

Project Title: Developing an Interprofessional Community Health Prevention Learning Project
Medical University of South Carolina
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Summary: The goals of this project are to provide health professions students (Colleges of Pharmacy, Medicine, Nursing, and Health Professions-Physician Assistant and Health Administration programs) with an interprofessional learning experience designed to increase their knowledge and skills in interprofessional community health care collaboration. This learning experience introduces students to collaborative health promotion/disease prevention with a focus on childhood obesity prevention.

Specific student learning objectives are:

- Recognize the value of interprofessional health care collaboration.
- Discuss the value of a community health approach to healthcare and prevention, including work with community groups.
- Participate in an interprofessional community health service learning project.
- Recognize sociocultural elements relevant to community and individual health.
- Discuss ways to address youth obesity through nutrition and physical fitness.

Progress

1. In 2007-2008 seven interprofessional teams totaling 26 students (PharmD, MHA, PA, and medical students) completed the ISLP activity. The activity continues this year as a formal part of all programs involved at MUSC and will be expanded to community learning sites around the state.
2. Curriculum Development: All four planned curriculum modules have been developed: a) teamwork and interprofessional collaboration; b) community health approach, including working in partnership with communities and community groups; and c) Prevention education addressing Childhood Obesity. The curriculum includes web-based modules and three classroom sessions where students discuss the modules and engage in an introductory team building exercise. Students also work together during two-three additional sessions on a community-based prevention education project.
3. Three learning sessions have been developed and tested with all 26 pilot students.

Session 1 (3.5 hours) Facilitated by an AHEC student coordinator

12:30 pm	Lunch is provided. Team member introductions / Discussion of Module 1 “An Introduction to Teamwork”
1:10 pm	“Assumptions” Activity- acknowledging stereotypes of healthcare professionals
2:00 pm	Introduction to the Service-Learning Project, “Junior Doctors”- Scotty Buff, PhD
2:40 pm	Teamwork exercise: complete the project AIM and Measures, assign work
3:30 pm	Plan the next session

Session 2	(3 hours)	Facilitated by an AHEC student coordinator
12:30 pm		Brownbag lunch.
12:45 pm		“Team Zoo”: understanding personalities and how they affect teams
1:10 pm		Prevention Discussion: Each team member presents his/her work regarding the community project (5 min), allows the group to discuss the work (5 min), and then gives the individual feedback (5 min)
2:30 pm		Teamwork exercise: revisit the AIM, refine the measures, and assign new work
3:15 pm		Teamwork check-up using the Team Skills Evaluation Instrument

Session 3	(3 hours)	Facilitated by an AHEC student coordinator
9:00 am		Each student presents his/her work.
9:30 pm		Team Skills Evaluation and discussion
10:30 pm		Teamwork exercise: Where is the project going? What are the next steps ?
11:30 pm		Feedback to faculty: What went well? What could have been improved?

4. A Facilitator’s Guide has been developed and finalized for the faculty-facilitator leading the three learning sessions with instructions for the individual activities as well as tips for facilitating group learning.
5. A Student Guide to ISLP and Junior Doctors of Health has been developed with prevention education data, teaching resources and data collection materials for the school-based nutrition and activity project.
6. The interprofessional faculty team has held 5 meetings to review the curriculum and feedback from the pilot groups of students.
7. An interprofessional faculty team has created a university-wide set of *Team Competencies* and subsequently an 18-item *Team Skills Evaluation Instrument* which is being piloted in the Jan-Feb rotation cycle.
8. An interprofessional faculty team has created a handbook resource for university faculty to assist them in introducing interprofessional learning and team skills into their curricula.
9. Students’ community health project work: “Junior Doctors of Health”
During the 2007-08 academic year, the community health project work focused on an elementary school teacher health awareness and exercise program. Student developed an exercise program and nutrition education curriculum designed to transform the teachers into health role models. The program was well received. Students worked directly with elementary students in the spring and summer to increase physical fitness and improve nutrition through the “Junior Doctors of Health” curriculum.
10. A facilitator workshop to train health profession coordinators throughout the state to facilitate interprofessional teams in community-based health promotion was developed and 2 workshops and 2 conference calls were held.
11. Evaluation: All 26 students evaluated the experience. At the conclusion of the third classroom session, students completed an evaluation of ISLP and their work together as a team. The ISLP evaluation instrument contained 6 items asking students to indicate their level of agreement (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree) regarding a) activities associated with the learning experience (e.g., teamwork module, “assumptions activity” to learn about other professions, overall organization,) and b) project goals (e.g., improvement of teamwork skills, help in understanding other professions, and increased appreciation for interprofessional collaboration). Students were asked to rate the effectiveness of their teamwork on the project (poor, fair, good, excellent). Students were asked to complete the following open-ended questions:
 - 1) One new feature of teamwork learned during the experience,

- 2) One new aspect of a profession different than their own learned during the experience,
- 3) Strengths of the learning experiences,
- 4) How the learning experience could be improved.

Means were calculated for the closed-ended items and themes were analyzed for the open-ended items. The mean score for the overall organization of the experience was 4.2. Students indicated the experience had improved their teamwork skills ($x=4.5$), helped their understanding of professions different than their own ($x=4.3$), and increased their appreciation for interprofessional collaboration ($x=4.5$). The “Assumptions Activity” was perceived positively in its capacity to help students better understand professions different than their own ($x=4.5$). The web-based teamwork module was perceived moderately valuable to their learning ($x=3.3$). Students found understanding each others’ strengths and communication styles were important to team work. Aspects of professions that they learned during the experience highlighted improved knowledge of specific professions. The strengths of the learning experience focused on the interprofessional nature of the experience and working together as a team. Scheduling of sessions was a theme for improvement.

Important Decisions Made:

1. Junior Doctors of Health pursued additional grant funding to sustain the program in Charleston and expand it to other sites in the state. Funding was obtained.
2. ISLP and Junior Doctors will be launched statewide for the 2008-09 academic year with participation from key stakeholders (Colleges of Pharmacy, Medicine, Health Professions, MUSC administration, AHEC, and SC elementary and middle schools.)

Lesson Learned / Surprises:

1. The effectiveness of the individual session activities and their success in assisting group formation is dependent on the skills of the facilitator. Since this interprofessional project will be introduced in the spring to other education sites in the state, a training workshop will be planned for the future facilitators in those sites.
2. Early student input in the planning phase of the project predicts more student ownership in the implementation and outcomes of the project.
3. Scheduling of interprofessional students for this activity was hard work but was not as difficult as initially anticipated. All four program calendars were scanned for “overlap” times when students could be available to work in teams. Flexibility is essential.
4. AHEC is an invaluable resource for community-based prevention education.
5. Students are very receptive to and enthusiastic about prevention education in an interprofessional community setting.
6. The collaboration of an interprofessional team of faculty to create the educational activity provides program and content expertise, and philosophical harmony.