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Research Brief

# Introducing the Interprofessional Education Collaborative Competency Domains Through a Dentistry and Nursing Partnership

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## KEYWORDS

interprofessional  
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collaboration;  
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**Abstract:** Collaborative health care teams lead to increased quality of patient care, safety, and positive outcomes; reduced health care costs; and greater satisfaction among patients and providers. New accreditation standards include interprofessional education as an important component of the health care curriculum; however, there remains a gap in academic preparation for interprofessional collaborative teams. The purpose of this study was to implement an educational experience that introduces concepts from the four Interprofessional Education Collaborative Competency domains. A convenience sample of prelicensure nursing students and predoctoral D3 dental students participated in a day long interprofessional experience where they engaged in team building exercises, problem-based learning cases, and a high-fidelity simulation case. All students completed the Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey and Attitudes Toward Health Care Teams Scale survey pre and post. Transcripts from the discussions were recorded and themes from the verbal transcripts determined. Seven nursing students and six dental students participated. There was a significant change in the Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey and Attitudes Toward Health Care Teams Scale scores from pre to post testing ( $p < .001$ ) for all students and the qualitative data corroborated the change seen in the scores. The results from this study demonstrate student attitudes, and understanding of the benefits to overall patient care through interprofessional practice begins with Interprofessional education.

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## Introduction

Collaborative health care teams lead to increased quality of patient care, safety, and positive outcomes; reduced health care costs; and greater satisfaction among patients and

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providers (Greiner, Knebel & Institute of Medicine, 2003). However, there remains a gap in academic preparation for interprofessional collaborative teams across health professions that subsequently impacts practice. Interprofessional education (IPE) is essential for preparing future health professionals to provide safe and effective patient care using a collaborative team approach. Inherent to IPE is reflective interaction between two or more disciplines (Freeth, Hammick, Reeves, Koppel, & Barr, 2005).

### Key Points

- Interprofessional education is essential for preparing future health professionals to provide safe and effective patient care.
- Nursing and dental students had significant increases in interprofessional collaborative competencies and attitudes following the IPE event.
- Student and faculty engagement is essential for implementing successful IPE events.

## Background

Despite the emphasis on IPE across health care professionals' curricula, many health colleges struggle with implementing true interprofessional learning experiences for their students. Core Competencies for *Interprofessional Collaborative Practice* (2011) have been established by the

Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC), sponsored by national organizations representing six disciplines, including nursing. Despite this, models for IPE integration and evidence-based strategies for effective IPE are still being developed.

Data support a team approach for providing effective patient-centered care, but this can only occur when team members are aware of each other's roles and responsibilities (Hall, 2005; IPEC, 2011; Suter et al., 2009). Understanding one's own role as well as other's roles on the team is a prerequisite for effective collaboration. By integrating the tenants of IPEC competency domains into the education and training of future healthcare practitioners, a greater emphasis may be placed on this collaboration as they move into practice.

The purpose of this pilot study was to implement an educational experience that introduces concepts from the four IPEC competency domains for a group of students from a college of nursing and college of dentistry. Two commonly utilized tools in interprofessional studies, the Interprofessional Collaborative Competencies Attainment Survey (ICCAS) and the Attitudes Toward Health Care Teams Scale (ATHCTS), were used to evaluate interprofessional competencies and attitudes toward teams, and participant's feedback was used to identify group themes.

## Methods

A mixed method design, with quantitative data from surveys and qualitative data from students' verbal discussions, was utilized. A convenience sample of predoctoral D3 dental students and prelicensure nursing students from a large public university in the Midwest United States were asked to participate in a day-long interprofessional experience. Eligibility criteria included health professional students from the college of nursing and the college of dentistry. A maximum number of participants for the interprofessional events was set at 14 students: 7 from the college of dentistry and 7 from the college of nursing. The day was broken into four major activities. The choice of activities was guided by concepts of building teams and from the *Interprofessional Education Collaborative Expert Panel* (2011) report. The morning activities, *Group Profile* and *New Planet*, are commonly used team building exercises that are teaching methods currently employed by School of Dentistry in their problem-based learning curriculum. The afternoon activities, *Problem-Based Learning Case* and *Simulation* are similar to examples of interprofessional activities suggested by the panel report to engage students in meeting the four IPEC competency domains.

### Group Profile

This was an interactive process that involved drawing a life-sized outline of a human body on a giant Post-It note. Various parts of the body were used to record words or events that represented topics relating to a body part (e.g., head = dreams or goals, shoulders = problems we have or face). Students were asked to comment on the eight areas of the body that represented various goals, dreams, or themes. Following this, the group discussed the similarities and differences of the group based on their profession. More information on the Group Profile Activity and other team building exercises can be found online at <http://most.ie/webreports/2014/TP/activities.pdf>, and requests for additional information are available on request from the authors.

### New Planet Activity

This is an activity akin to the movie *Interstellar* and is a Lifeboat Ethics exercise. The group was told that the earth's ozone layer was depleted, and the earth will not support life. In small groups, participants were asked to select 10 people from a list of 30 to populate a new planet. Then the larger group convened and discussed the similarities and differences between groups, focusing on individualism, group decision making, challenges, conflict, leadership, and values/ethics.

### Problem-Based Learning Case

The third activity was a small group discussion of a patient case. The patient was an 80-year-old female in good health

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