

Involving Students in a Community Engaged Learning Pedagogical Approach to Population Health and Primary Prevention



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Background/Purpose

- The purpose of community engagement for nursing students is to allow students to apply knowledge and skills to address a community need while further developing clinical skills through an experiential learning opportunity.
- TCNJ's Community Engaged Learning Requirement provides sophomore nursing students a 25-hour learning opportunity to hone civic and clinical skills via projects guided by content of nursing health assessment, nutrition and lifespan classes.
- Projects are guided by the learning objectives of the course as well as the needs of the community.



PICO

- In nursing students does community engagement improve clinical and communication skills?
- P- Nursing students
- I- Community engagement
- C- No community engagement
- O- Improved clinical and communication skills.

Methodology/Implementation

Experiential learning opportunity for sophomore BSN nursing students.

- Students spend 25 hours in community learning implementing projects, caring for populations with chronic conditions in a community setting:
 - Healthy walking club for special needs students on TCNJ campus.
 - SNACK: (Smart Nutrition and Collaboration for Kids) students participated in recess activities twice weekly with elementary school children.
 - TASK: (Trenton Area Soup Kitchen) to serve meals, teach health lessons, perform screenings and tutor students seeking their GED.
 - Project Teach: breastfeeding/parenting classes at a high school for teen mothers.
 - Dawn of Hope: Students provided instruction to girls in character development, self esteem, embracing identity, life skills, health and wellness.
 - Health Break, students had opportunity to work with individuals with intellectual disabilities in the CCS program. CCS is a college-based program designed for students with intellectual disabilities ages 18-25. Together the programs facilitator and the students provided the CCS students with self-esteem, stress reduction and coping techniques.

Results

- Benefits to students:
 - Cutting edge experience related to social determinants of health.
 - Opportunity to apply assessment and clinical skills in community based settings.
 - Networking opportunities for educational and professional development.
 - Improved social responsibility and citizenship skills
 - Improved to professionals and community members which offered new learning and career opportunities.
- Benefits to Faculty:
 - Development of new community partnerships.
 - Partnerships offered networking opportunities with faculty in other disciplines institutions and other healthcare professionals.
 - Partnerships offered new opportunities for research and publications.
- Benefits to Community Members:
 - The CCS students at TCNJ and Dawn of Hope students benefited from relationships formed with positive role models.
 - SNACK elementary school children benefited by increased physical activity during recess.
 - TASK participants benefited from improved health knowledge and academic assistance.
 - Project Teach moms benefited from increased child development, nutrition and parenting skills.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Nursing students benefit from early exposure to community engaged learning.
- Introducing community engaged learning early in a nursing students career allows opportunities for longevity with community organizations.
- Many students have continued volunteer service throughout their college career at their community engaged learning sites.
- Several students have continued involvement with the SNACK program as paid research assistants.
- Two students were co-authors on a faculty publication about the SNACK project.



Acknowledgements

The SNACK team would like to thank Novo Nordisk for funding our innovative approach to combating pediatric obesity. We would also like to acknowledge all of the collaborators at the Trenton elementary schools, TASK, Project Teach, Dawn of Hope and CCS.