

O5 Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn

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Community Based Learning (CBL) successfully enhances didactic objectives in a nutrition curriculum while serving the community. University students actively solved problems in a 'real world' situation and benefited non-profit locations. Emotionally, learners profited on personal levels through successfully overcoming barriers. Content analysis was used to demonstrate that using CBL in a 'Nutrition Education and Communication' class met didactic learning objectives, enhanced students' personal confidence in teaching, and strengthened awareness of interpersonal skills. 71 students, in pairs, developed and taught nutrition lessons in diverse community locations. Students kept a reflective journal throughout the five weeks of the experience. Content analysis of three points in time (T1 = assignment given; T2 = site visit; T3 = after teaching) from the journal entries was performed. Text was coded for: perceived barriers, intent to teach nutrition, personal confidence in teaching, and interpersonal skills employed. Coding for change over time tracked the experience dynamics. At T1 confidence scores were associated with prior experience. Lower confidence scores were associated with perceived barriers such as anxiety about public speaking, knowledge of audience, and scheduling. Most students (79%) increased in confidence at T3. Teaching in a bi-lingual location was associated with lower lesson appraisal. Skills listed most frequently included communication skills, time management, and working cooperatively. All students reported a greater confidence in ability to teach after the CBL experience. Final papers demonstrated that students' accurately matched educational theory constructs to their experience in CBL. As graduates face increasingly diverse populations in work locations, CBL prepares students through 'teaching to learn.'