

Course Sharing: An Interprofessional Education (IPE) Perspective

The need for and benefits of interprofessional education (IPE) in the health professions have been recognized for many years. The PEW Health Professions Commission in 1998 identified the capacity of working in interdisciplinary teams as a competency to strive for in the 21st century. Indeed, IPE opportunities have increased in the new century. Although the focus of this presentation will be IPE in the healthcare setting, the same principles can be applied among other disciplines. Several studies have documented the benefits of IPE which can include raising awareness of the roles and responsibilities of all healthcare professionals, facilitating interprofessional communication, increasing cultural sensitivity, preparing students to deal with the complexities of teamwork and allowing disciplines to strengthen their identities.

Educational content generally taught in the health informatics and information management (HIIM) arena is sought by many disciplines across many universities. Opportunities exist for HIIM departments and programs to expand their academic influence within other disciplines through interprofessional course offerings. Curricula in health sciences such as nursing, health services administration, dentistry, public health, medicine, pharmacy, and computing/informatics are now offering HIIM courses. This expansion allows HIIM departments and programs to increase student exposure to HIIM, diversify the value of the HIIM department/program, showcase the exceptional HIIM faculty beyond the walls of the traditional HIIM department/program and create additional avenues for HIIM faculty to engage in research and scholarship across the university ecosystem. Engagement of HIIM faculty in multidisciplinary research is an important step towards HIIM professionals being recognized as high impact contributors to basic research, applied research and the acquisition of new knowledge.

Many organizations which accredit health professionals' educational programs have published requirements for interprofessional education into expectations for curricular content; thus the time is right to begin introducing elements of IPE into various curricula.

This presentation will walk participants through the various steps in developing interprofessional courses including identifying possible course offerings, exploring potential academic programs interested in course sharing, soliciting academic administration support, and balancing workloads for faculty. Challenges of interprofessional collaboration will be discussed and benefits reviewed.

The location of the health information management program within the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette offered a perfect opportunity to develop a legal and ethical aspects of healthcare course to nursing, health services administration and health information management students. A case study describing the introduction of the legal and ethics course will be presented and results discussed.