

From Stereotypes to Synergy

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Abstract

Background: Interprofessional collaboration is essential in healthcare, yet early professional socialization often reinforces stereotypes and uniprofessional identities. Recognizing that preceptors and educators play a key role in shaping learners' professional and interprofessional identities, two projects have been implemented in the HC curricula at University of Northern British Columbia, Canada to explore how early shared learning experiences can nurture a sense of *"interprofessional self."*

Research / Project Question: How can interprofessional education initiatives foster the development of a *shared interprofessional identity* that includes all health care professions?

Methods: Two pilot projects paired medical and physiotherapy students in anatomy-based sessions and medical and nursing students in early clinical skills sessions. Using qualitative feedback and SWOT analysis from students and preceptors, themes of trust, role awareness, and stereotype reduction were explored. The approach was reinforced by reflective debriefing, explicit faculty role modeling, and intentional discussion of interprofessional language and hierarchies.

Results: Students reported increased appreciation of complementary professional skills, enhanced communication, and greater confidence in shared clinical tasks. Preceptors noted improved relational dynamics and early identity bridging- "trust was built quickly," "the room felt inclusive." Faculty identified the challenge of aligning curricula across disciplines but recognized the high impact of visible, collaborative role models.

Discussion & Conclusion: Early, structured IPE sessions within anatomy or clinical skills curricula can dismantle professional stereotypes and lay the groundwork for a shared interprofessional identity. The findings support a framework for integrating IPE longitudinally - from classroom to clinical placement - and reinforce educators' responsibility to transform implicit role modeling into explicit reflection and practice.