Blending interprofessional education and population health: Helping students gain interprofessional skills and confidence

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This work was supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number UF1HP28513 for Nurse Education, Practice, Quality and Retention.
From Silos to Collaboration for veteran health

**Objective:** Identify innovative and practical strategies to blend interprofessional education (IPE) with population and community health.
Many graduates of health science programs seem to lack the skills and confidence to incorporate multiple providers’ perspectives when designing coordinated care outcomes (Cahn, 2014).

An **IP faculty teaching team** developed **four independent hybrid modules** based on the 2011 **IPEC competencies** (IP Education Collaborative Expert Panel 2011) **blended into veteran population health**.

A **longitudinal cross-sectional study** using the Interprofessional (IP) Attitude Scale and anecdotal data to study student perceptions of IP work **over four consecutive semesters**.
Distinct Diverse Sub-Culture

- Possess a unique set of roles & responsibilities
- Defined ethical code
- Specific language & communication practices
- Expect teamwork

IPEC Competencies
(Interprofessional Education Collaborative)

- Professional roles & responsibilities
- Professional code of ethics
- Intra- and Inter-professional communication
- Teamwork & Collaboration

Why Veteran Population?

Triple Aim
Improve Patient Experience, Improve Population Health, Reduce Cost
Four independent modules (ethics, roles, communication and teamwork)

Veteran community members design case studies & volunteered to be standardized patients

Learning experiences occur online and face-to-face using classroom, clinical and community settings

Examples of the learning experiences include

- Veterans who experienced sexual trauma,
- Environmentally acquired conditions (e.g., cancer, stress, amputation, head trauma)
- Observation of dynamic IP teams modeled by VHA Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACT)
Student Willingness to Work Interprofessionally

Interprofessional Attitude Scale (IPAS)
- 37 Likert-type questions
- Subscales:
  • Teamwork
  • Roles & Responsibilities
  • Biases
  • Community Centeredness;
  • Diversity & Ethics
- Pre-Post Course
- 4 consecutive semesters

Anecdotal Data
- Six structured questions
- Perceptions of professional obligations
- Barriers to IP work
- Collected through
  • End of course surveys
  • IP team quizzes
  • Reflection papers
  • Video reports
  • In-class presentations
  • Observed face-to-face patient interviews

Nonparametric Calculations

Qualitative Description
Findings

• **IPAS:**
  – Nursing student cohort attitudes toward **teamwork, community centeredness, and professional biases** improved significantly with medium to large effect sizes (N = 162, $r = .33$ to $.62$).
  – Physical Therapy (PT) perceptions significantly increased on **communicating across cultures** (N = 17, $r = .49$)
  – Compare nursing with PT trended positively toward **teamwork, community centeredness, and bias** with small to medium effect sizes ($r = .14$ to $.27$)

• **Anecdotal:**
  – **Early** - Disconnects between various professions and healthcare systems
  – **Midway** - More aware of professional identity and blended responsibilities as a member of an IP team
  – **End** - Gain in understanding own and other professions’ practice and honed communication skills and IP collaboration
Take Aways

- **Shared learning** beneficial especially using small IP group projects
- **Intra- and inter-professional communication** key to planning coordinated care
- **Advocacy** for health care is more powerful when intra-professional voices join in
- **Decreased** perceptions related to *prejudices or assumptions about health professionals and/or students from other disciplines*
“I came to this class a little intimidated by the other disciplines....This fear started to fade away as I saw the other disciplines truly value my input. It gave me confidence when introducing an idea that I thought was important....We are all caring for one patient, and this experience helped me feel more confident approaching a professional outside of mine to help a patient meet their health goals.”
There is no one ideal IPE Approach

Pre-professional IPE curricula embedded within a content saturated education schema is challenging, yet possible through the shared commitment of IP faculty and the use of creative educational approaches.

*Long Lasting affects*
- Willingness to engage in IP work
- Ask the Question "Have you ever served?"
- Professionally thank a veteran for their service