

Public Health Practice and Issues

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Abstract

The Consortium of Eastern Ohio Master of Public Health program is a partnership of six institutions: The University of Akron, Cleveland State University, Kent State University, Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, Ohio University, and Youngstown State University. The program started in 1999, with a target student population of working professionals. Based on this student population, the program has used a variety of distance learning methods to teach the core courses, including online course management systems and interactive videoconferencing. One of the newest courses, Public Health Practice Issues, was developed to address the cross-cutting competencies presented in the Core Competency Development Project. Four areas are being covered in this course: public health biology, diversity and culture, communication and informatics, and ethics (professionalism). Students access materials online, including archived videos of lectures, and apply course principles using case-based discussion and papers. Students are matched to a practice setting in which they will apply course concepts to the organization's existing structure and capabilities. Faculty from two academic institutions and health departments worked together on this course. Concepts from this course are mapped to the particular competency being covered and are categorized using Bloom's taxonomy. The course was being offered as a pilot in summer 2007 and will be a required course in the curriculum.

Instructional Methods/Techniques

- Online interface (WebCT) with videos
- Narrated PowerPoint for instructor didactic material
- Application of concepts to an agency
- Student discussion postings
- Interaction between students-- response to each other's discussion postings
- Written agency analysis and case analysis
- Student narrated PowerPoint with SWOT analysis
- Oral presentation to agency
- Synchronous conference calls to discuss final project topics
- Use of grading rubrics
- Use of cross-cutting competencies
- Use of Bloom's taxonomy to assess achievement of cross-cutting competencies

Assignments

- Readings
- Written agency description
- Discussion and response on cases
- Written case scenario analysis
- Cases: food-borne illness, pertussis, and influenza pandemic
- Final project with narrated PowerPoint (agency analysis for a public health situation)
- Final project with an oral presentation to the agency
- Agency members attending presentation sign a roster and comment on presentation
- Final project SWOT analysis

Discussion

This course was a mix of asynchronous and synchronous instructional methods. Students interacted with faculty from four different institutions. They applied the concepts of public health biology, professionalism/ethics, diversity and culture, communication and informatics to agency settings. Logistical challenges were coordinating grades and making sure that all instructors were consistent. This was accomplished by the use of rubrics, periodic meetings, reminders to submit materials, and designating a person to maintain consistency of online postings. Evaluation from students ranged from desiring "more real-time interaction" to "heavy course load."

For more information

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