



Curricular Transformation: A model from the CSWE Gero-Ed Center

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**The CSWE Gero-Ed Center is supported by the
John A. Hartford Foundation of New York City, USA*



Models of curriculum change

- Specialization
 - Graduate learning that builds on foundation content
- Integration
 - Placing specific content separately in strategic locations in the curriculum, but not within all foundation courses – “Add On”
- INFUSION
 - Content is poured into the foundation curriculum to permeate and alter it—specific content is present in every aspect of the foundation curriculum

Infusion “IS”

- Gerontology “embedded” in:
 - Course description
 - Course goals and objectives
 - Foundation competencies/learning outcomes.
 - Each class session’s description/objectives



Curriculum Transformation

- Goal: long-term change and institutionalization
- Aim: to realign the learning experience with the desired (changed) outcomes so that learning is fundamentally altered
- Involves building intersections between one content area and another
- Must be congruent with each program's learning environment and culture

Long Term Reward

- Infusion models take longer than integration or specialization models to implement
- Infusion is most effective in institutionalizing content
 - Difficult to remove embedded content vs. add-on content
 - Especially important in considering faculty turn-over and other academic issues

Gero Infusion

- John A. Hartford Foundation
 - Geriatric Social Work Initiative (GSWI)
 - CSWE Gero-Ed Center
 - NYAM Practicum Partnership Program
 - Scholars, Fellows, Pre-Dissertation Fellows
 - Nursing
 - Medicine

Gero Infusion

- CSWE Strengthening Aging and Gerontological Education for Social Work Project (SAGE-SW)
 - 1998-2004
 - Surveyed 946 educators and practitioners to develop the *CSWE SAGE-SW Competencies* (65 competencies)

Competencies

- What graduates are able to **do** based upon knowledge and values learned in BSW and MSW foundation classes and field curriculum

“Use empathy and sensitive interviewing skills to assess social functioning (e.g., social skills, social activity level) and social support of your client.”

Gero Infusion

- CSWE Geriatric Enrichment in Social Work Education Program (GeroRich)
 - 2001-2006
 - Funded 67 BSW & MSW programs to infuse gero into their program
 - Forms the foundation of the “Planned Change Model”

Gero Infusion

- CSWE National Center for Gerontological Social Work Education (Gero-Ed Center)
 - 2004 – current
 - Builds on accomplishments of SAGE-SW and GeroRich
 - Refined and reduced foundation competencies list from 65 to 39
 - Over 1000 faculty participants

CSWE Gero-Ed Center

- Curriculum Development Institutes
- Gero-Ed Institutes
- eLearning
- Gero-Ed Forum & Gero-Ed Track
- Textbook Project
- Accreditation Project
- *Aging Times*

Process of Curricular Change

1. Planning Phase
2. Implementation Phase
3. Evaluation & Dissemination Phase
4. Sustainability Phase

Planning Phase

- Assessment
 - Input from faculty, students, community
- Select appropriate competencies
- Develop Action Plan

Implementation Phase

- Implement Action Plan

Examples of Infusion

- Diversity and social justice courses articulate intersections:
 - Age, race, gender, functional ability, spirituality and sexual orientation, with health and economic disparities across the life course
- Human Behavior course can be turned “upside down” to begin with old age

Evaluation and Dissemination Phase

- Measure to what extent you achieved your goals
- Incorporate into your research agenda for dissemination

Sustainability Phase

- Build toward institutionalization of long-lasting changes

Key Features for Success

- Identify the need – “selling point”
- Address organizational barriers
 - Time, resources, curriculum structure, reaffirmation self study, diverse faculty teaching styles, other demands
- Congruence with program's organizational culture
 - Mission, curricular goals, and objectives

Factors Impeding Success

- Inadequate time/attention
- Fixed preconceived notions
- Programs unwilling to move beyond specialization approach
- Inability to build on intersections
- Gero-faculty who did not collaborate with other non-gero faculty
- Entrepreneurial organizational culture
- Reaffirmation self-study

Lessons Learned

- Process similar regardless of program size or type
- Inclusion of field in addition to classroom learning
- Pedagogy – learning the best ways to teach the material
 - Experiential most effective

Lessons Learned

- Evaluation most effective when incorporated into existing mechanisms
- Mentoring important for dissemination
- Scholarly potential not related to size or nature of program

Lessons Learned

- Sustainability more broadly defined than funding
 - In-kind: meals, speakers, space
 - Building intersections with other populations (children, addictions)
- Support needed for marketing
- Acknowledgment led to commitment and sustainability



For infusion resources related to gerontology & social work, visit:
www.Gero-EdCenter.org

