

Educational and Professional Outcomes through Student Service-Learning Experiences

John Mazzeo, PhD; Selina Kowalski, MPH; Raj Shah, MD; Noah Levitin

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH EQUITY



Purpose

This research proposed to describe how social-cultural interactions by graduate students in health professions at service-learning sites in Chicago could transform their conceptualization and attitudes about health in equality.

Main Focus of the Research:

1. Development of professional identity through service work
2. Conceptualization of health equity issues in Chicago through service work
3. Complementarity of service work with traditional coursework at Rush University.

RCSIP Sites

The RCSIP (Rush Community Service Initiative Program) ⁽¹⁾ sites had agreed to be a part of our study:

- 1) **5+1=20**; Students meet regularly to teach the youth about preventable illnesses, to prolong the lives of their community by 20+ years. ⁽¹⁾
- 2) **Franciscan**; A homeless shelter where students provide medical care for each resident. ⁽¹⁾
- 3) **Community Health Clinic**; Provides free primary care services to individuals who are ineligible for medical insurance. ⁽¹⁾

Methods

This study required participant recruitment activities through: email, word of mouth, and through a in-person presentation.

The study collected qualitative data using ethnographic methods to understand the socio-cultural context of learning experiences and the changes in students' conceptualization and attitudes. These techniques included: audio recorded semi-structured interviews and ethnographically written observations in a electronic journal reflection format.

The audio recordings were then individually transcribed and coded to deliver a comprehensive analysis.

Participant Details

Sample Size: N ₁ =8 N ₂ =6 N ₃ =4	Professions 7 Medical students 1 Nursing student	Total hours of interviews: 6 Total Journal Reflections: 6
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Instrument Tool Questions

Selected Interview Questions:

1. What was the primary motivation for your participation in a service learning opportunity, like RCSIP?
2. Have you noticed any differences in yourself due to this experience?
3. What does health disparities mean to you?
4. Have you seen examples of health disparities while at your RCSIP site?

Selected Journal Reflection Questions:

1. How does this experience fit in with your professional health career?
2. How do you think your interaction with patients would impact them to care for their own health
3. How is this experience affecting you attitudes, beliefs and knowledge about the population you are working with?

Preliminary Results

Illustrated quotes below about participant's experience at RCSIP:

- “Everyone that we encounter in the clinic has a story. They want healthcare and they're trying to get something that they can't afford it or obtain it, or they legally can't go about it.”
- “It's definitely realizing that the biggest impact we have is not necessarily taking this person's blood pressure and telling them that they are hypertensive right now, but it's what are they going to do about it.”
- “Some of the students are genuinely worried that they might be deported. And it made me be able to put a face on what that looks like.”

Future Analysis

1. Code semi-structured interview transcriptions
2. Data analysis
3. Summarize recommendations & reporting

References

1. Rush University. (2016). *The Rush Community Service Initiative Program*. Retrieved from <https://www.rushu.rush.edu/rush-experience/community-engagement/rush-community-service-initiative-program>