Introduction

Understanding the influence of diverse culture is very important for physical therapists to achieve excellence in clinical practice as the population in the United States is becoming more diversified. The American Physical Therapy Association’s position statement calls for that “Members of the American Physical Therapy Association should demonstrate cultural competence.” The importance is also reflected in multiple professional documents such as the Evaluative Criteria for Accreditation of PT Programs of the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE). However, teaching and learning cultural competence can be challenging. Educational strategies need to effectively engage students, especially for students from a community with a less diverse population. We developed, implemented, and assessed a solution that used active learning strategies based on the current revolution of technologies. As the standard university course evaluations may not be sufficient to assess student learning using these innovative strategies, we previously completed the course assessment using the California Brief Multicultural Competency Scale (CBMCS). However, assessment of student progression was not possible due to the limitation of the course schedule. The purpose of the current project is to assess the progression of students as ongoing efforts in the course assessment.

Methods

Active learning activities using various technologies were developed to improve student engagement when teaching students to become culturally competent. Briefly, the students were provided with a list of animated video developing tools, such as GoAnimate, Powtoon, and Movizu. The students were grouped in pairs to develop a short animated video to teach a cultural competence contents covered in the course, such as a cultural competence model or a cultural related to physical therapy. The students presented their projects in the Annual Physical Therapy Departmental Diversity Event. CBMCS was administered to the students (n=30) at the beginning of the course and the end of the course to assess their progression.

Results

The average total score of CBMCS increased from 55.2 (SD 6.3) to 65.0 (SD 6.6) with statistical significance (p <0.01). The Scale consists of 21 Likert questions (ranked 1-4) divided into 4 subscales: Culture Knowledge, Cultural Sensitivity, Cultural Awareness, and Nonethnic Skill. The average Culture Knowledge subscore was 11.1 (SD 2.4) which was below the proficient threshold of 12 and increased to 13.8 (2.3). The average Cultural Sensitivity subscore was 9.2 (SD 1.1) which above the proficient threshold of 9 and increased to 10.2 (SD 0.9). The average Cultural Awareness subscore was 16.9 (SD 2.0) which was below the proficient threshold of 18 and increased to 19.7 (SD 2.3). The average Nonethnic Skill subscale was 18.7 (SD 3.5) was below the proficient threshold of 20 and increased to 21.6 (SD 2.5).

Conclusions

The data indicated that the active learning strategy based on technologies was effective to engage the current generation of students in understanding and applying the concepts of cultural competence in physical therapy practice. One of the next steps of this project is to compare the results with the data from Clinical Performance Instrument, which assesses student performance, including cultural competence, during their clinical education experiences.