INCORPORATING 2022 COMPETENCY FOR THE REGISTERED DIETITIAN NUTRITION, 3.6 INTO A NUTRITION SKILLS LAB: IMPACT ON STUDENTS KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE LEVELS

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Abstract
Since the development of new accreditation standards by the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND) became effective June 1, 2022, nutrition educators have the task of ensuring new curriculum and learning activities are incorporated into their programs. Standard 3.6, “Conduct a swallow screen and refer to the appropriate health care professional for full swallow evaluation when needed”, is a new competency based on recent additions to the Standards of Practice in Nutrition Care, resulting in limited research being available to nutrition educators on this practice. The purpose of this project was to create a nutrition skills lab where Dietetic Internship (DI) students participated in a both a lecture and a lab, in conjunction with the assistance of a Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), to measure a perceived increase in knowledge of the subject matter and competence in demonstrating the actual competency. The students were assisted by the lab instructor and SLP to learn how to properly screen patients with swallowing difficulty and determine if the patient was appropriate to continue with the DI student conducting the screening or if the patient needed to be referred to an SLP. Following the lab, students provided qualitative feedback on their experience, which indicated that what they practiced in the simulation would better prepare them for their clinical rotations. The institution of this nutrition skills lab may prove beneficial to other nutrition educators who are seeking to adopt methods to incorporate this new competency into their curriculum.

Objective
After completion of the lab, DI students will be able to recognize patients at high risk for swallowing difficulties, then to identify signs and symptoms which warrant a safe swallow screen, indications for a modified diet, or indications for referral to a Speech Language Pathologist for further evaluation when beyond the scope of the RD practice.

Methods
Table 1: Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Plan</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Allotted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lab 1</td>
<td>SLP role: review of high risk patients, indications to contraindicate, review decision-making tree; watch video of RDN.</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab 2</td>
<td>DI equipment: Standardized patient, water, applesauce, gelatin, ice chips, COP, spoons, napkins</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab 3</td>
<td>Students practice thickening liquids to honey, nectar, and pudding consistency</td>
<td>20 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab 4</td>
<td>Students watch all perform swallow screen(s) on SP</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Evaluation Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Did not perform</th>
<th>US</th>
<th>1pt</th>
<th>2pts</th>
<th>3 pts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student 1</td>
<td>CRDN 3.6: Student is able to adequately conduct a swallow screen (simulation).</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 2</td>
<td>CRDN 3.6: Student is able to adequately conduct a swallow screen (simulation).</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student 3</td>
<td>CRDN 3.6: Student is able to adequately conduct a swallow screen (simulation).</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion
The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition: Revised 2021 Standards of Practice and Standards of Professional Performance for Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (Competent, Proficient, and Expert) in Nutrition Support states that the RDN at proficient or expert level of practice may evaluate need for a modified barium swallow study (SOP 1.3B) and then make a referral to a speech language pathologist following the organization’s process (SOP 3.9B). The RDN collaborates with the interprofessional team members (e.g., physical, occupational, speech therapy; social services; psychology; or dental services) to facilitate referrals to optimize nutrition care as indicated (SOP 3.2B1). The Revised 2017 Scope of Practice for the RDN supports the RDN’s assessment of a patient’s nutritional status working closely with interprofessional team members (e.g., ability to swallow, in the care of patients with dysphagia with the Speech Language Pathologist.

Conclusion
The lab enabled DI students to list which patients were good candidates for a swallow screen by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) and which should be referred for a full swallow evaluation. Nutrition simulation and skills labs can provide opportunities for students to practice required skills in a safe, non-clinical, environment to better prepare them for their clinical rotations and practice.

Results
All DI Students were given a score of Advanced Beginner (AB) on the above rubric line item, “CRDN 3.6: Student is able to adequately conduct a swallow screen (simulation).

My statement in a graduate student in Speech Pathology and was impressed at how well I understood the Yale Swallow Protocol. I feel we will be better prepared for my clinical rotation based on this exposure.” Dietetic Internship Student, Beau Landry

The swallow lab was beneficial for my clinical rotation. I had an opportunity to witness two Modified Barium Swallows (MBS) and I had the background knowledge regarding patients who were appropriate and not appropriate for bedside swallow evaluations.” Dietetic Internship Student, Desiree Kern

References
[9] Iowa Department of Public Health. (2021). Speech and Language Pathologist. Available at: https://www.idph.gov/professional-regulations/certification-licensure/occupations-speech-language-pathologist-