

A CURRICULUM MODEL FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH THAT ENGAGES STUDENTS AS WORKING VOLUNTEER MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS



Karen Karlowicz, EdD, RN
Phyllis Eaton, PhD-c, APRN, BC
Ann Campbell, MSN, CPNP

Old Dominion University
School of Nursing
Norfolk, VA

Barriers to a Positive Community Health Experience

The concept of community health was introduced too late in the curriculum for students to appreciate the role of the baccalaureate-prepared registered nurse in promoting health within a community setting.

The community health clinical experience was not optimal for students because:

- Experiences were limited to a four-week rotation
- There was inadequate time for students to become acquainted with the agencies and populations served before having to develop and implement specific projects

- Contracts with public health and government agencies for community health clinical experiences were becoming increasingly difficult to secure
- Many organizations were imposing unrealistic limitations on what students could and could not do while fulfilling their community health clinical experience with them

- Student course summaries consistently reflected a desire for more direct patient/client contact during the community health clinical experience

Curriculum Model

The Goal

- To develop a community health curriculum for the pre-licensure undergraduate students that promoted long-term partnerships with community organizations to improve the health of vulnerable populations

Curriculum Model

Features

- Two-semester curriculum in community health that begins in the 5th semester of the pre-licensure program and concludes in the last semester of the 6-semester program (senior level)

- Students are required to complete a total of 4 credits of community health that is presented in two, 2-credit courses each semester that combine classroom, seminar and clinical activities

Old Model

- Class time
 - 24 hours over only 1 semester
- Seminar time
 - 3 hours
- Clinical
 - 72 hours, 3 days/week, over 4 weeks

New Model

- Class time
 - 12 hours/semester
 - 2 hours every other week
- Seminar time
 - 6 hours/ semester
 - Time varies by site and instructor
- Clinical
 - 36 hours/semester

Clinical Objectives

■ First semester

- Assessment of needs related to identified aggregate
- Development of a proposal for planned interventions to meet needs of aggregate

■ Second semester

- Implementation of planned interventions
- Outcomes evaluation of interventions

Developing Partnerships

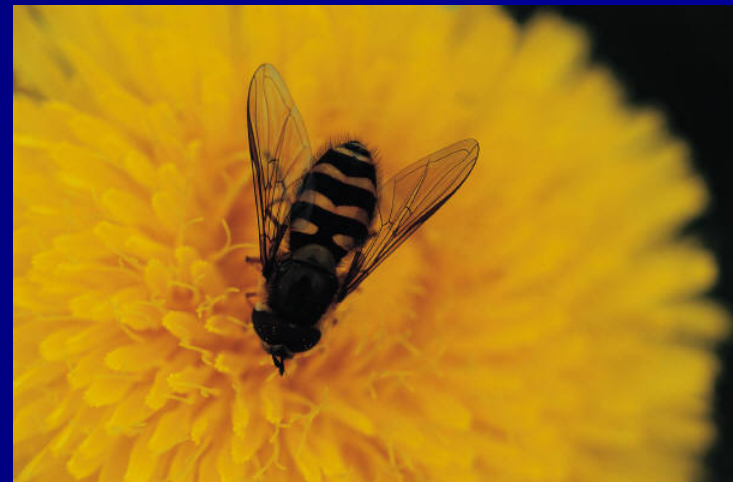
- Identify community organizations that serve a vulnerable population
- Consider non-traditional organizations such as volunteer coalitions, the court system, & alternative schools
- Select organizations that will enable you to:
 1. Meet needs for student learning
 2. Meet organizations' needs for accomplishing their mission.
 3. Sustain long-term relationship between the students, school and agency

Getting Partners to the Table

- Educate yourself about each organizations' needs and projects
- Educate organizational leaders about nursing education and goals for community health education
- Develop and present a formal proposal for what nursing students are capable of providing to the organization as working volunteer members

The Sales Pitch

You need worker bees, and we have the students (worker bees) who need meaningful projects that will make an actual contribution to the health of the community.



We want to contribute to the overall mission of the organization in a manner that allows the students to see the level of cooperation needed among a diverse group of stakeholders to affect health care practices within the community.



Initial Partners - Coalitions

What is a coalition?

- A group of concerned citizens and/or organizations working together to facilitate community change
- Can be grassroots or very sophisticated
- Usually has a formal structure – however, some coalitions start very informally
- Has a lifecycle – just like a business

Why Coalitions?

- Using coalitions to move community change works because of the investment made by community partners
- Partners can access a variety of resources that no one individual organization could access on their own
- The cumulative ideas of many are almost always better than the ideas of a few...

Why do Nurses Need to know about Coalitions and Community Groups?

- Coalition approaches to public health are common in our public health system, with the majority of CDC grants requiring them as part of public health initiatives
- Coalitions are an effective mechanism to promote change in the community – and proven to work
- The contributions of nurses are integral to trans-disciplinary community health efforts

Partnering Students with Coalitions

- Consortium for Infant and Child Health (CINCH)
 - Allies Against Asthma (AAA)
 - Injury Prevention workgroup
 - Playground safety workgroup
 - Car seat workgroup
 - Obesity Prevention workgroup
 - Covering Kids and Families (FAMIS)
- Eastern Virginia Perinatal Council

Other Partnerships

- Village Point Senior Housing
- Sentara Community Health & Prevention
- Norfolk Drug Court
- Chesapeake Care Free Clinic
- Faith-based

Student Projects

- Type of project depends upon
 - The organization's needs at the time students are involved
 - May involve implementation of short-term project or support continuation of a long-term project
 - The aggregates' needs as identified by the students and the aggregate
 - Priorities within the community

Accomplishments



Allies Against Asthma Workgroup



Students work with public housing tenants and management to address environmental asthma management issues.

Asthma education to Head Start preschool students



Playground Safety Workgroup

- Take Back Your Park Project
 - Developed tool to assess playground safety
 - Assessed playgrounds in Norfolk
 - Identified playground with greatest potential for improvement
 - Worked with parks department, community and local businesses to renovate playground



Covering Kids and Families Workgroup



Students attend various community events, including PTA meetings and health fairs, to provide information and complete applications for health insurance for uninsured children



Perinatal Workgroup

- Students conduct a 2-day teaching program for “at risk” new mothers Coronado School.
- Teaching focuses on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), sleeping environments, sleeping position (back to sleep), tummy time, and co-bedding



Obesity Workgroup

Students provided health and nutrition teaching at multiple schools and health fairs



Norfolk Drug Court



- Sessions 2x/month for non-violent drug offenders who have specific health needs
- Participants acknowledge students help in completing their drug court program

Community Health Day

- Held at the end of spring semester each year
- Involves ALL junior and senior students in an event promoting excellence in community health nursing practice
- Provides an opportunity for senior students to discuss outcomes of community health projects during formal oral presentations

- Facilitates the transition of junior students (rising seniors) to the community health experience
- Promotes community health within the School and the College
- Provides a forum where community health leaders can share in the students' successes

Benefits of New Curriculum Model

- Familiarizes students with long-term, grassroots community and/or neighborhood efforts regarding health promotion and disease prevention
- Provides students with the opportunity to work as part of a trans-disciplinary professional and lay team of health care advocates

- Establishes partnerships with a variety of community organizations dedicated to improving the health of the region
- Expands focus of nursing care beyond acute care facilities
- Enables School of Nursing to participate in community-wide efforts to improve overall health of region.
- Increases the visibility of the School of Nursing within the community

Recommendations

- School of nursing needs to be dedicated to curriculum with buy-in from all faculty
- Solicit retired faculty who want to remain involved with education to serve as clinical instructors for community health
- Introduce the concept of community earlier in the curriculum through brief lectures in other courses
- Start the experience earlier program