



Short Communication

A five-session interprofessional team immersion program for health professions students



Shelley Cohen Konrad, PhD, LCSW, FNAP^{*}, James T. Cavanaugh, PT, PhD,
Kira Rodriguez, MHS, Kris Hall, MFA, Karen Pardue, PhD, RN, ANEP

University of New England, 716 Stevens Avenue, Portland, ME 04103, USA

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ABSTRACT

The interprofessional team immersion (IPTI) is a developmental, longitudinal, and sustainable curricular resource that was designed in response to student requests for small, interactive, cross-professional learning experiences. Learning objectives are aligned with behaviors as identified in the Core Competencies for Interprofessional Practice and aim to increase students' understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, to apply teamwork principles, to refine communication skills for contextualized person-centered practice, and to utilize knowledge in the presentation of a collective project. Instructional formats include a team-building exercise, case-based learning, and simulation. Pre- and post-session evaluation measured students' attitudinal and behavioral changes. Rapid cycle program evaluation used student feedback to continuously improve the quality of the learning experience. Overall students found IPTI to increase their knowledge of other professions, build confidence in their team skills, and provide a basis for working collaboratively in their future workplace settings. Program evaluation feedback reinforced the efficacy of small group, interactive learning and full faculty engagement in IPE learning activities. Both a successful and sustainable shared learning activity, IPTI offers generalizable content, instructional approaches, and assessment strategies for other institutions seeking transformative team-based learning experiences.

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Format

Five sequential small group interactive learning experiences culminating in simulation sessions with standardized patient-s/actors, facilitated debriefing, and student presentations. IPTI is offered each semester to cohorts of 6–8 small teams, comprised of 6 health professions students selected from four clinical colleges.

Target audience

IPTI is designed for pre-clinical undergraduate and graduate-level students enrolled in health professions training programs, including osteopathic medicine, physical therapy, dental hygiene, occupational therapy, social work, dental medicine, nursing, pharmacy, and physician assistant. Students are selected by their departmental faculty and most commonly have had 1–3 years of

professional training. A representative faculty member from each participating program is required to be an IPTI facilitator.

Objectives

The broad objectives for IPTI are twofold. First, based on behaviors cited in the Core Competencies for Interprofessional Practice,¹ IPTI aims to provide opportunities for students to increase understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, demonstrate teamwork principles and skills, and apply integrated communication skills for team-based, person-centered practice in a simulated setting. Second, IPTI aims to provide a model for monitoring and continuously improving the quality and relevancy of campus-based, pre-clinical IPE learning activities in response to student and faculty feedback.

Activity description

IPTI was first launched as a pilot in 2014 by the University's Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC). It has taken place fall and spring semesters for two years and continues today as a

^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail address: scohenkonrad@une.edu (S.C. Konrad).

Table 1

Purpose, product, content, and facilitator role of IPTI sessions.

Session	Purpose and product	Learning activity	Facilitator role
“Orientation”	<p><u>Purpose:</u> Initial team meeting in which students learn roles and responsibilities of other health professions; practice interactive, cross-professional communication; address assumptions and biases; begin team development process.</p> <p><u>Product:</u> 1. Team name, maintained throughout all sessions; 2. Student-led discussion and preliminary case analysis.</p>	<p>Team-building exercise. Students introduce selves and describe what they are learning in their individual programs. Commonalities and emerging themes in professional aspirations serve as fodder for the development of a team identity name (e.g. “The Collaborators”).</p> <p>Introduction to Case Scenario. Students read and begin to discuss background information about the patient.</p>	<p>Model interprofessional communication; facilitate discussion among students; encourage curiosity by asking each other questions; encourage respectful questioning of assumptions; dismantle stereotypes; ensure that all students have opportunities for full participation. Establish a learning environment where multiple perspectives are honored, assuring that no one student or discipline monopolizes the conversation; lay the groundwork for productive interprofessional student-led communication for the remaining sessions.</p>
“Planning”	<p><u>Purpose:</u> 1. Teams conduct a comprehensive case analysis; 2. Teams plan for the upcoming simulated patient assessment (format and content of interview and brief, non-invasive physical examination, if needed; who will interact with patient).</p> <p><u>Product:</u> Initial team-based case assessment plan.</p>	<p>Teams are provided with additional information about the patient and the specific reason for the upcoming patient encounter. Teams gather additional key pieces of information not included or not well elucidated in the case information. To prepare for the patient encounter, teams decide who among its members will interact with the patient; who of the students will observe; and the format of how the time with the patient will be utilized. It should be noted that these sessions focus on IPE competency aims and not on clinical proficiency.</p>	<p>Facilitators step back, observe and support student-to-student interaction; redirect questions to student teams and refrain from offering opinions. Encourage full participation of students.</p>
“Simulation 1”	<p><u>Purpose:</u> Teams conduct 30-min team-based patient assessment, in which students implement person-centered communication and apply critical thinking and cultural sensitivity skills.</p> <p><u>Product:</u> Summary list of the team's collective findings and recommendations for the patient's plan of care.</p>	<p>Team-based patient assessments typically include an interview and an optional, brief, non-invasive physical examination. During the session, the patient unexpectedly reveals new information that the students have not encountered previously.</p> <p>Note: Some teams decide to divide the 30-min interview into two 12-min periods, so that different combinations of members can interact with the patient in smaller numbers. When this occurs, a 6-min huddle at mid-session is allowed for teams to reconvene as a whole for the purpose of garnering feedback.</p>	<p>Debrief collected information and team performance with team; offer feedback and field questions about next steps.</p>
“Simulation 2”	<p><u>Purpose:</u> 1. Teams conduct 30-min team-based follow-up meeting with patient and family member, in which students implement person-centered communication, critical thinking, cultural sensitivity and shared decision-making skills; 2. Faculty collaboratively conduct a summary debriefing of the first four sessions with all teams.</p> <p><u>Product:</u> Student reflections on IP attitudes, beliefs, and skills learned over the entire IPTI experience.</p>	<p>The team presents its assessment findings and recommended plan of care to the patient and family member. During the session, the patient and/or family member unexpectedly reveals new information that the students have not encountered previously. The meeting offers an opportunity for students to practice shared decision-making and difficult conversations with the patient and family member. Following the simulation, the team receives debriefing critique that includes feedback from the “patients” on the efficacy and delivery of their team communication.</p>	<p>Participate in summary debriefing.</p>
“Poster Session” (optional)	<p><u>Purpose:</u> Integration of IPE learning experience and use of team skills to develop and present final product.</p> <p><u>Product:</u> Poster or team oral presentation.</p>	<p>Optional presentation event, for which students choose to create and present a final academic product from their IPTI experience. Students seeking the IPE Honors Distinction typically participate.</p>	<p>Faculty serve as mentors for Honors Distinction applicants; read and approve all materials submitted.</p>

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