Abstract

The facilitation of learners from different professional groups requires a range of interprofessional knowledge and skills (e.g. an understanding of possible sources of tension between professions) in addition to those that are more generic, such as how to manage a small group of learners. The development and delivery of interprofessional education (IPE) programs tends to rely on a small cohort of facilitators who have typically gained expertise through 'hands-on' involvement in facilitating IPE and through mentorship from more experienced colleagues. To avoid burn-out and to meet a growing demand for IPE, a larger number of facilitators are needed. However, empirical evidence regarding effective approaches to prepare for this type of work is limited. This article draws on data from a multiple case study of four IPE programs based in an urban setting in North America with a sample of neophyte facilitators and provides insight into their perceptions and experiences in preparing for and delivering IPE. Forty-one semi-structured interviews were conducted before (n = 20) and after (n = 21) program delivery with 21 facilitators. Findings indicated that despite participating in a three-fold faculty development strategy designed to support them in their IPE facilitation work, many felt unprepared and continued to have a poor conceptual understanding of core IPE and interprofessional collaboration principles, resulting in problematic implications (e.g. 'missed teachable moments') within their IPE programs. Findings from this study are discussed in relation to the IPE, faculty development and wider educational literature before implications are offered for the future delivery of interprofessional faculty development activities.