Addressing Cultural Competency Through Service-Learning

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Objectives

1. Define service-learning and describe the goals of service-learning.
2. Differentiate service-learning from community service and clinical experiences.
3. Describe the framework for the implementation of service-learning.
4. Describe the approach one physician assistant program utilized to develop a service-learning program that fosters cultural competency.
5. Discuss how the traditional service-learning framework was modified for PA education.
6. Describe the results of the implementation of the service-learning program.
Cultural Competency

Definition

• Race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity and disability
• Required component of PA education
• ARC-PA standard (B1.06)

Integrating CC Training into the Curriculum

• clinical experiences, lectures, simulation, role-playing, case studies, and community service
Cultural Competency

Campinha-Bacote’s Cultural Competency Theory

• Students can not be taught to be culturally competent
• They must progress through stages in order to move towards being more culturally competent
• Framework involves 5 dimensions including:
  • Desire to understand cultures
  • Awareness in the recognition of cultural issues
  • Knowledge of beliefs and values of other cultures
  • Possession of cultural skills
  • Application of the skills in cultural encounters
Cultural Competency

Key to cultural competency training

• Actual application of cultural knowledge and skills by the students
  • Fosters understanding
  • Creates genuine interest
  • Improves competence
Service-learning

- Initially medical education focused on social aspects of disease (Muller)
- Shifted more to disease diagnosis and management
- Treating the patient & family than the disease process
- Community service has been used to involve the students in the community
  - Usually occurs for brief periods of time
  - Does not involve input from community
- Boyer has encouraged community involvement in education for years
- Concept of SL has emerged to address community involvement in educational process
Definition of Service-learning

- “Structured learning experience that combines community service with preparation and reflection.”

~ Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
Goals of Service-learning

• Prepare competent medical providers who are aware of how community issues affect health care
• Assist in improving the existing relationships between communities and educational institutions
  • Communities are steeped in distrust
• Produce better future global citizens
Service-learning Fosters Cultural Competency

- Increasing cultural awareness
- Providing a structured means to apply cultural knowledge and skills
- Gaining a better understanding of the social determinants of health that contribute to health disparity facing many patients
Theories of Service-learning

• 2 theories of thought revolve around the student activity
  • Involvement in health-care activities
  • Non-involvement in health-care activities

• One argument for health-care activities:
  • Students should be placed in health-care activities that foster a better understanding of health care

• True service-learning places students in experiences:
  • That are not a part of their discipline
  • Allows them to set aside their medical skill sets & knowledge
  • Genuinely focus on community issues
How is SL Different from Community Service?

- Service-learning is not required community service
- Blend of structured learning and service
- Key Components
  1. Learning objectives and service objectives
  2. Learning by both parties
  3. Developing future global citizens
  4. Completing reflections
  5. Focusing on community needs
  6. Involvement of the community partner
Key Components

1. Learning and service objectives should be designed by the university program with the community partner
   a. Mutually beneficial to both parties
   b. Mutual involvement

2. Mutual learning by both parties

3. Development of better global citizens
   a. Fosters a continued interest in community service
   b. Gain a better understanding of community issues facing future patients

4. Written Reflections
   a. Demonstrates student understanding of the community issues
   b. Forces students to analyze the issues and needs of the community
   c. Separates SL from volunteerism
Key Components

5. Identification of Community needs
   a. SL activity focuses on needs of the community

6. Community partners should be involved in:
   a. Identifying needs of the communities they serve
   b. Designing the learning & service objectives

Common problems when working with community partners

- Distrust intentions
- SL groups identify problems without addressing needs
- Things are being “done” to communities
- Instead of groups working “with” the communities
Framework for Service-learning

- Yoder in 2006 developed a framework for service-learning in dental education
- 10 Components of Service-learning
  - Link to education
  - Partnership with a community organization
  - Objectives for the service-learning activity
  - Preparation for the activity
  - Service activity by the students
  - Learning by both parties
  - Structured reflections by the students
  - Involving the community members
  - Evaluation of the service learning activity
  - Scholarship about project
Development of SL That Fosters Cultural Competency

• Establish a true service-learning component in the didactic curriculum that was structured and required
• Wanted the students to better understand the communities which they would be serving as medical providers

First Step was to decide:
• What was important to the program?
• What should the students accomplish with the service-learning?

Main emphasis
• Producing better medical providers who more effectively understood community issues and social determinants
Development of SL That Fosters Cultural Competency

• Program’s Goals
  • Occur across the life-span of patients
  • In underserved communities that were diverse

• 3 semesters in didactic phase

• Each semester represents a different life-span
  • Seniors, children, adults

• Investigated potential Community Partners
  • Promise Neighborhood – children
  • University District/ AARP – seniors
  • Safe Places – domestic violence survivors
Development of SL That Fosters Cultural Competency

- Designed SL activity and objectives with the assistance of the community partner
  - What they would like the students to accomplish as a result of the experience
- Established sustainability from year to year
- 2 hr training sessions were conducted at the beginning of each semester
  - How to work with....
  - Cultural competency
- Service-learning training manual was developed for each component
Development of SL That Fosters Cultural Competency

- 26 Students
- 3 groups of 8-9 students, one group for each life-span
- Students rotated each semester
- New cohort of students would enter the program and cycle would begin again
  - Ensured continuity and sustainability
- Set scheduled date/times & worked it into the curriculum
- Students were paired together and assigned M, T, W, or Th
- Required 1 hr a week for 10 weeks
- 15 week semester
Development of SL That Fosters Cultural Competency

- Written reflection completed after each weekly experience
  - Description of experience
  - How they felt about experience
  - What they learned
  - What would be beneficial as a future medical provider
- Debriefing with faculty facilitator
  - 8-9 students and faculty member met at end of week
  - 30-45 minutes in length
  - Allowed students to realize that others were experiencing similar experiences
  - Fostered learning
  - Allowed group to trouble-shoot issues together
  - Decreased formation of biases and stereotyping

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Promise Neighborhood

Community Partner Goal
- Assist the daycare children with reading skills before entering into kindergarten

PA Program Goal
- Provide the PA students with the experience of working hands-on with children before clinical rotations
- Improve cultural competency training through application
  - Children were from underserved area of the city
  - Variety of races and ethnicities
  - Some children with developmental delays

- Little Rock Children’s Library
Community Partner Goal
• Assist in decreasing isolation of seniors living in district

PA Program Goal
• Provide the PA students with the experience of working hands-on with seniors before clinical rotations
• Understand the issues that face seniors daily
• Improve cultural competency training through application
  • Seniors were from underserved area of the city
Safe Places

Community Partner Goal
• Assist domestic violence survivors through support groups
• Educate community members about prevention & empowerment

PA Program Goal
• Provide the PA students with the experience of working with individuals struggling with DV or empowerment issues
• Understand the issues that survivors face & their struggles
• Recognize the signs of abuse
• Improve cultural competency training through application
  • Individuals were from underserved area of the city
  • Many were struggling with other issues
Student Reflection Questions

• What part of the activity was most interesting/engaging today?
• What part of the activity was least interesting/engaging today?
• What happened today that surprised you the most?
• What did you learn today about the social, cultural, or economic issues facing the individuals within the community you are working with?
• How will this experience today influence you as a future medical provider?
Results of SL Implementation

• One semester has been completed
• Students completed 10 written reflections each
• Qualitative data from student reflections and weekly debriefing is being gathered
• Students have now entered into 2nd semester and with different community partner
• Community partners
  • All have continued partnerships
  • Very excited about the involvement
  • Trust is developing
  • Children enjoyed working with students
  • Seniors & adults enjoyed experience but also realized the impact on student education
Promise Neighborhood

What the students are learning......

• Enjoyed working with children/ connecting with them/ gaining trust.
• Observing the children improving in reading and seeing the transition.
• Observing and using different learning strategies.
• Realizing the impact we are making on the lives of these children.
• Showing interest in the children or asking questions improved attention spans.
• Realizing that children act differently daily and are unpredictable.
• Realizing that this experience is also boosting the children’s confidence.
• I was reading a story about sheep and that they could be black or white. One child said, “Just like us!”
• I had a stressful day but as soon as I started working with the children, it really brightened my day.
Promise Neighborhood

What occurred that will make you a better medical provider?

• Interaction is making me more comfortable with children.
• Seeing different levels of children at different age levels.
• Behavior changes daily, so I will not be so quick to judge my patients.
• Learning different communication strategies with children to keep them engaged and cooperative.
• I will not make assumptions about disabilities.
• Learning to compromise will increase compliance.
• Being flexible and adaptable is essential to working with patients.
What the students are learning......

• To listen better to what the seniors are saying
• Seniors become attached very quickly, and I realize the impact I will have on future patients
• Seniors are more comfortable with routine and generally dislike change
• I am surprised at the lack of involvement by their children in their lives
What occurred that will make you a better medical provider?

• I better understand the daily issues or struggles that seniors face
• I am becoming a better listener and understand why it is so important
• I have learned to have more patience
• I better understand how to really communicate with seniors
• I now realize the impact of isolation on seniors and how one person can make a difference
Safe Places (Domestic Violence)

What the students are learning......

• I have learned so much from the experiences of the group members
• I have a lot of respect for what the group members have gone through
• I have a better understanding of the struggle of power and control that the group members have lived through
• I can now relate to individuals that I thought were so different
  • They are in fact not different, but have just gone through different experiences
Safe Places

What occurred that will make you a better medical provider?

• I will not be so quick to judge things I do not understand
• I have a better understanding of what individuals have to go through to get out of DV situations and how I can assist
• I will be able to better recognize the signs of abuse with patients
• I better understand the psychological struggles that survivors experience
What did the PA Program learn?

Overall
• Sustainability, continuity & trust for partner was key
• Flexibility/ Adaptability
• Educate community more about PA Profession & education

Promise Neighborhood
• Changed training to focus more on learning strategies, reading techniques

University District
• Back up contact #s needed for seniors

Safe Places
• Different training was needed initially
• Changed a facilitation site
Modification of Traditional SL Framework

Framework for Service-Learning in PA Education
1. Purpose of the service-learning project/ program
2. Identification of a community partner with similar goals
3. Mutually beneficial service-learning activity with mutual learning for both parties
4. Sustainability of service-learning project
5. Developing structured objectives and planning with community partner
6. Training of students before initiation of service-learning activity
7. Required student-reflection writing component
8. Debriefing with students as a group after activity to decrease stereotyping
9. Evaluation of service-learning by all stakeholders
10. Scholarly activity about project to share ideas with educational community
Conclusions – Service-learning

• Method to produce better global citizens
• Train medical providers who more effectively understand:
  • social determinants
  • cultural, social, and economic issues in the communities
• Elevate cultural competency training to the next level
  • Place students within diverse communities
  • Develop a structured program
  • Foster application of cultural knowledge and skills
  • Encourage students to better understand community
• Assist the community partner’s with their goals
• Improve trust between university & communities
Conclusions – Service-learning

• Invaluable experience to the PA students
• This is the stuff we cannot provide in a classroom setting!
Questions?
References


References
