

Interprofessional Skills Development in Public Health Education: Expectations and Successes

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Introduction

Interprofessional practice, or IPP, describes relationships and communication

skills needed for diverse professionals to work together effectively. The implementation and evaluation of interprofessional education (IPE) are crucial in meeting the needs of today’s public health workforce. The IPE Collaborative released “Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice” to serve as a basis for introducing and evaluating interprofessional education in health professions (1). Previous studies indicate that multisystem thinking and action are vital. IPP is a central feature of healthcare practice across the globe (2). Two studies were conducted to explore students’ expectations and perceived successes throughout the course of their public health education.

Methods

Study A

Before and after an online IPP training module, participants were asked to define IPP and quantify their agreement with IPP-related statements using Likert scale ranks. Following the module, participants responded to one of six IPP related statement and applied IPP principles to a patient care scenario.

Study B

Data collection over a ten-year period provided students with core competency and program perception-based surveys upon entering and exiting their public health program. Using NVivo12 Plus software, qualitative thematic analyses for both studies were conducted separately (3,4). **Common themes in student responses for both studies were then identified.**

Learning Objectives

- Identify potential gaps and opportunities for the incorporation of interprofessional skill development in public health education.
- Evaluate students’ perceived importance of IPE as it applies to career success.
- Determine best practices in interprofessional knowledge delivery through student perceptions and successes.

Results

- Students expect to gain skills related to IPP during their education.**
- Students value IPP skills in a professional workplace.**
- Students understand the need to collaborate and learn from others to attain career success and serve the public.**

Table 1. Student’s educational expectations and related post-training themes.

Expected Outcomes (Study B)	IPP Theme (Study A)
Field experience opportunities to advance career readiness.	Interacting in a professional field.
	Building and maintaining professional relationships.
Develop skills to contribute to current public health issues.	Integrating families into patient care.
	Considering opinions of those with differing backgrounds and skill sets.
Attain public health communication skills.	Communicative problem solving.
	Promoting efficiency and quality in patient care through collaborative practice.

These studies were approved by Kansas State University Institutional Review Board #10234, #10862, and #10874.

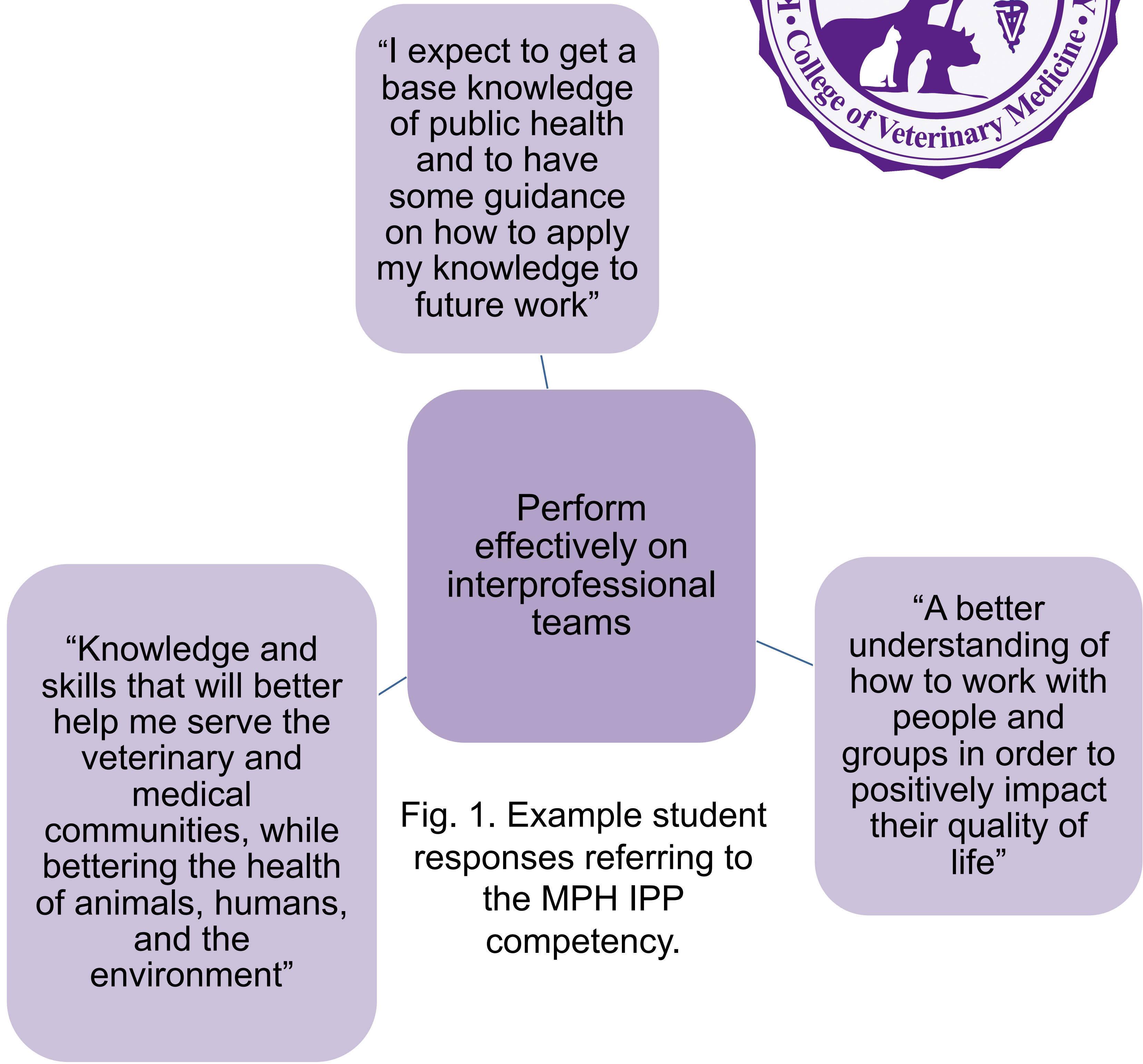


Fig. 1. Example student responses referring to the MPH IPP competency.

Discussion

- Online IPP training modules such as this one can help students meet their educational goals and achieve career success.
- Students who are introduced to IPP ideas have the potential to bridge previously discordant fields to solve the major issues of the future (5).

References

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