-learning activities and completion of a Cultural Competence Badge. Students assessed their empathy using several different scales and completed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessment at the beginning and end of the course.

Results: Seventeen students with 11 different designated majors participated in the course. The majority of students (82.4%) were female and all were at least classified as a sophomore. The average baseline IDI Perceived Orientation (PO) was 121.49 compared to 126.61 at the course end. The class IDI Developmental Orientation (DO) average at course onset was 94.96 compared to an average of 104.01 upon course completion. Fourteen (82.4%) students demonstrated an increase in IDI DO. The range of positive increase in IDI DO was 0.54-22.59 points with the average change being 11.3 points.

Implications: The majority of students demonstrated intercultural growth after course completion. The IDI assessment results demonstrate it is possible to help students grow their intercultural skills which include empathy in a classroom setting. Future plans include offering this content as a pharmacy elective and integrating the intercultural learning activities across the pharmacy curriculum.