Sight for Success: An Interprofessional Collaborative Team Approach to Promote Childhood Vision

Lenora McWilliams, PhD, MS, RN
College of Nursing, University of Houston, Sugar Land, TX, USA
Pat Segu, OD
College of Optometry, University of Houston, Houston, TX, USA
Daniel Price, PhD
The Honors College, University of Houston, Houston, TX, USA

Purpose: Eye health and vision play a critical role in childhood development. Uncorrected visual problems can interfere with learning and academic success, social development as well as health and well-being throughout life. The Sight for Success project used a two-tiered inter-professional collaborative team approach to increase awareness of undetected vision problems in school aged children and to provide infrastructure support to school nurses to coordinate follow-up care. The first tiered inter-professional team was composed of faculty members from three colleges of a local university who collaborated with the school nurses and nurse manager from a large independent school district (ISD). The second tiered inter-professional team included undergraduate and graduate students from the three collaborating colleges to integrate the multiple components of the vision screening process for students in the school district. The goal of the project was to identify students in the school district who needed follow up vision services and then address barriers to receiving corrective eye-wear.

Methods: Faculty members for the College of Nursing, College of Optometry and Honors College collaborated with the ISDs’ nurse manager, nurses from elementary schools within the ISD, and the clinical placement coordinators (colleges and ISD) to determine school placement sites. College students and faculty members of the university became volunteers for the school district. Once the elementary schools were identified as being a part of the Sight for Success project, the nursing faculty worked with the nursing clinical coordinator to assign nursing students to the schools. The coordinators for the Honors College and College of Optometry, then assigned honor students, pre-optometry students and optometry students in the graduate program to work at the designated elementary schools. Nursing students were certified by nursing faculty as vision and hearing screeners for the state. The team of volunteers including the pre-optometry students and undergraduate honors students completed the state vision screening certification program. As a pre-assessment, all students were asked to reflect and respond to a question regarding what they expected to achieve by working with an inter-professional collaborative team. Two nursing students were assigned to each of the nine schools and became the lead for the student inter-professional collaborative team. One nursing student called their identified school nurse to coordinate their clinical days and time. Three out of the nine school nurses requested nursing students only to work in their clinic on their first scheduled clinical day. During the following three weeks, the inter-professional collaborative team of honor students and pre-optometry and/or optometry graduate students joined the nursing students to complete vision screening. Vision screening was conducted for kindergarten, 1st grade, 3rd grade and 5th grade, as well as, children identified to be struggling in the classroom. After screenings were completed, a referral
log was created to notify the parents/guardians for those students who failed the vision screening. Parents/guardians were contacted by email, telephone calls and/or sending a referral home via mail.

As a post assessment, all students were then asked to reflect and respond to a follow up question regarding if their expectations of the inter-professional collaborative team were met, what they learn from working with other professional disciplines, and challenges that they faced.

**Results:** Pre and post assessment of students’ reflections and responses will be analyzed to determine themes. Current themes for nursing students include:

- Understanding and Acknowledging Various Perspectives,
- Learning Together and Sharing Experiences, and
- Challenges and Successful Outcomes

**Conclusion:** An inter-professional collaborative team approach benefits all members involved. The university students had the opportunity to engage and work as a team through the Sight for Success project. The students developed an understanding of different perspectives and scopes of practice, and the impact of social determinants on health. Members of the team were able to organize and structure large populations of elementary level students to conduct screenings while integrating and performing new skills. The school district and school nurses benefit as the elementary students’ screenings are conducted in a timely and effected manner. The elementary students benefit when they receive corrective eye-wear earlier in the academic school year which promotes their health and well-being and academic success.

**Title:**
Sight for Success: An Interprofessional Collaborative Team Approach to Promote Childhood Vision

**Keywords:**
Inter-professional collaboration, Promoting childhood vision and Vision screening

**References:**


Prevent Blindness.org. Children’s vision and eye health: A snapshot of current national issues. Summary

Abstract Summary:
Participants will gain a better understanding of the infrastructure and support needed to improve visual outcomes for school age children. The session will provide insight about the process, benefits and barriers of inter-professional collaborations between large institutions when developing, organizing, and implementing a vision screening program for elementary students.

Content Outline:
Purpose:
- Identification of the problem.
Methods:
- Structure of inter-professional teams
- Collaboration and coordination of vision screening program
Results:
- Pre- and post-assessment
- Current themes
Conclusion:
- Benefits of an inter-professional collaborative team approach

First Primary Presenting Author
Primary Presenting Author
Lenora McWilliams, PhD, MS, RN
University of Houston
College of Nursing
Assistant Professor
Sugar Land TX
USA

Author Summary: Dr. McWilliams is a content specialist in the area of simulation including high, medium and low fidelity. She has been involved in the development, implementation and debriefing of multiple simulated learning experiences and her research involves the use of cooperative learning. She has been a member of multiple inter-professional collaborative teams and currently holds a faculty position in a college of nursing for a tier one university.

Second Author
Pat Segu, OD  
University of Houston  
College of Optometry  
Clinical Professor  
Houston TX  
USA

**Author Summary:** Dr. Segu received her Doctor of Optometry degree from the University of Houston in 1992. She is the Clinic Director for the Kids Vision for Life, a vision collaboration project- See to Succeed.

Third Author  
Daniel Price, PhD  
University of Houston  
The Honors College  
Associate Clinical Professor  
Houston TX  
USA

**Author Summary:** Dr. Price has a philosophical background in social justice and cultural representations in science and has recently implemented an innovative approach to teaching community health workers alongside pre-health professional students through collaborative and project-based learning. Students and CHWs from his courses have been working on several projects with Houston schools, including the vision screening and follow up on the social determinants of health.