Interprofessional Education: Taking Active Learning Online

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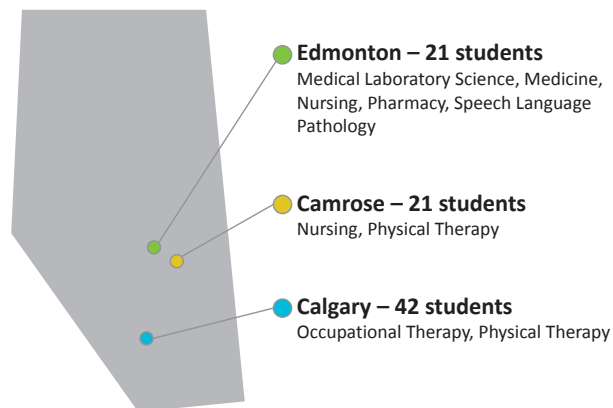
IPE Learning Pathway

UAlberta health sciences programs integrate interprofessional education (IPE) into the curriculum across faculties. We teach the competencies and skills needed to work in interprofessional healthcare teams. We run events and courses like INT D 410, the Interprofessional Pathway Launch, and Help! Save Stan.

Context

Edmonton – 21 students
Medical Laboratory Science, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Speech Language Pathology

Camrose – 21 students
Nursing, Physical Therapy

Calgary – 42 students
Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy

Each year, the INT D 410 Online Stream has approximately 84 students from the Calgary, Camrose (Augustana), and Edmonton (North) campuses. In the Winter 2018 term, facilitators were located in Edmonton (3), Calgary (2), and Wynyard, Saskatchewan (1).

Feedback

"I'm glad I took this course online – it forced me to be more active than I would have been in a regular class. I couldn't just show up. I had to be involved with my team." (Student)

"The teams gel quickly online. We see them work efficiently, develop observable skills, and demonstrate the course competencies." (Facilitator)

"I learned how to collaborate online and be productive. This will be useful for my clinical work and for working with people in my regulatory association." (Student)

10 Tips for Teaching IPE Online

1. **Support team process**. Teams may need extra time to get comfortable working together during the synchronous sessions. Keep teams together over the term. Encourage teams to post photos in their shared file space.

2. **Encourage collaboration**. Teams should meet outside of class time using their preferred technology.

3. **Customize the screen names**. Since there are no name tags or tent cards, students and facilitators change their screen names to include their discipline and their role for the current activity.

4. **Have a mix of disciplines**. Ensure there is a mix of disciplines on each team and that the activities are relevant to all the disciplines.

5. **Keep it interesting**. Have a variety of activities within each class and over the term.

6. **Use worksheets**. In Google Docs, create a worksheet with the activity instructions. Share it as a view-only file. One student from each team makes an editable copy for the team and facilitator to work on together.

7. **Keep it simple**. Write clear and simple instructions. With each facilitator working with multiple teams, it's harder for any one team to get their attention to ask questions.

8. **Allow extra activity time**. Teams may need more time to complete activities during class. Instead of, "Complete two case studies," try saying, "Here are two cases; choose one. If time allows, do both."

9. **Support the facilitators**. The coordinator meets with the facilitators before each class to review the activities, and again after class to debrief and seek suggestions for next time.

10. **Use supported technology**. Use University-supported technology so help is available. Arrange for tech staff to help students and facilitators during the synchronous sessions.

Guiding Principles

1. **Limit the tech**. Use as few technologies as possible, so students and facilitators get comfortable with them and can focus on the activities. Don't assume students are tech-savvy.

2. **Online is equivalent**. An online activity may be structured differently from its face-to-face counterpart, but it must teach the same competencies and present the same level of difficulty.

3. **Just-in-time preparation**. Meet with the facilitators the day before each class and review the activities. Use the same technology for this meeting that you use for class.

Example: Rapid Rounds

Face to face version: Two teams of 6-8 students participate. Team A reviews three patient cases. Four students present the first case, each from their discipline's perspective; a different mix of students presents the second case, and the third. One minute (max) is allowed per case. Team B observes and uses a structured format to give feedback. The two teams swap roles and repeat the activity.
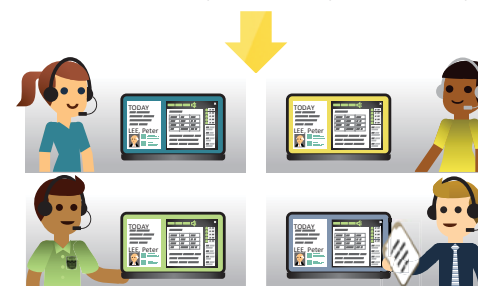
Online version: The core activity is the same as in the face-to-face class. However, students must change their screen names in Adobe Connect to include their discipline, e.g. "Sam Rose (PT)." Because of the lack of visual cues, students say their name and discipline when they speak, and verbally hand off to the next student, e.g. "Next we'll hear from Joe." They are given two minutes per case.