

Impact of Community Based Education on Students' Performance

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Abstract

Community-Based Education (CBE) is an educational approach that offers students the opportunity to receive practical training in a real-life setting. It enables students to gain knowledge about health issues within the community and strengthens the relationship between educational institutions and the communities they serve. The rationale behind adopting CBE is that it provides society with relevant, cost-effective, and evidence-based medical education. In CBE, medical schools utilize the community as a learning environment, ensuring interaction between students, teachers, healthcare professionals, and community members to address the community's health needs in the curriculum. Additionally, CBE offers students the chance to develop leadership, communication, and teamwork skills. It has also been observed that CBE increases students' interest in pursuing careers related to primary healthcare. Overall, this review aims to pilot and evaluate the CBLIS as a tool for measuring the impact of community-based learning on student education. By doing so, it aims to contribute to the understanding of the effectiveness of community-based learning and its potential benefits for students. The study focuses on five key themes, namely civic engagement, institutional/community relations, academic learning, psychological well-being, and professional development, based on existing empirical support and the goals of the research project. The inclusion of psychological well-being as a primary focus is particularly noteworthy, as it has been overlooked in previous studies.

Keywords: community; environment; health; student; social; psychology

Introduction

Community-Based Education (CBE) is an educational approach that offers students the opportunity to receive training in a real-life setting. It enables students to gain knowledge about health issues within the community and strengthens the relationship between colleges and the communities they serve. The rationale behind adopting CBE is that it provides society with relevant, cost-effective, and evidence-based medical education. In CBE, medical schools utilize the community as a learning environment, ensuring interaction between students, teachers, healthcare professionals, and community members to address community health needs in the curriculum. Additionally, CBE offers benefits such as the development of leadership, communication, and teamwork skills among students. It has also been observed that CBE increases students' interest in pursuing careers in primary healthcare. However, despite the extensive literature on CBE, there are limited studies that examine the impact of learning within community settings on graduates' future paths in life and career. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the influence of learning in a CBE setting on graduates' performance and career trajectories.

Community-based education is an approach that aims to equip students with the necessary skills for future professional work within the community. The quality of instruction should be evaluated based on the outcomes of the program. However, the relationship between learning activities and students' attitudes remains unknown. The objective of this research is to pilot and assess the effectiveness of the Community Based Learning Impact Scale (CBLIS) as a tool for evaluating the impact of community-based learning at one of three liberal arts campuses within a major University. Community-based learning encompasses various teaching practices, including student volunteerism, experiential learning, and curriculum designed for academic credit, all of which involve collaboration and partnership with the community. The purpose of the CBLIS survey was to determine how community-based learning affected student learning. It incorporates things that action different parts of the growth opportunity, like the improvement of decisive reasoning abilities, the procurement of new information, and the upgrade of individual and social obligation.

In general, this survey expects to assess the CBLIS as an estimation device for evaluating the effect of local

area put together learning with respect to understudy learning. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the understanding of the effectiveness of community-based learning and its potential benefits for students.

Literature

Although the settings in which these models are implemented may vary, instructors have emphasized the importance of these learning environments in various disciplines such as dentistry (Gadbury-Amyot et al., 2006), public health (Cacari-Stone, Wallerstein, Garcia, & Minkler, 2014), the liberal arts (Barber & Battistoni, 1993), and non-profit management (Carlisle, Kruzich, 2013). Available literature suggests that community-based learning is linked to enhancements in interpersonal skills (Durlak et al., 2011), leadership skills (Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000), volunteerism (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999), and academic development, civic responsibility, and life skills (Astin & Sax, 1998), although there are mixed findings regarding its impact on interpersonal skills (Moely, Miron, Mercer, & Illustre, 2002; Simons & Clearly, 2006; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000). While the positive impact of CBL on student learning has been reported (Reed-Bouley, Wernli, & Sather, 2012), less is known about its impact on community agencies, except for Clarke's (2003) process assessment that demonstrated CBL's positive influence on the community and agency. Community-based education offers opportunities for integrating learning activities within a community background, thereby enhancing personal and professional skills (Brownell & Swaner, 2010; Kuh, 2010). Furthermore, community-based learning has been found to improve self-awareness and confidence (Batchelder & Root, 1994) and promote civic engagement, leading to positive social change (Welch, 2009). For instance, Mayhew and Engberg (2011) conducted a longitudinal study among undergraduate students enrolled in service-learning at a large academic institution. Their study examined pretest/post-test responses related to changes in charitable and social justice accountability after participating in a community-based learning course.

Previous research consistently demonstrates that students who participate in service-learning courses experience positive outcomes in terms of their charitable responsibility and civic engagement. According to Mayhew and Engberg (2011), students enrolled in service-learning courses were found to have a significantly increased sense of charitable

responsibility. However, these courses did not have a significant impact on their understanding of social justice or their ability to utilize their power and privilege for the betterment of society. In a study conducted by Crone (2013), the specific impact of service-learning on attitudes, civic participation, sensitivity to social issues, self-efficacy, and civic responsibility in a social psychology course was examined. The findings of this study revealed that students in a service-learning centered social psychology class demonstrated greater improvements in civic engagement and academic abilities compared to those in non-service-learning classes. Furthermore, Nokes, Nickitas, and Keida (2005) found a positive association between service-learning classes and civic engagement among nursing students. This suggests that service-learning can have a positive impact on students' engagement with their communities and their understanding of their role as professionals. Service-learning has also been linked to professional development in various fields. Piper, DeYoung, and Lamsam (2000) found that pharmacy students who participated in service-learning experiences reported enhanced self-understanding and improved communication skills. This suggests that service-learning can contribute to the development of important professional skills. Despite being in the early stages of development, assessment tools for evaluating the impact of community-based learning options hold promise in fostering stronger relationships between institutions and communities, benefiting both parties (Maurrasse, 2001; 2002). This emphasizes the potential of service-learning to not only benefit students but also strengthen the connections between educational institutions and the communities they serve. The present study aimed to further explore the impact of service-learning on important outcomes such as civic engagement, institutional/community relations, academic learning, psychological well-being, and professional development. By examining these constructs, this study contributes to the growing body of research in this area, building upon existing empirical support for their inclusion in the literature. The decision to focus on these five key themes was influenced by factors such as the theoretical and empirical literature, the setting, institutional goals, and a Theory to Practice grant received by the research team from the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Theoretical and empirical literature played a crucial role in shaping the selection of these five key themes. Extensive research and scholarly work in the field of

service-learning and community engagement provided valuable insights into the areas that have the most significant impact on student learning and community development. By drawing on this literature, the research team was able to identify the themes that were most likely to yield positive outcomes for both students and the community. The setting in which the research was conducted also influenced the selection of these themes. Each community has its unique needs and challenges, and it was essential to consider these factors when determining the focus areas. By aligning the research with the specific context, the team ensured that the outcomes would be relevant and applicable to the community being studied. Furthermore, institutional goals played a significant role in shaping the decision-making process. The research team considered the broader objectives of the institution and sought to align the project with these goals. By doing so, they ensured that the research would not only contribute to the field but also support the institution's mission and vision.

The Theory to Practice grant received from the Association of American Colleges and Universities also influenced the selection of these themes. This grant provided financial support and recognition for the research project, allowing the team to dedicate resources and time to the study. The grant also came with specific guidelines and expectations, which helped shape the focus areas. One notable aspect of the decision to include psychological well-being as a primary focus was its absence in a significant portion of the early service-learning scholarship. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of mental health and well-being, many previous studies had not given it the attention it deserved. By including psychological well-being as a key theme, the research team aimed to fill this gap in the literature and shed light on its significance in the context of service-learning. In conclusion, the decision to concentrate on five key themes in the research project was influenced by various factors, including the theoretical and empirical literature, the setting, institutional goals, and the Theory to Practice grant. The inclusion of psychological well-being as a primary focus was particularly significant, considering its absence in previous scholarship.

Conclusion

The main objective of this research is to use the CBLIS as a tool to evaluate the impact of community-

based learning on student learning. The study aims to enhance our understanding of the effectiveness of community-based learning and its benefits for students. To achieve this, the research examines and develops constructs related to civic engagement, institutional/community relations, academic learning, psychological well-being, and professional development. These constructs are supported by existing evidence and are important for this investigation. The study focuses on these themes due to factors such as theoretical and empirical literature, the specific setting, institutional goals, and the Theory to Practice grant. Notably, the inclusion of psychological well-being as a primary focus is significant as it has been overlooked in previous research.

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