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Experiences in Teaching and Learning

## Description and assessment of a pilot interprofessional education case competition activity

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## ABSTRACT

**Background and purpose:** A case competition involving pharmacy and nursing students was designed as a pilot project to determine if this would be an effective way to implement interprofessional education (IPE) within the College of Health and Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

**Educational activity and setting:** Level 5 nursing students and third-year pharmacy students were invited to participate in a patient case competition activity as interprofessional teams. A modified version of the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) Competency Survey and the Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS) Questionnaire were administered before and after the activity.

**Findings and discussion:** Nineteen students (nine nursing, 10 pharmacy) participated in the case competition and completed both the pre- and post-survey. Responses to questions in the IPEC Competency Self-Assessment Tool suggest improved self-reported competence in the interaction and values/ethics domains.

**Summary:** Participation in this IPE case competition demonstrated improved engagement with other healthcare professional students as assessed by the IPEC Competency Survey and the RIPLS Questionnaire. This activity could serve as a way for other schools of pharmacy to implement IPE in their curriculum.

## Background and purpose

Advances in technology and science, coupled with an aging population with complex chronic healthcare issues, have necessitated an interdisciplinary approach to providing quality patient care. Recommendations from national medical organizations include restructuring the current healthcare system into a patient-centered system, which can provide evidence-based care in an interdisciplinary manner. Interprofessional education (IPE) is a starting point for creating a system that coordinates care using best practices to achieve the highest quality outcomes, as presented by the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC).<sup>1</sup> The Accreditation Standards and Key Elements for the Professional Program in Pharmacy Leading to the Doctor of Pharmacy Degree (“Standards 2016”) include guidelines that align with the IPEC report affirming that “all health professionals should be educated to deliver patient-centered care as members of an interdisciplinary team, emphasizing evidence-based practice, quality improvement approaches, and informatics.”<sup>2</sup> Also, The Essentials of Baccalaureate Education for Professional Nursing Practice provided by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing dictates IPE in Essential VI, stating, “Interprofessional education enables the baccalaureate graduate to enter the workplace with baseline competencies and confidence for interactions and with communication skills

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that will improve practice, thus yielding better patient outcomes.”<sup>3</sup>

Providing opportunities for health profession students to practice a team-based approach to caring for patients early in their training has clear benefits. Interprofessional collaboration has been shown to improve patient outcomes through competency in clinical skillsets such as communication, role identification, team building, and conflict management.<sup>4</sup> A health profession student needs to develop psychomotor skills specific to health disciplines, competency skills, and reflective practices to experience readiness for effective interprofessional collaboration. Knowledge of and attitudes toward IPE can impact a student's ability to learn.<sup>5</sup>

In order to address these needs and meet the Standards 2016 IPE requirement, several pharmacy schools have evaluated the role interprofessional activities play in developing students' abilities and attitudes regarding IPE.<sup>6–8</sup> Standardized patient cases have been widely used to meet accreditation standards related to IPE in various disciplines, as evidenced by multiple publications.<sup>9,10</sup> While the work presented here does not differ vastly from other similar reports, one major difference is the small number of programs involved and the fact that this was the first in-person, interactive activity conducted at our institution. Our experience may be most beneficial to those programs in the early stages of implementing IPE. At the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM), all health sciences programs are working to incorporate IPE into their curricula. The institution is a public university, not associated with an academic health sciences center. Currently, no program is offered in which students will ultimately be recognized as prescribers. An IPE task force within the College of Health and Pharmaceutical Sciences (CHPS) has been charged with developing an IPE plan for all interested programs (nursing, occupational therapy, and pharmacy).

In review of the literature, several instruments were identified in the measurement of IPE readiness. The Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS) in conjunction with a condensed IPEC Competency Survey (version 3) was utilized to determine readiness and achievement of IPE core competencies for pharmacy and nursing students. As stated by Lie et al.<sup>11</sup> “The RIPLS was designed to assess novice students' own attitude toward interprofessional education. The assessment of attitudes toward IPE is relevant in identifying the optimal stage to introduce and reinforce IPE to prepare students for future team collaboration and practice.” The IPEC Competency Self-Assessment Tool was designed to measure overall competency of the IPEC domains.<sup>6</sup>

## Educational activity and setting

The IPE Case Competition Activity at ULM was designed as a pilot project to determine if this activity could effectively serve as one component of IPE implementation in the curricula of interested disciplines within the CHPS. Four ULM pharmacy faculty members and one ULM nursing faculty member collaborated to design and conduct the activity, with the intent that the activity could be expanded to more disciplines and students in the future. This project was submitted for review and deemed exempt by the ULM Institutional Review Board.

### *IPE case competition activity*

Third professional year (P3) pharmacy students and Level 5 senior nursing students were invited to voluntarily participate in the IPE Case Competition. Students were sent an email with information about the competition and given information about it during class, and they were informed that they could register to participate by emailing a designated faculty member. Prior to asking for student volunteers, faculty determined that for logistical reasons for this pilot project they would take a maximum of 10 pharmacy students and 10 nursing students. Students were informed of this beforehand and also told that the winning teams would receive an award in the form of a gift card. As an additional incentive, service-learning credit was provided to all students who participated. Faculty planned to have teams of four students (two pharmacy and two nursing) for the IPE Case Competition. Faculty agreed to randomly select the participants if more than 10 from each discipline were interested in participating. Twelve pharmacy students and nine nursing students emailed to register; thus, after random selection, two pharmacy students were informed they were not selected to participate but would be sent an email if another student declined participation.

The activity was conducted during the Fall 2015 semester on a Friday afternoon during a four-hour time frame in which no classes or extracurricular activities were scheduled. Upon arrival, students were given their team assignment and asked to sit with their team. Teams were formed using random selection (random.org), and included four teams of four students (two pharmacy and two nursing) and one team of three students (two pharmacy and one nursing).

### *IPE introduction component*

At the time of the competition, IPE was not part of the required ULM School of Pharmacy (SOP) or School of Nursing (SON) curricula; thus, the majority of students were likely not aware of or familiar with IPE. To introduce the concept and goals of IPE to participating students before beginning the case portion of the IPE Case Competition, one of the faculty members gave an overview of IPE, highlighting the IPEC Core Competencies.<sup>1</sup> Next, students were given approximately 20 min to introduce themselves to their team members and discuss their own educational background, their health profession's role and responsibilities, and then identify areas of responsibility or ideas that they previously did not know about the other health profession. We asked one member of each team to share highlights of their discussion with all participants, focusing on things they learned about the other healthcare professions.

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