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Framework for Improving Interprofessional Communication Through Shared Learning Experiences

Tiffany Barrett

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, tiffany.barrett@unlv.edu

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Framework for improving interprofessional communication through shared learning experiences

Tiffany Barrett, PT, DPT
Department of Physical Therapy

Teaching Practice

Healthcare is shifting to a more collaborative approach that requires professionals to interact closely. This has required education to evolve to meet the students need for communication skills and to strengthen professional identity. Healthcare students who are encouraged to develop interprofessional communication skills through simulation-based learning activities can be expected to gain confidence and enter the workplace better prepared. UNLV students in the Doctor of Physical Therapy program (n=48) participated in a minimum of 6 different Interprofessional Education (IPE) learning activities within their first 2 years of didactic material. Creation of these innovative activities expanded beyond traditional pedagogy to enhance professional development in the learner.

The activities varied in 3 different categories:

- 1) **Small group interaction** (in-person and virtual)
- 2) Large group activities (participation in UNLV IPE Day).
- 3) Real-world application during clinical rotations.

Need it Addresses

Expanding out of one's educational silo is not specific to healthcare professions, but should be explored in all working professions across UNLV campus. Encouraging activities in the curriculum that span across departments can allow students to gain confidence in communication and develop professional identity.

Evidence it Benefits Students

After participating in interprofessional activities throughout the curriculum, UNLV DPT students (n=35) completed the Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS). The RIPLS is a 19-item, 5-point Likert scale self-reporting tool that assesses perceptions of healthcare students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding learning with other healthcare professionals. These results help show the benefit our students gained from these collaborative activities.

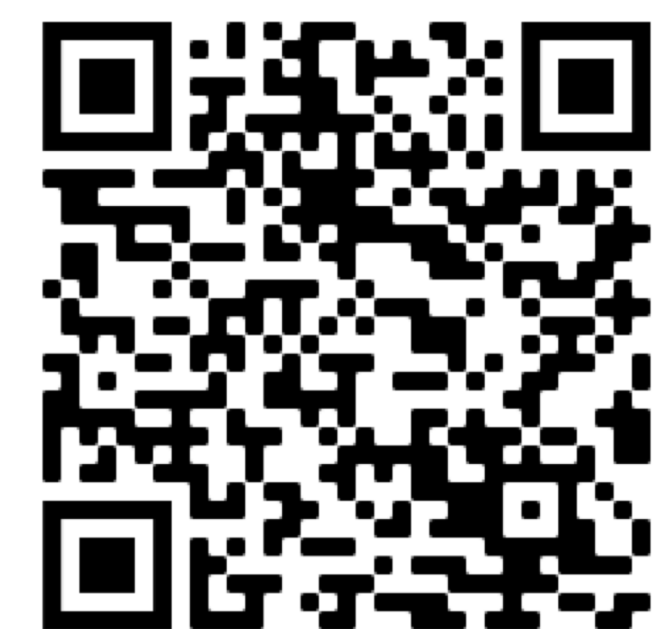
100% of students 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'

- Communication skills should be learned with other healthcare students / professionals
- Shared learning with other professionals helped improve their own communication skills.

97% of responses 'strongly agreed'

- Shared learning with other healthcare students / professionals would increase their ability to understand clinical problems.
- Patients would ultimately benefit if healthcare students / professionals worked together.

Implementation of cross-discipline group assignments increases students' communication and develops professional identity. UNLV students benefit from collaboration with students outside their own discipline.

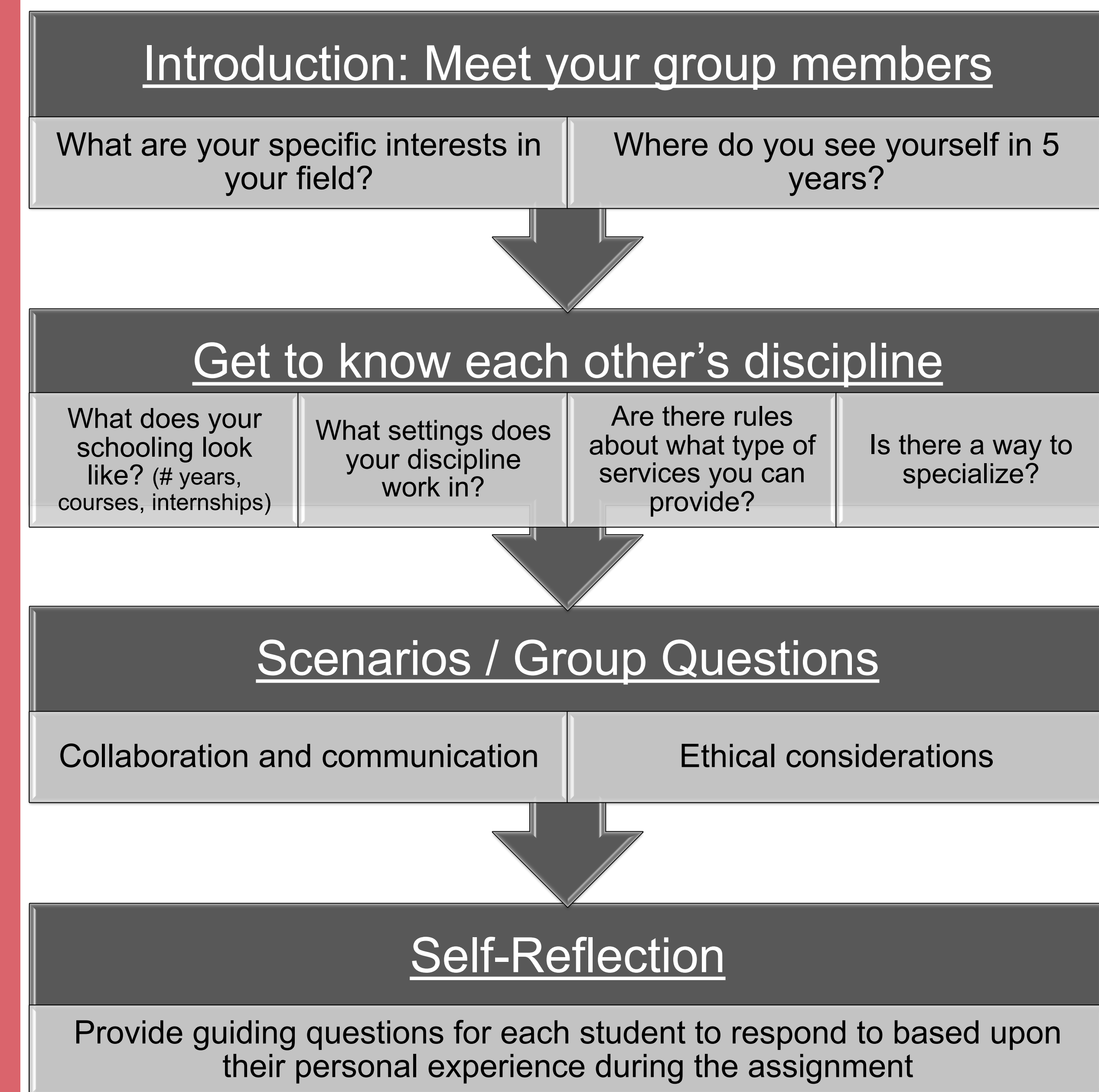


Download more information on creating Group Work.

Create a Small Group Assignment

- 1) Identify other professionals your students will interact with once in the work place.
- 2) Seek out collaboration to other departments and faculty on campus.
- 3) Create an experience (in person or virtual) that allows the students to interact with one another.

Example Framework for Assignment:



From our experience, group work has been most successful when first allowing the students to share information about their own profession, then work in small groups to each use their expertise to accomplish a shared goal. Use creativity to adjust your classroom to make group assignments work.

References & Resources

- Thomson K, Outram S, Gilligan C, Levett-Jones T. Interprofessional experiences of recent healthcare graduates: A social psychology perspective on the barriers to effective communication, teamwork, and patient-centred care. *J Interprof Care*. 2015;29:634-640.
- Binienda J. Critical Synthesis Package: Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS). *MedEdPORTAL*. 2015;11:10274. https://doi.org/10.15766/mep_2374-8265.10274
- UNLV Faculty Center to help create your group project. Go to "Faculty Development Resources" - Scroll down to "Peer Learning – Group Work". This outline can assist you in creation of a group project that will fulfill the specific needs of your students.

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