Honours education in health care studies
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Honours education in health care studies: what defines an excellent allied health care professional?
How a profile for the excellent Allied Health Care professional can be developed, in order to improve teaching in an honours programme

- Introduction and background
- Method
- Participants
- Results
- Conclusion and discussion
Introduction

Honours programmes:

Selective programmes designed for motivated and gifted students who want to do more than the regular programme offers (Wolfensberger, 2015)

Key words:
- critical thinking / academic competences;
- building community;
- freedom and autonomy (Wolfensberger, 2011).
Honours Talent Programme Healthy Ageing:

- extracurricular programme (30ECTS) in which students from health care studies, nursing an social studies work on challenging projects.
- aimed to guide students to become the excellent professional of the future.

Which characteristics differentiate an excellent health care professional from a regular, competent professional?
Background

Hanze Talents Leading the Change (2011)

Research project covering all schools of the Hanze University of Applied Sciences, in cooperation with the research group Talent Development in Higher Education and Society.

Aim:
Develop evidence-based descriptions of professional excellence for the professional domains related to the different schools of the Hanze University.
What defines an excellent AHCP?

Which characteristics differentiate an excellent AHCP from a competent professional?

→ professionals’ perception
→ typical, differentiating characteristics
→ observable behaviors
→ general descriptions as well as domain specific aspects
Method

Research plan:

1. Literature search on professional excellence

2. Focus group discussions: 3 consecutive discussions with professionals

3. Delphi survey: validating the concept profile by experts
Method

Phase 1

Focus Group 1
Focus Group 2
Focus Group 3

Concept Profile

Phase 2

Delphi 1
Delphi 2

Result

Characteristics of an Excellent Allied Health Care Professional

Professorship Talent Development in Higher Education and Society
Participants

Focus groups

- Group 1: 9 participants
- Group 2: 5 participants
- Group 3: 7 participants

N=21: 6 physiotherapists; 2 oral hygienists, 7 speech therapists; 4 diagnostic radiographers and 2 dieticians
Method

Professorship Talent Development in Higher Education and Society

Phase 1
- Focus Group 1
- Focus Group 2
- Focus Group 3

Phase 2
- Concept Profile
- Delphi 1
- Delphi 2

Result
- Characteristics of an Excellent Allied Health Care Professional

Group of specific performance characteristics
The characteristics are:
- essential to describe excellence
- important but not essential to describe excellence
- not relevant

CVR: \[
\text{ne} - \frac{N}{2} \\
\frac{N}{2}
\]
Participants

Delphi survey

Expert panel: 34 experts in total
- Survey 1: 29 respondents
- Survey 2: 27 respondents

Experts: policy makers, coördinators, researchers, lecturers, care insurers
Method

Phase 1

- Focus Group 1
- Focus Group 2
- Focus Group 3

Concept Profile

Phase 2

- Delphi 1
- Delphi 2

Results

Characteristics of an Excellent Allied Health Care Professional

group of specific performance characteristics
Results

Excellent Allied Health Care Professional

- Innovative
- Intropective
- Broad perspective
- Evidence driven
- Sharing knowledge
- Communicative
- Cooperative
- Initiative
The excellent AHCP:

- a professional that acts efficiently and effectively in complex and new situations;

- based on the assumption that the excellent professional is a competent AHCP by nature.

The additional characteristics define the element of excellence
Discussion

Implementation in the Honours Talent Programme *Healthy Ageing*

- different working forms;
- discussions with professionals and honours-students on professional excellence in practice;
- discussions with students on their perspective on the characteristics described in the profile?
Perception of honours students: a first impression

Recognition: innovating, initiating, overview in complex situations
New: communicating, cooperating, sharing knowledge

“All AHCP should do this. These are professional skills that you learn during your education. For example ‘communicative’: is this excellence? For me it’s clear: if you are a competent health care professional, you can do this”.

April 2016 COHERE Profile Excellent AHCP
Perception of honours students

- works as a guideline
- instrument for reflection
- means to develop personal goals
- self confidence

“This is the final aim. If you read this [profile], than you know ‘Oh, this is where I am aiming at’. Kind of a guideline (…). But it should be clear that you should not have to meet this aims at the start. It is important that this is the final goal”.

April 2016  COHERE Profile Excellent AHCP
Developments in the professional field and alterations in the population of students lead to adjustments

For instance:
- internationalisation in relation to the Excellent AHCP
- nursing students and social work students joined the programme and use their own profile
Take home message

*How a profile for the excellent Allied Health Care professional can be developed, in order to improve teaching in an honours programme*

An evidence based description of excellence can be used as a reference for personal improvement for honours students:

- gives direction
- instrument for reflection
- helps to formulate personal goals
- self confidence

- serves as a guide for faculty too

