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Advancing Students' Educational Experiences With Interdisciplinary Service-Based Learning: Impacting Special Needs Community

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Purpose: To provide education about service-based interdisciplinary learning. Service-based interdisciplinary learning is a type of learning experience where two or more healthcare programs work together to meet the needs of the community (Isibel et al., 2018; Jones, Li, Zomorodi, Broadhurst & Weil, 2018; Kurowski-Burt, Evans, Baugh & Utzman, 2017; Morin Fraile et al., 2017). Through the participation in a service-based, interdisciplinary learning project, undergraduate and graduate healthcare students from a private Christian university in Phoenix, AZ were able to donate 374 sports physicals to Special Olympics athletes in two separate events in 2018.

Methods:

The first event was hosted in a facility for individuals with special needs. Vital sign screenings were completed in a gymnasium and drapes were placed in a secondary room to provide a semi-private space for athletes to have physicals completed. The second event was hosted by the university on campus in a newly developed nurse practitioner clinical suite, which provided privacy for athletes. The private rooms allowed providers to conduct a detailed exam and gather findings that might've been missed in a less private setting. The university was able to have an additional use of space intended for students, to provide a need for the community.

By utilizing the principles of Knowles theory of andragogy (Knowles, 1990), students were able to participate in a transformative, active, interdisciplinary service-based learning experience. Knowles theory of andragogy is based on the premise that the adult learner must be actively involved in the learning process, know that their experiences are the foundation for future knowledge to be gained, knowledge gained is relevant and impactful, and through learning something new, the learner is solving a problem (Knowles, 1990).

Results: Student participants were provided an environment not only to practice the skills they learn in the classroom setting about their future roles and understand how the different healthcare professions work together to meet the needs of the patient (Isibel et al., 2018, Jones et al., 2018; Morin Fraile et al., 2017; Weiss et al., 2016). Student participants were also able to network with individuals in their future career settings to have a personalized understanding of healthcare careers. Students had the opportunity to work with a vulnerable population and see conditions that they might only ever read in textbooks. Students were able to assess the athlete's physical limitations and understand how these limitations affect the athlete's ability to participate in sporting events. By understanding how these limitations changed the athlete the students were able to have a compassionate understanding of the barriers these athletes face (Brown & Bright, 2017). Students gained confidence in their ability to perform their skills as well as pride in making a difference in the community they reside.

Future recommendations for Special Olympics Medfest events include continuing use in the university simulation clinic setting. The simulated clinic setting provided private rooms for athletes and a convent location for volunteers and staff. University student volunteers and staff were able to come and go as their schedules allowed due to being located on campus. In future events besides having healthcare students involved, the goal to include students from the college of education and college of business would be ideal. Students from the college of business could help with the organization of documentation and flow of participates, and the college of education students would have the opportunity to provide education to

students about healthy lifestyle habits. Having enough family nurse practitioners present to provide clinical hours for family nurse practitioner students would be ideal. Due to one-to-one clinical rules, clinical hours were not able to be provided to participants at these events in 2018. In future years, conducting events over two days will be ideal. Two days allows for smaller numbers to occur, providing participants with the opportunities to interact with the athletes personally, and for providers to not feel rushed during assessments. The number of athlete participants will be limited using name pre-registration before the event occurs. In 2017 we had 400 athletes register, and only 238 attended, in 2018 we had 300 athletes register and 308 were screened with 70 sent away. We found that schools were arriving that either did not pre-register or brought additional athletes than initially thought. To ensure accurate assessment findings and quality of volunteers and athletes experience, limitations will need to be addressed for 2019 events. Athletes did not like longer than expected wait times due to increased numbers and volunteers did not have a moment to take a break as needed during the day.

Conclusion:

Special Olympics athletes were able to receive medical screenings to provide the ability to participate in the sports events and screen for other conditions. All the Special Olympics athletes screened were from low-income areas, where they might not have had the screenings completed otherwise. Special Olympics athletes provided these screenings that allowed them to participate in the sporting events for the 2018-2019 season which are shown to increase the athlete's self-esteem and self-confidence. Medfest screenings provided opportunities for health promotion to occur. Service-based learning projects have been shown to strengthen interdisciplinary relationships and make a positive impact to the community served (Isibel et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Weiss et al., 2018). By providing physicals to the Special Olympics athletes at the MedFest event, students were able to learn about the profession they are going into, refine their skills under professional supervision, learn interdisciplinary relationships all while making a difference in the lives of the Special Olympic athletes.

By providing physicals to Special Olympics athletes, participants were able to ensure screenings were offered to a community that might not have had screenings otherwise due to financial limitations. Special Olympics has been noted to improve self-esteem and self-confidence in the participants. Participants from the previous year shared stories of their accomplishments along with the feelings of pride they had. Student volunteers were able to see the importance of screening at-risk populations as well as providing services for those in need. Through the utilization of Knowles theory of andragogy, undergraduate and graduate healthcare students were able to address the needs of the community while learning more about their future roles as members of the healthcare team.

Title:

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Keywords:

Health Promotion, Interdisciplinary Education and Service-Based Learning

References:

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Abstract Summary:

Provide education to nurse educators on interdisciplinary service-based learning to meet the needs of both the community and the students. This abstract will showcase an event conducted in Phoenix, Arizona that provided free sports physicals to participants of the Special Olympics with volunteers from undergraduate and graduate healthcare programs.

Content Outline:

I. Introduction A. What is service-based learning? 1. Service-based learning includes community service and academic learning in one environment allowing the students to be civically engaged and meeting the needs of the community while learning more about their profession at the same time (Morin Fraile et al., 2017). B. What is interdisciplinary education? 1. Interdisciplinary education promotes a collaborative learning environment with students from two or more different health care programs, working together to positively impact the patients served (Isibel et al., 2018; Jones, Li, Zomorodi, Broadhurst & Weil, 2018; Kurowski-Burt, Evans, Baugh & Utzman, 2017). 2. The use of interdisciplinary education allows the students to see that each part of the healthcare team needs to work together to meet the needs of the patients served. C. How the use of service-based learning to creates an environment for interdisciplinary education to occur. 1. Review of literature and how the literature relates to a service based interdisciplinary educational experience that undergraduate and graduate healthcare professions students from a private Christian university in Phoenix, AZ participated in to donate sports physicals to the Special Olympics. 2. Using service-based learning, undergraduate and graduate students from healthcare professions programs from a private Christian university in Phoenix, AZ were able to provide sports physicals to local Special Olympics athletes from low-income areas. This presentation will provide an overview of the literature and show how research applied to the service-based interdisciplinary learning experience conducted between the private Christian university and Special Olympics Arizona. II. Body A. Knowles Theory of Andragogy (Knowles, 1990) 1. The adult learner must be actively involved in their learning process. 2. The adult learners experience provides the foundation for new knowledge. 3. The new knowledge must be relevant and impact the learner's lives. 4. The focus of adult learning is problem-centered rather than content centered. B. How the use of service-based learning to meets the needs of students. 1. By having a faculty presence during service-based learning activities helps the students feel confident and made progress in their learning. Participants of service-based learning have been shown to feel more motivated to continue to

improve due to their faculty member's presence during the process (Kurowski- Burt et al., 2017; Morin Fraile et al., 2017). 2. Student participants of service-based learning activities report that they have increased understanding of the concepts of cultural sensitivity, health awareness, disease prevention, and lifestyle modification as well as an increase in their written and verbal communication skills (Weiss, Hajjar, Giordano & Joseph, 2016). 3. Service-based learning activities have been shown to increase student caring for vulnerable populations that the participants were not as compassionate before the service-based learning activity occurred (Brown & Bright, 2017). 4. Participants of the Special Olympics MedFest outreach event were able to practice the skills they have been taught in the classroom setting in an environment where they were able to work directly with patients and have faculty supervision. 5. Participants of the Special Olympics MedFest outreach event were able to network with professionals currently in the career setting to have a better understanding of what their future roles are. 6. Participants of the Special Olympics MedFest outreach event were to gain confidence about the skills they have learned and how to apply them in a community setting.

C. Interdisciplinary Education for Healthcare Students 1. The use of service-based learning has been shown to improve the teamwork skills of the students who participate in service-based learning events (Morin Fraile et al., 2017; Isibel et al., 2018). 2. Using service-based learning projects, students provides students with the opportunity to meet the needs of the community while learning how to interact with other specialties in the healthcare professions (Isibel et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2018). 3. After participation in service-based learning projects, students report an increased understanding of their professional role in the healthcare team (Weiss et al., 2016). 4. By using service-based interdisciplinary education, students learn valuable skills in collaboration, peer learning, and how to use interprofessional relation relationships in their future practice (Kurowski-Burt et al., 2017). 5. The participants in the Special Olympics MedFest outreach event were able to see how healthcare professionals and students from athletic training, pre-licensure nursing, and family nurse practitioners interact in the healthcare setting. Additionally, these participants were able to see how ancillary members from the business environment play a vital role in the delivery of healthcare services. 6. Participants who participated in Special Olympics MedFest outreach event practiced the skills of interprofessional communication, learning how to report findings to each other. Participants were able to see professionals who work in the roles that they are studying and ask questions about the professions they are currently studying. 7. Participants in the Special Olympics MedFest outreach event were able to see the importance that each specialty brings to the healthcare setting.

D. The use of service-based learning to meet the needs of the community 1. Participants of service-based learning projects have a positive experience and have noted that by having an interdisciplinary team approach they were able to use all the different skills they possessed to make an impact for their patients in the community setting (Isibel et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Weiss et al., 2018). 2. Community participants have positive experiences in service-based learning stating that they felt honored to be a part of the students learning experience, learned from the intervention provided by the students, and thought that the students cared for their well-being (Castaneda, Islam, Stetten, Black & Blue, 2017). 3. The Special Olympics MedFest events in 2018 donated 374 physicals to Special Olympic athletes in need that came from low-income schools in Phoenix, AZ. These athletes might not have been able to receive these screenings without the donation of time from all the participants. In 2017, 229 physicals were donated, and that increased to 308 in 2018 with 70 additional athletes needing to reschedule a different day due to the limited number of providers and time. On day two of the 2018 event, we donated an additional 66 physicals to low-income athletes with special needs. a) Part one was conducted in a center for individuals with special needs. Vital signs were completed in a gymnasium with physicals occurring in a separate room that had drape dividers to provide privacy. There were issues with noise control and stimulation, but stimulation control was better than the previous year when physicals were occurring in the gymnasium as well. b) Part two of the event was hosted at a private Christian University in a newly designed outpatient clinic that intended for the family nurse practitioner program. The clinic space provided a private room for the athletes to have the physicals completed and the quiet space allowed for the examinations to identify findings that would be difficult (i.e. murmurs) in an open screening setting. The university was able to see the flow of the clinic rooms and understand multiple uses of the space. 4. These screenings identified baseline functional status of the athletes as well as some with acute findings. The purpose of the MedFest event is to provide screenings for athletes who might not otherwise be able to be seen by providers due to financial and transportation issues. 5. By providing participation physicals to the Special Olympics athletes in need, the athletes can participate in Special Olympics events that are designed for everybody at every level. By having the ability to participate in events planned for their special needs, this

helps improve the self-esteem of Special Olympics athletes (Special Olympics, 2018). 6. Return participants enjoyed telling stories from last year and were more relaxed about the screening experience. Athletes and their teachers discussed the positive changes that occurred between 2017 and 2018 events. Athletes also shared stories with volunteers about their success in the Special Olympics. III. Conclusion
 A. What is service-based learning? 1. Service-based learning is a learning experience that combines community service and academic learning for its participants (Morin Fraile et al., 2017). B. What is interdisciplinary education? 1. Interdisciplinary education is a collaborative learning experience between two or more health care professionals providing students the opportunity to learn how to work together (Isibel et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2018; Kurowski-Burt et al., 2017). C. Using service-based learning and interdisciplinary education healthcare professions students were able to make an impact on Special Olympics athletes in low-income areas of Phoenix, AZ. 1. By participating in the MedFest event undergraduate and graduate healthcare professions students and healthcare professionals were able to donate 374 physicals total between two events that occurred in 2018 to athletes in need. Volunteer participants were able to understand interdisciplinary relationships while having a deeper understanding of their role in the healthcare team. Volunteer participants were able to network with health care professionals who were currently practicing in the setting that they wanted to be in as well.

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Any relevant financial relationships? Yes

Relationship	Description of Potential Conflict
Salary	Grand Canyon University- I am employed there and this was based with the university.

Signed on 11/11/2018 by *Stephanie Herrick Kays*

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Author Summary: Dr. Love is committed to the highest standard of providing innovative educational experiences for future nurse leaders and taught in nursing programs for 20 years. She is Academic Review Manager for DNP program and reviews direct practice improvement projects while working closely with students, faculty, and AQR reviewers to ensure quality and success of the students. She

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