Purpose: The purpose of this service-learning project was to assess the effectiveness of the Community-Based Collaborative Action Research (CBCAR) framework in providing real-world learning opportunities for enhancing baccalaureate nursing students' public health knowledge.

Background: Service-learning teaches the value of leadership skills, demonstrates students' personal growth, academic achievement, and opportunity for strengthening interpersonal skills, self-efficacy, and social responsibility. Academic-community partnerships provide opportunities for students to apply newly learned skills in real-world settings. These opportunities meet a community's need and facilitate greater understanding of the nursing profession and meaning of being a professional.

Conceptual Framework: This case study analysis used the six-phase framework of the Community-Based Collaborative Action Research (CBCAR) to guide a community health needs assessment of a rural community within a service-learning project when students applied public health nursing core competencies.

Methods: The Community-Based Collaborative Action Research framework linked service-learning and community health needs assessment with public health nursing core competencies. Fifteen nursing students partnered with collaborative members. Student observational field notes and narrative reflections were analyzed qualitatively for fidelity to the CBCAR framework and to evaluate student public health knowledge. Community data and student stories were extracted from this comprehensive real-world, service-learning experience of students to provide meaningful data.

Community-Based Collaborative Action Research Framework

- **Partnership:** Modular Community Based Collaboration (MCBC) Collaboration forms/re-forms
- **Dialogue:** Research question & direction determined
- **Pattern Recognition:** Data collection & analysis
- **Reflecting on Evolving Pattern:** Evaluating actions & considering new questions
- **Insight Into Action:** Community dialogue about meaning of research findings
- **Dialogic:** Representation of research findings

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Results: Nursing students successfully utilized the CBCAR framework in collaboration with the critical access hospital and community members to design and conduct the community health needs assessment. By applying what they have learned from their education to a real community, they demonstrated successful development of critical think skill.

Conclusions: Community-Based Collaborative Action Research facilitates collaborative partnerships and relationships throughout the service-learning process. The CBCAR framework:

- **Provided a safe environment where open, non-judgmental dialogue encouraged and strengthened community voices which had not always been heard by health care professionals.**
- **Created space where meaningful work by community members, nurses, and researchers could collaborate to enhance the health and wellness of the rural community.**
- **Provided gratifying learning experiences for nursing students and nurse researchers which benefited community growth through dialogue.**
- **Promoted meaningful long-term relationships with those involved in the process.**

When nurse educators provide service-learning opportunities, students learn to recognize barriers and social determinants of health within the community, promote primary prevention, and use available resources to help improve societal health. Use of the CBCAR framework is recommended to facilitate academic community partnerships and relationships when designing and implementing service-learning opportunities.