“An Innovative Inter-professional Population Health Classroom Strategy: Neighborhood-based Partnership with North Portland Community Health Workers”

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1. Examine the contributions of inter-professional teaching strategies through a classroom partnership with CHW’s, students, and faculty to foster authentic relationships with community members.

2. Describe the planning and implementation process for the New Columbia Health Fair as an interactive partnership activity.
The goals of this inter-professional partnership supported bringing the “neighborhoods” into the classroom to strengthen students’ understanding of local vulnerable populations’ health needs, foster deeper cultural awareness, stimulate understanding of social determinants of health and how to develop strong community partnerships.

Project Aim/Purpose
New models of inter-professional preparation of nurses are needed for better integration of population health concepts (Tourse, Mooney, Shindul-Rothschild, Prince, Pulcini, Platt, & Savransky, 2008)

Interprofessional: “two or more professions associated with health or social care …team members are engaged in learning with, from and about each other” (Purden, 2005)

Community-campus partnerships have been demonstrated as an effective strategy to address society’s complex health concerns. Recently these partnerships have been grounded in CBPR – a collaborative approach where community and academia can partner as coteachers and colearners. (Zandee, Bossenbroek, Friesen, Bleck & Engbers, 2010)

“Community engagement bridges the gap between academia and society by promoting application of skills to real life situations” (Kolomer, Quinn, & Steele, 2010)
Population – 27,689
Median income - $33,220
Median age – 31
Diverse population – over 21 nationalities
Education level – high school or lower
Primary employment – service jobs

North Portland Neighborhood & Population Context
Community Health Workers (CHW’s)

• “Frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community served.”
  (APHA, 2009)

• Institute of Medicine (IOM) has called for expanded roles for CHW’s to improve access to care, control costs and help eliminate health disparities
  (Balcazar, Rosenthal, Brownstein, Rush, Matos, & Hernandez, 2011)

• Select current roles include: liaison, participants in CBPR, case-finding, referrals, health education, coaching, patient navigation, promoters of wellness, capacity building, provide social support to reduce social isolation
  (Balcazar et al., 2011)

• Strength of CHW’s…commonalities of shared life experiences with persons in their communities
  (Ingram, Reinschmidt, Schachter, Davidson, Sabo, Guernsey De Zapien, & Carvajal, 2012)
Community Partnership Course Activities

1. Undergraduate course – Introductory Population Health Course
   - Utilization of virtual “Neighborhood” program
   - Mock health fairs for diverse populations presented by students
   - Mock community newsletters

2. CHW class presentations and attendance in both classes

3. Graduate Population Health Course
   - Collaborative population & community assessments by graduate students and CHW’s
   - Local health fair planned by graduate students with neighborhood CHW’s, community partner agencies, and nutrition course students

Methods
Preliminary Outcomes
Community Partnership Benefits

Benefits for Learning outcomes:

- “Helped to integrate concepts learned”
- “Applied what we learned to real life”

Class Partnership limitations:

- Some communication issues – students needed support and guidance to foster strong interactions
Overall Benefits:
- “Hearing voices from community”
- “Meeting actual community members”
- “Learning actual community concerns and communication challenges”

Promotion of Learning Outcomes:
- CHW’s role as key informants very supportive in population assessment
- “Good challenge for organizational skills/leadership”
- Enhanced communication skills
- Promoted development of networking & knowledge of resources

Recommendations for Future: Continue to do this!
- Transition some of these class experiences to clinical rotation
- Help CHW’s see this as a collaborative process with opportunities and limitations
- Open health fair to students from other health disciplines
- More meetings between CHW’s and students requested

Pre-Licensure Graduate Students
Benefits:
- “Got more involved in my community”
- “Stronger understanding of nursing students and the extent of their knowledge”
- “Strong partnership beginning”
- “Made me feel younger”

Future Recommendations:
- “Use a facilitator/broker to encourage partnerships”
- “More collaborative meetings between partners”
- “More interaction with workshops at both sites”

Community Health Workers
• Face-to-face class interactions with CHW’s and neighborhood partners far exceeded virtual community applications
• Benefits for community partners include a stronger, sustainable academic/community partnership
• Partnerships may enhance students’ commitment to future community engagement, teamwork, and collaboration skills ((Kolomer, Quinn, & Steele, 2010)
• Time consuming but very high rewards
• Faculty & students’ role in CBPR offers the foundation for strong partner relationships with community members

Implications for Future Educational Practices
Will continue to extend the partnership…

1. Emphasis on **collaboration** with community partners – all partners need an active voice in decisions

2. **More integrated class discussions/presentations between CHW’s and students** on course concepts such as health disparity, poverty, and vulnerability concepts

3. **Early decisions** for potential partnered activities
• More research is needed to generalize key elements of inter-professional education and its effectiveness (Kolomer, Quiz, & Steele, 2010)
• Innovations in educational strategies are needed to match the changes in community health care delivery models – CHW’s present opportunities for new partnerships to enhance students’ community competencies in culture, communication, assessment, and effective interventions


References
The community inter-professional neighbors…

- Village Garden/Janus Youth Program directors: Jason Skipton & Eca-Etabo D. Wasongolo
- Village Garden Community Health Workers, North Portland, Oregon (New Columbia, St. John’s Woods & Tamaracks)

University of Portland colleague…

- Kim Nguyen, nutrition adjunct faculty member, University of Portland