2018 COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

HS 430 – COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM PLANNING

This document includes abstracts describing the 12-week Service Learning Projects completed by senior-level Community Health majors at Iowa State University in collaboration with 5 Iowa County Health Agencies during the Fall 2018 semester (Cerro Gordo County, Dickinson County, Madison County, Story County, Tama County)

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CERRO GORDO COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM CERRO GORDO COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Meagan Bandstra, Heather Thompson, Jason Pastene, Alyssa Sikkema, and Brielle Ulrich in cooperation with Alyse DeVries (Cerro Gordo County Representative)

We were asked to develop a survey for youth to find out about the use, knowledge, and prevalence of vaping within high school students in Cerro Gordo County. Vaping has increased in prevalence in recent years. It has been marketed to be an alternative to smoking that is perceived to be healthier. To buy and use vaping products, people have to be at least 18 years or older, however, this is not the case in the schools in Cerro Gordo County. The vaping products are small, compact devices that are difficult to identify as contraband; therefore it is easier for the youth to partake in vaping.

"WE WERE ASKED TO DEVELOP A SURVEY FOR YOUTH TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE USE, KNOWLEDGE, AND PREVALENCE OF VAPING WITHIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CERRO GORDO COUNTY."

We created a survey in Qualtrics that will be administered to six schools within Cerro Gordo County. The survey captured the school the students were from, their grade level, perceived harmfulness and knowledge of vaping, the relationships to people who they know that vape, their vaping habits, and where they have acquired vaping products. Based on the results of this survey, county health leaders and schools will see if there is a need for more education about vaping products.

It is important for Community Health leaders to identify the populations most susceptible to the use of vaping products, and the consequences that accompany their use. This will allow them to jumpstart the process of educating the necessary populations on how vaping could be potentially be impacting them. Considering that vaping produces similar negative effects to smoking, the education individuals would be receiving could help to combat the potential increase in health outcomes from vaping. The education serves as a first line of defense, and thanks to the data our survey will produce, the health leaders can take the proper action.
STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES
Meagan Bandstra, Heather Thompson, Jason Pastene, Alyssa Sikkema, and Brielle Ulrich

Community health is an ongoing process of evaluating current health behaviors and creating programs to address negative behaviors. All counties have opportunities to create a healthier environment for their community members depending on various degrees of health-related problems identified.

Service learning gave us the opportunity to apply concepts in class to real world scenarios. A hands on experience allowed us to learn more effectively and gave us a sense of reality as to what we will be doing after college.

We feel that we are better prepared to enter the workforce through the experiences in this project. We had the opportunity to work with a community health professional to create a survey that was used to identify the prevalence of vaping, which will help the county to develop a solution to this problem. We developed a network of individuals all working toward a common goal, learned how to utilize Zoom to communicate tasks and reports week-to-week, and produced a survey in Qualtrics the survey that will help us be successful in our future professions.

We learned how to effectively communicate with a community health leader on a growing issue in their community schools. We developed a survey with the aim to gain awareness on the prevalence use, and knowledge of vaping products in high school students.

This project gave us hands-on experience for developing our professional skills. A survey was created and analyzed for future health programs in Cerro Gordo County. We are confident in our abilities to effectively communicate with health professionals to reach goals that were set for us. We also learned how to work with our county health professional online through a different form of communication which was called Zoom.

“SERVICE LEARNING GAVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY CONCEPTS THAT WE LEARN IN CLASS TO REAL WORLD SCENARIOS”

This experience will help us in our future professions because we gained valuable skills that will allow us to be effective communicators in our future work. Through class and service learning, we developed skills and experiences to help aid in our future professions. We have experience collecting demographics of a population, identifying a need, creating a survey, communicating with community health leaders, and analyzing results. These skills and experiences will allow us to be great additions to any workforce.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ALYSE DEVRIES FOR HER CONTINUED SUPPORT THROUGHOUT SERVICE LEARNING. WE ALL FEEL THAT THE TIME SPENT WORKING WITH HER WAS A FUN AND EXCITING EXPERIENCE. A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO LOUISE LEX FOR COORDINATING THE SERVICE LEARNING EXPERIENCE. AN EXPERIENCE WE ARE G ATEFUL TO HAVE HAD.

SINCERELY,
JASON PASTENE, BRIELLE ULRICH, HEATHER THOMPSON, MEAGAN BANDSTRA, AND ALYSSA SIKKEMA
DICKINSON COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM DICKINSON COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT
Logan Heerema, Elizabeth Jennett, Ala Osman, Susan Strawhacker,
Rilley Ring-Foss, & Brandon Rohrig

Over the length of the semester, our group has been working side by side with Brandon Rohrig, the Director of Population and Public Health for Dickinson County. Throughout the semester, our main focus has been creating a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) that contains secondary information about Dickinson County. We collaborated with Brandon to accomplish this. Our group has collected information from various state records, censuses and other demographic collections from research projections.

IN 2017, THE POPULATION WAS 17,199 RESIDENTS. SINCE THE IOWA GREAT LAKES ARE LOCATED IN DICKINSON COUNTY, DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS THE POPULATION CAN GET AS HIGH AS 120,000 PEOPLE.

When creating our CHNA and researching the data and information, we wanted to focus on the areas we felt were the most important to educate the residents of Dickinson County about. Some of these areas were included in the overall demographic of the county.

Dickinson County is located in the northwest region of Iowa. The county is quite rural, with a size of 404 square miles and 23 of those square miles being water.

Dickinson County is home of the famous Iowa Great Lakes. The Iowa Great Lakes consist of West Lake Okoboji (6.011 square miles), East Lake Okoboji (2.867 square miles), and Big Spirit Lake (8.881 square miles).

As we stated before, Dickinson County is a rural county. In 2017, the population was 17,199 residents. Since the Iowa Great Lakes are located in Dickinson County, during the summer months, the population can get as high as 120,000 people.

In Dickinson County, a majority of their population is white, rounding out at 97.7% of the county. 2% of the residents are Hispanic or Latino, 0.4% African American, and 1.8% fall into the other category. Over the last 18 years, the number of white residents has continued to stay consistent. Hispanic or Latino residents are on the rise, as well as others.

In July 2017, the housing demographic consisted of 13,890 units within the county. 8,008 (75%) of them were considered households due to the ownership of them. Within a household, there is an average of 2.1 persons per household. With there being multiple different races residing in Dickinson County, 2.1% of the households do not speak English as their main form of communication.

As for education, 95.6% of the residents above the age of 25 years old, have a high school degree. Of that 95.6%, 29% of them have received a bachelor’s degree, or higher. Poverty levels are on the rise in Dickinson County, especially in children. According to County Health
Rankings, 10% of the children located in Dickinson County are considered to be in poverty. The amount of single part households is quite higher compared to the top US performer, 30% in Dickinson County with only 20% coming from the top US performer. The reason for this could be the unemployment rate continually rising as well. 4.4% of the population is unemployed, while in Iowa the average is only 3.7%. Having a higher number of unemployed residents, brings the economic well-being of the residents at risk.

4.4% OF THE POPULATION IS UNEMPLOYED, WHILE IN IOWA THE AVERAGE IS ONLY 3.7%.
HAVING A HIGHER NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED RESIDENTS, BRINGS THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE RESIDENTS AT RISK.

Mental Health awareness has been on the rise in the last few years. Unfortunately, in Dickinson County the amount of mental health providers is extremely low. There is only 1 provider to 2,160 residents. The top US performer is ranked at 330 residents to 1 provider, while Iowa is averaging 760 residents to 1 provider. A reason behind this could be the location and size of the county. With Dickinson County being a rural county, there is less resources compared to a larger county.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Throughout this project our group had many new experiences. None of us had ever used secondary sources to create a community health needs assessment. It taught us how to find useful information and structure it in a way that can create a valuable document. We learned how to look up statistics, as well as gauge the impact they may have. While some of us may end up in the community and public health field, and others of us may not, it was still a very informative assignment. From the assignment we also learned how to operate Zoom and CyBox notes. Zoom was beneficial because it could be a helpful tool for collaborating with professionals in the future. The CyBox notes helped us keep clear and informative records on how we spent our time throughout the project. This may be a requirement in some of our future jobs and it was good practice. We now have other resources to consider using in the future. None of us had also collaborated with an experienced professional in a similar field as us to complete a larger- sized school project. Collaborating with Brandon was a new and interesting experience. Through our partnership, we learned how to properly communicate with another working online. This is the closest experience any of us had that may be similar to a real-job setting. We are all now more confident if we had to contact a fellow health professional online regarding a project, report, question, etc. This will help us later in our careers, so we do not feel as unprepared for this task. Finally, the service learning we did was a semester-long group project. Most classes do not have that. This taught us how to cooperate and work with each other to reach a common goal. Once again, this may be asked of us in our future careers. Group work isn’t always easy, and having done it a whole semester, we will all be reader for that task. All in all, Dickinson County is a unique county that we had the joy to work with this semester.

WE WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND A VERY SINCERE THANK YOU TO BRANDON ROHRIG OF DICKINSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH FOR HIS TIME AND GUIDANCE. WE APPRECIATE YOU HELPING US AND GIVING US REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE.

SINCERELY,
ELIZABETH JENNITT, SUSAN STRAWHACKER, RILEY RING-FOSS LOGAN HEERMA,
& ALA OSMAN
The objective of this service learning project was to learn more about the data in Madison County regarding middle- and high-school aged adolescents and their habits concerning vaping and consuming alcohol. In order to do this, we researched information about vaping and alcohol use at the particular ages we were interested in, which ranged from 12 to 18. We created a survey to assess how this population felt about various aspects of these habits. Madison County is a generally rural county, with a population of only 16,013 spread between eight towns. This was important to consider while gathering data and creating questions within the survey so that we could be confident that the questions we asked would resonate well with and be understood by the target population. Consuming alcohol under the legal age has been a prevalent problem in Madison County for a number of years, as shown in the County Health Ranking Data. Vaping among students under the legal age is also becoming more and more prominent. Drinking and vaping—especially underage—pose various health risks for the people participating in these activities. One of these risks includes developing an alcohol or nicotine addiction. The county representative felt that addressing and analyzing this issue would be beneficial for the county and hopefully improve over time by implementing the survey and analyzing the data established.

The survey consisted of 35 questions and 4 short video clips regarding teen drinking and vaping. The questions asked a range of different things, focusing around why this population may choose to drink or vape and how they are influenced by others (their peers, parents, etc.) to either take part or not take part in these activities. This survey is going to be taken by the students in Madison County in Spring 2019. It should take participants less than 10 minutes to complete the survey.

Overall, we had a very positive experience with the project. It was exciting working with Sharon and getting to learn about everything she does as a public health administrator. We enjoyed getting to work on a project that will be used in a real-world setting and hopefully impact many children in the coming months.
STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES
Branden Arends, Cassandra Brower, Kourtney Condon, Lauren Fangman, Kassidy Hays, & Hannah Wohlers

We gained valuable experience while working with Sharon throughout this service learning project. We learned how to collaborate and work as a team to come up with quality survey questions. We also learned how to effectively communicate our ideas to Sharon throughout the service learning project. One of the most valuable and interesting lessons we learned was to think about the environment and individuals in which our survey would be presented. For example, Sharon asked us to look at vaping and alcohol videos that would resonate with students in a rural community. We found that there were many great videos about alcohol and vaping, but most were portrayed in a city environment. Another example of us learning to think about the specific environment and individuals we are influencing is when we were deciding on the verbiage for some of our survey questions. We wanted to ask the students with video resonated with them more. Sharon asked us to come up with a better word that all students would understand. This was a valuable lesson because we may have gotten inaccurate data simply because not all students may know the definition of resonate. We are now better prepared to enter the workforce because we will always be mindful of the specific group of individuals we are working with and their unique way of viewing health and information. We know to choose images, information, and language that will be understandable and related to our specific and unique audience.

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR MADISON COUNTY PARTNER, SHARON MILLER, FOR HER TIME AND GUIDANCE. WE ARE SO INCREDLIBLY THANKFUL FOR YOU. ANOTHER THANK YOU TO LOUISE LEX FOR HELPING TO FACILITATE THIS EXPERIENCE.

SINCERELY,
BRANDEN ARENDS, CASSANDRA BROWER, KOURTNEY CONDON, LAUREN FANGMAN, KASSIDY HAYS, & HANNAH WOHlERS
STORY COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM STORY COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT
Annika Anderson, Jordan Enga, Leidys Gutiérrez-Martínez, Morgan Nafziger, Cassie Payne, Kloee Thilges & Lesla White - Story County Health Representative

Getting started

The main project that was worked on in the Story County Service Learning project, was putting together a focus group plan for our county health representative. This focus group plan centered around gaining more insight about the problem of food insecurity in the County.

For this project, research was done to identify the biggest needs in Story County and what factors needed to be addressed to improve the health of the community. This research led us to identify that food insecurity was an issue that needed to be analyzed and addressed in order to improve other health factors.

Food insecurity is an important issue to address because it can have other implications. This issue can lead to obesity, which can lead to other health problems. This can include heart disease and diabetes. Food insecurity is not only related to access to food, but the access to healthy foods too. People may have access to food but are eating poor diets because of the quality of food they that they have access to. That is why a focus group would give good insight to this problem and where it stands currently.

The focus group plan that was created was a packet for our county health representative that included several components to in order to have a precise plan for whenever the focus group needs to be implemented. The packet included: a step-to-step guide on the main steps to create a focus group, a release and consent form for participants, a script of what needs to be said during the session, guided discussion questions, tips on note taking, and strategies/tips on how to analyze the results of the focus group discussion.

These materials will be important tools for the county health representative to use in order to conduct a successful focus group. Since the issue of food insecurity is so prevalent in Story County, this could be a great first step to understanding the problem which could help lead to a solution in the future. This focus group guide will help to improve the health of the community because it will lead to results that can be used for the next step of fixing food insecurity. The focus group will help to give answers from people who are impacted by this issue and/or those who see the impact. Therefore, these answers can be used to create a successful intervention that targets the right area.

The guided packet will also be helpful for other focus groups centered around other health topics in the future. The materials that were given can be customized to fit the needs of a specific problem, not just food insecurity. Although the materials that were given are specific to this issue, the parts can be changed to address any other topic.
STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Annika Anderson, Jordan Enga, Leidys Gutiérrez-Martínez, Morgan Nafziger, Cassie Payne, Kloee Thilges

Learnings along the way

The Service Learning Project was an opportunity to get to know the complexity of team dynamics in the context of a Community Health Project. We built a joint collaboration between our team and our Story County partner throughout the planning and development of the structure of a project with feasible and reasonable goals.

We learned the importance of defining an agreed goal since the beginning in order to allocate time and resources in a thoughtful way to use them in an optimal manner. However, the flow of this bilateral work-dynamic also taught an important lesson: flexibility is an appreciated and probably underrated value which is required. By this, we learned that the teams should be able to adapt to the necessities that may arise with the project, which also entails refining objectives and approach strategies as needed.

Furthermore, a clear goal to work towards was a lesson strongly bounded to the establishment of a professional communication channel within the group and with the County Public Health representative. In this way, discussions were oriented to define the short-term goals necessary to keep continuous progress towards the main agreed goal. In this regard, weekly goal setting along with weekly follow-up meetings registered in a shared diary, made our progress traceable and clear for everyone.

In addition, we realized that the identification of strengths and weaknesses of the team was a time-saving step, particularly, to get to know the skill set that could be added to the collaboration and to recognize the deficits in which further guidance from external collaborators, with higher level of expertise, was required.

In fact, the Service Learning Project in partnership with the Story County Representative was an experience full of meaningful learning. It brought us the hands-on experience of being part of a community health project, where our skill set contributed to the discussion and approach to fill a gap in the Health Needs assessment of Story County around the problem of Food Insecurity.

Successes despite the challenges

Despite the struggles, we can state that our first Service Learning project was successful, in the way that we accomplished the goal that we were aiming for: to finalize a Focus Group Guide that could be undertaken by Story County Public Health workforce, as part of their next Health Needs Assessment. We brought the theory to the practice and we fill a gap in the Health Needs assessment of the County through a novel approach around the problem of Food Insecurity in Story County. Furthermore, we set the beginning of a partnership with future service learning groups, which could continue the execution of this project.

Successful community health approaches are accomplished through collaborative and multi-disciplinary work. Creation of an effective communication channel is pivotal for long-lasting collaborations.

Besides, we were able to strengthen bilateral communication skills in professional settings where a real problem needed to be tackled. This collaboration allowed us to add other abilities and insights to the Public Health workforce of the county, contributing to a better understanding and providing the support needed to undertake a resourceful approach to ultimately help the community. Therefore, from now, we are better prepared to be part of a community health initiative after this first exposure to the work that it entails within one group, in collaboration with a government stakeholder.

Finally, one of the greatest gains of this project is the lesson that successful community health approaches can be done through collaborative and multi-disciplinary work. Creation of an effective communication channel is pivotal for long-lasting collaborations where different skills can be brought together to translate the knowledge of the academia into public health projects to create healthier communities.

In Conclusion, we believe our work with Lesla White has been nothing but a positive experience. At the beginning of the semester, as a group we were having a hard time figuring
out what we actually wanted to do our project over. After looking at health indicators of Story County and finding something that we were all interested in, we settled on focusing on food insecurity and how to hold focus groups. This was something that we all had interest in which was what we wanted and a way to make the project successful. As time went on, we actually learned more about our topics which made this a great experience for us all. After recently talking to our county leader, Lesla White, she has already mentioned having the HS 430 students work with her next semester. This is something that we wanted to hear as it means she enjoyed the work we have done together. We all really enjoyed this project.

Acknowledgements

We appreciate the support and guidance of our partner from the Story County Public Health workforce: Lesla White. Also, we are thankful to Ashton Chapman and Gregory Welk for their coaching on Communication strategies and Focus Group assessments. Finally, we are grateful for this Service Learning experience facilitated by the hard work and commitment of Louise Lex.

Sincerely,

Annitka Anderson, Jordan Enga, Leidys Gutiérrez-Martínez, Morgan Nafziger, Cassie Payne, Kloece Thilges
ACCOMPLISHMENTS & OUTCOMES FROM TAMA COUNTY SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT

Katlyn Junker, Chelsey Sims, Hailey Smock, Marco Tapia, Pailin Demeo, Sarah Stark & Community Partner: Linda Rosenberger

Our team, in cooperation with Linda Rosenberger, worked hard throughout the semester to create an introductory worksite wellness program for the Tama County Department of Public Health. Each week there were several action items that we completed to reach the final goal of completing a feasible worksite wellness program. In the first couple of weeks, we researched a variety of worksite wellness programs. We wanted to understand what the pros and cons were and how they could benefit small businesses in Tama County. It was essential to find evidence-based papers and empirical articles to ensure the information we found was to be presented to the board of supervisors was valid and aided in justifying our proposal. We ended up creating an information page on worksite wellness in small businesses and their benefits in the workplace. After the information page was given to Linda, she thought that we presented quality information and wanted to start work on creating a worksite wellness program for Tama County.

To begin this process, we first developed a health interest survey that asked questions regarding the employees’ demographics, their current health habits, and what type of worksite wellness programs they were interested in if it were to be customized for their company in the future. After getting the survey results back, we created two worksite wellness programs that were based on the feedback we received from business employees. We created a walking club program and a point system for healthy habits program. The walking program was geared towards the employees who were interested in increasing their fitness levels to help them to jump start in weight loss goals. The point system program was aimed at overall lifestyle health behaviors and helping employees to improve in all areas of life.

THIS SEMESTER WE WERE ABLE TO MAKE BIG STEPS IN REGARDS TO WORKSITE WELLNESS FOR TAMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

After the programs were designed, Linda asked us to also touch on the hazards of smoking. After everything was created, we needed to find a way to promote the programs, explain the dangers of smoking, and tell the employees why a worksite wellness program was necessary. To do this, we created three brochures: one on the walking club program, one on the point system program, and another on smoking cessation. We also created a flyer to promote both the wellness programs and a PowerPoint presentation for Linda, or another employee, to present on why a worksite wellness program is important and necessary for their company. The work we did over the semester was crucial for Tama County Department of Public Health because they do not have a current worksite wellness program, and are not as knowledgeable on the subject as we are.

This semester we were able to make significant steps in the direction of worksite wellness for Tama County Department of Public Health. Our efforts were focused on the groundwork, and in the future, the company will be able to use our information to further their efforts towards officially implementing a worksite wellness program.
STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Katlyn Junker, Chelsey Sims, Hailey Smock, Marco Tapia, Pailin Demeo, & Sarah Stark

Working with the Tama County Department of Public Health taught us a great deal about community health. We all got to see into what having a job in the field might resemble. Additionally, while working with Linda, we realized that even when a lot of members share a common desired idea in a company, it doesn’t necessarily mean that it will be put into action. Linda, along with a significant number of her colleagues, all wanted a worksite wellness program because they felt that it would be beneficial for them. However, a worksite wellness program is something that has to be brought to the board of supervisors for approval before official action of implementation can take place. Within the community and public health field, a lot of companies are under the government's control and supervision. Money that you might make is a result from the people in your city and surrounding areas paying taxes. This is why it is hard to allocate money towards a worksite wellness program. The money used to implement the program would be from tax dollars, and this might come across as an unnecessary expense to some. To fund the worksite wellness program that we have created, Tama County Department of Public Health will have to find grant money to allow for the supply of resources and incentives. Learning this was the most interesting part of the project.

However, this is not the only thing we will be taking away from this service-learning experience. We also learned how important communication, preparation, and time management is in regards to competency in the public health field. We learned how to communicate effectively because we only had a half hour each week to understand what Linda wanted us to do for the next week. We learned the importance of preparation through the use of our weekly meeting notes uploaded to CyBox, and how the notes were vital to understand what necessary tasks we needed to complete for the next week. Lastly, we learned that time management is crucial, and how it was a necessary skill to possess in making sure we completed our project in the four months we had to get it done. This meant that we were working hard each week to get the jobs laid out in our weekly meeting notes done, in order to have the complete worksite wellness package finished in the end. Overall, this service-learning experience has been nothing but great, and has prepared us all for a real job in our field.

WE ARE VERY THANKFUL TO HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH LINDA, TAMMY, AND THE TAMA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH. WE APPRECIATE THE TIME THEY TOOK TO SPEND WITH US, AND THE GUIDANCE THROUGH THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD. WE ALSO WANT TO THANK LOUISE LEX FOR HELPING US FACILITATE THIS NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCE.

SINCERELY,

KATLYN JUNKER, CHELSEY SIMS, HAILEY SMOCK, MARCO TAPIA, PAILIN DEMEO, & SARAH STARK