



Interprofessional Education for Freshman Nursing and Pharmacy Students: An Application of Ethics

By: Robin M. White, PhD, MSN, RN
Michelle R. Musser, PharmD, BCPS
Erin Petersen, PharmD, BCPS
Lisa L. Walden, MEd, MLS(ASCP)CM
Megan Lieb, MSN, RN

Background

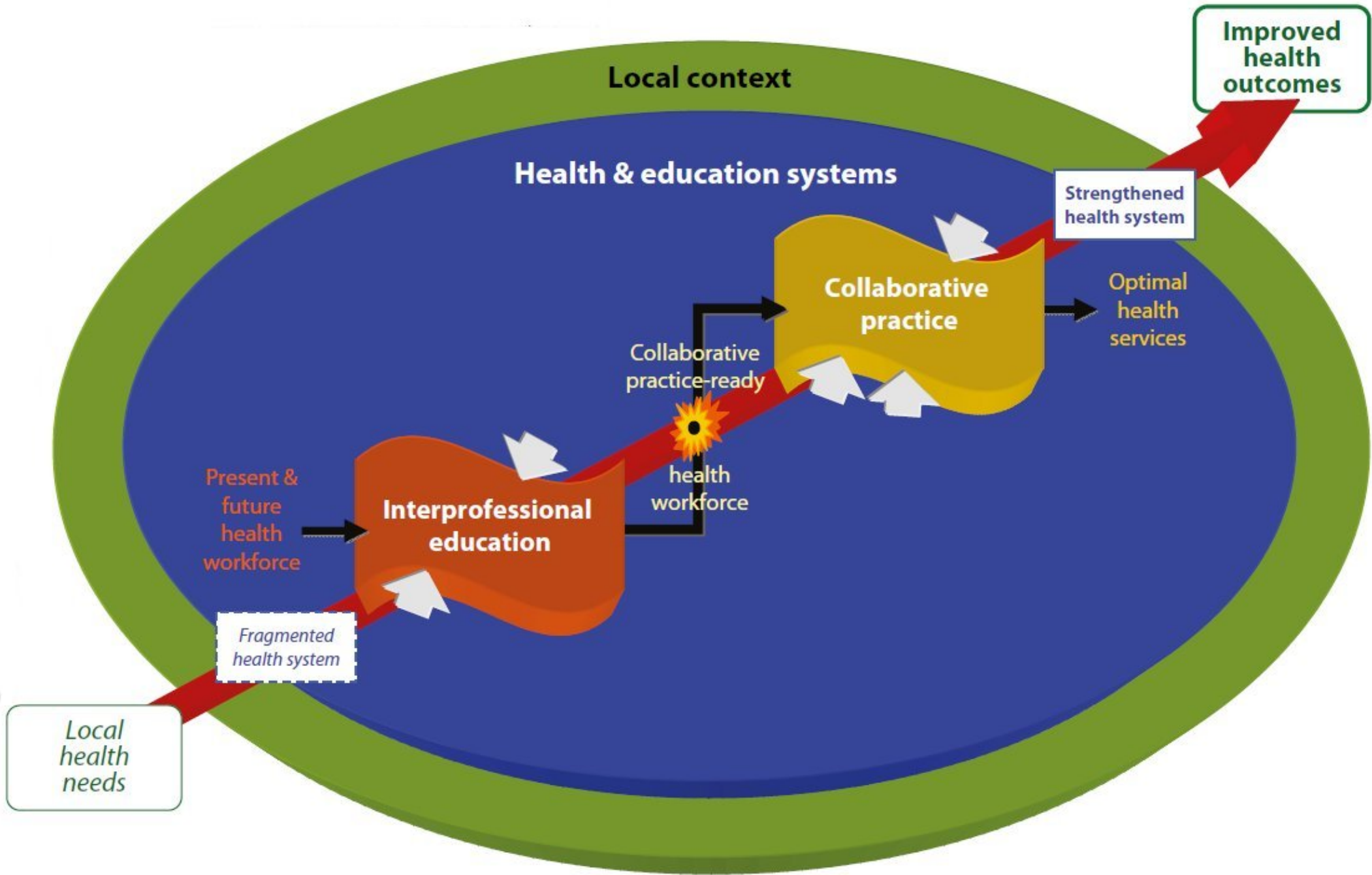
- In 2009, 6 national education associations of schools of health professions formed a collaborative to promote and encourage constituent efforts to advance substantive interprofessional learning experiences (IPE).
- IPE is designed to help prepare future health professionals for enhanced team-based care of patients and improved population health outcomes.
- By 2016, this initiative has grown significantly, even being mandated by some professions.

IPE as an Education & Practice Standard

- The **American Association of Colleges of Nursing**, for example, has integrated interprofessional collaboration behavioral expectations into its “Essentials” for baccalaureate (2008) master’s (2011) and doctoral education for advanced practice (2006).
- **National Pharmacy Education Leaders** completed intensive study of interprofessional education and its relevance to pharmacy education (Buring et al., 2009).
- “An essential component of patient-centered primary care practice is interprofessional teamwork. High-functioning teams require collaboration between physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, clinical psychologists, case managers, medical assistants, and clinical administrators...” (**Department of Veterans Affairs**, 2010, p. 2)

“It is no longer enough for health workers to be professional. In the current global climate, health workers also need to be interprofessional.” (WHO, 2010, p. 36)





Learning Objectives Relevant to Conference Goals:

- To create a coordinated effort across the nursing and pharmacy health profession curricula to embed essential interprofessional experience and content.
- To guide professional and institutional curricular development of learning approaches and assessment strategies to achieve productive outcomes for nursing and pharmacy students.
- To demonstrate a newly developed ethics activity for freshman students in nursing and pharmacy programs to exhibit interprofessional problem-solving.

Project Purpose

- To encourage students in the health care professions to work interprofessionally to better enable them to enter the workplace as a member of the collaborative practice team.



Ethics Activity Student Objectives

- Engage in respectful discussion with other professional students from different disciplines in small group format.
- Develop an understanding of commonalities and differences in the scope of practice and service delivery setting across their own and other professions.
- Reflect on their own code of ethics and compare it to another professions' code of ethics
- Develop a shared code of ethics for IPE collaboration
- Apply the shared code of ethics to an educational scenario
- Provide a basis for ethical and productive collaboration in future IPE experience



Description of Intervention/Program

- IPE activities were developed through a committee consisting of faculty and students from various health care majors at the institution.
- An activity for freshman students (N=152) was developed, focusing on each profession's code of ethics and application to ethical situations.
- Students completed a pre/post survey evaluating their readiness and perceptions of IPE, as well as evaluating the activities' effectiveness in effective collaboration using qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Specific Activity Components

Pre-exercise work

- Complete pre-survey in online learning system (RIPL)
- View the *Professional Ethics & Medical Ethics* lectures and *Introduction to Professions* slides (on-line)
- Fill in IPE worksheet

Exercise

- Students assigned to groups/ instructed to dress professionally for the activity
- Group should compose a single ***Code of Ethics for Interprofessional Education*** based on their discussion
- Apply the newly designed Code of Ethics to an ethical scenario

Post-exercise work

- Complete the post-survey in online learning system (RIPL) including a peer evaluation of group members

Ethics Activity

- Introductions/review of objectives and process of in-class activity: 5 minutes
- Development/submission of shared code of ethics: 15 minutes
- Development of shared response to ethical scenario: 15 minutes
- Discussion of shared code of ethics and ethical scenarios/
closing: 15 minutes
- **Total class time = 50 minutes**



Sample Code of Ethics Worksheet

What are the key principles or concepts of each code of ethics?	
Your Professional Code of Ethics	Another Professional Code of Ethics
What is the primary duty to the patient, client, family or community?	
Your Professional Code of Ethics	Another Professional Code of Ethics
How does the code of ethics address collaboration? Culture/diversity?	
Your Professional Code of Ethics	Another Professional Code of Ethics

Student Survey Results Post-activity:

- **What is interprofessional education (IPE)?** “Learning skills and other abilities alongside other healthcare professionals of different fields so that I can get a better understanding of how to work effectively with them in an actual healthcare setting.”
- **Why is IPE important?** “*IPE is important because it allows students of different disciplines to come together and see different approaches and opinions on a subject that both disciplines would have to deal with in the real world.*”
- **How will you use IPE in the future?** “In a workplace situation in the future I will have to work with other healthcare professionals, such as doctors and nurses.”
- **What did you learn during the IPE activity? Did it match your expectations?** “I learned how to effectively make decisions regarding the patient that follows both the pharmacy and nursing code of ethics. Â For the most part, the code of ethics of both seemed fairly similar with slight differences in a few points.”

Student Survey Results Post-activity:

- **What were some positives aspects about the IPE activity?** "Some positive aspects of this IPE activity were that we were able to work with other students that we would not normally come into contact with, and that it is relatively easy to collaborate with other healthcare students."
- **What improvements would you suggest for IPE activity?** "I would suggest that the IPE activity can be improved by including students from other majors besides pharmacy and nursing (for example, finding students who are interested in pursuing a pre-med track)."
- **Peer comments:** "Student B worked well with everyone in the group and gave ideas and suggestions as to how we should effectively combine the code of ethics of pharmacists as well as that of nurses."
- Student A seemed very knowledgeable on her code of ethics and role. She contributed some ideas/suggestions for the case. She seemed to work well with the group

Exercise Relevance to IPE & Practice

- First, the authors illustrated an IPE activity that can be implemented with lower level professional students.
- Second, the authors outlined a plan for continuous improvement of the IPE activity, looking beyond implementation to assessment and optimization of these initiatives.



Conclusion

- Based on both quantitative and qualitative feedback from the students, the freshman IPE activity assisted both pharmacy and nursing students to become a more effective member of the health care team.
- This exercise brought students from different health care programs together to problem-solve while applying a collaboratively devised code of ethics with an application-based activity to produce a robust experience.