Creating Classroom to Community: Health Education in Action – a service-learning partnership with Teach For America
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The Challenge: Preparing Health Educators

Educators and public health practitioners are trained in isolation, yet the two fields have tremendous impact on each other. To partner effectively with schools, future public health educators need:

- Hands-on teaching experience
- In-depth understanding of how people learn
- Practice developing relationships with teachers and school leaders
- Time to experience and reflect on the complex realities of schools
- Practice developing and adapting health education materials

Classroom to Community Goals

- Equip public health students with the knowledge and skills needed to become effective health educators and school partners.
- Inspire a passion for teaching and a drive towards public health leadership.

Using Teach For America (TFA) teachers as partners and mentors

TFA focuses on growing the movement of leaders who work to ensure that children growing up in poverty get an excellent education. In addition to training teachers in the classroom, TFA trains teachers in the art of leadership, helping them to develop skills to ensure that students become lifelong learners.

Classroom to Community (C2C) Curriculum

The course uses TFA’s Teaching as Leadership framework to teach MPH students how to create and teach skills-focused health education lessons. The course specifically teaches:

- The inside scoop on how schools really work so that students can become more effective health educators and communicators.
- The psychology behind how people learn so that students can become more effective health educators and communicators.
- Backwards planning and creating objective-driven lesson plans to ensure students learn critical health information and skills.
- Methods for tailoring health education materials and adapting teaching methods for a wide variety of audiences.
- Strategies for developing a growth mindset for continuous reflection and improvement – critical skills for leadership and community engagement.

Additional guest lectures foster a contextual understanding about the importance of coordinated school health and community engagement. The class culminates in a final dinner to celebrate achievements, reflect on lessons learned, and network with experienced professionals in health and education.

What is Teaching as Leadership (TAL)?

TAL is Teach For America’s framework used to foster strong leadership in education. It is a set of principles and actions for highly effective teaching in order to achieve academic gains. The table below demonstrates how several components of TAL are applied in Classroom to Community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TAL Principles</th>
<th>Application in TFA</th>
<th>Application in Classroom to Community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective Teaching</td>
<td>Using backwards planning, measurable, and meaningful goals for all students</td>
<td>MPH students are taught to assess baseline health knowledge of classmates, then set and achieve measurable goals for health education lessons. MPH students receive feedback and are given clear criteria for determining levels of success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan Purposely</td>
<td>Involving others when lesson is shared, clear assessment to be defined, and what path to student growth is most efficient</td>
<td>MPH students begin with the most important, by backwards planning to create a teaching in a teaching objective. The goal is to develop a student-driven lesson plan and creating assessments to determine whether the learning objectives have been met.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Execute Effectively</td>
<td>Designing progress and adjusting course to ensure that every action contributes to student learning</td>
<td>MPH students learn and practice strategies for achieving teaching content and for understanding during lessons. MPH students also learn and practice strategies for facilitating group work and class discussions. In addition, methods for promoting student performance are illustrated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuously Increase Effectiveness</td>
<td>Reflecting critically on progress, identifying outstanding areas, and implementing solutions</td>
<td>The model in the right illustrates the key areas of reflection during teaching interactions.</td>
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Impact of Classroom to Community on MPH students

What MPH students say about C2C:

- “I have learned so much about lesson planning, curriculum development, and teaching. I can definitely say that it was the continuous feedback, the opportunity to collaborate with TFA partner, the dynamic C2C lesson, the guest speakers, and (most importantly) the time in the TFA classrooms that have exposed me to the connection between health and education.”

- “This class has enhanced my appreciation for teachers and made me realize why it is so important to integrate health into schools.”

- “My TFA partner taught me so much about the health issues his students face. The feedback/debriefing sessions were incredibly helpful. I have learned so much about the art of teaching and interaction through this partnership. This has been one of the most unique components of C2C.”

- “Because of C2C, I know I definitely want to aim for a position in public health leadership down the road... Because of C2C, I know that I want to work with students and professors, go back to school, and continue to work on a career that I can incorporate education, teaching, and mentorship into.”

* More information: Health disparities affect educational attainment * Educational attainment affects health * What role will your students play in making a difference?