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## **The Value of Inter-professional Experience in Occupational Health Practice Education: Traditional Barriers Challenged**

Kerry Adam, Clara Chan, Alexandra Lyle  
*The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane, Australia*

### Introduction

Uniprofessional models of student practice placements have been linked with the development of negative professional boundaries (Jacobsen et al. 2009). These boundaries are reinforced in practice through socialization and stereotyping as professionals operate in 'unidisciplinary' communities. An innovative program at the University of Queensland, UQ Work Service Clinic is challenging this approach when educating senior students in occupational health from occupational therapy, physiotherapy, pharmacy and nutrition science.

### Objectives

The objective is to foster positive attitudes to the inter-professional experience in a service delivery environment, whilst strengthening their understanding of their individual roles (Jacobsen et al. 2009).

### Description

UQ is immersing students in an inter-professional practice education experience. This model is similar to others presented in the literature and draws on the skills of each discipline to deliver injury and illness prevention and wellness services to workers in industries including; manufacturing, construction, security and office based operations.

### Discussion/Results

Students report positive attitudes to the inter-professional experience drawing on knowledge and skills from all disciplines to develop services. Educator role models play a crucial role in student readiness to explore and benefit from this experience.

### Conclusion

The inter-professional experience facilitated an understanding of the knowledge and skills of the others. They were then able to work together to identify a set of skills available for a more client centred approach to service development and delivery.

### Contribution to Practice

The inter-professional experience in a supportive environment, allows the students to appreciate the roles of other disciplines (Pollard & Miers, 2008). They learn from each other what is possible in this model and this contributes to their readiness for practice.

Jacobsen, F., Fink, A.M., Marcussen, V., Larsen, K., & Baek Hansen, T. (2009). Interprofessional undergraduate clinical learning: Results from a three year project in a Danish Interprofessional Training Unit, *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 23 (1), 30-40.

Pollard, K.C. & Miers, M.E. (2008). From students to professionals: Results of a longitudinal study of attitudes to pre-qualifying collaborative learning and working in health and social care in the United Kingdom. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 22 (4), 399-416.