

Model Curriculum

Strategies for Student Success in Health Occupations

This publication was produced pursuant to grant agreement numbers 02-0161-001 and 03-317-011. This project was supported by Economic and Workforce Development funds and Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (VTEA), Title 1, Part B funds awarded to the Los Rios Community College District by the Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges.

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Foreword

In response to the clear crisis in health care resulting from the shortage of well-trained health care workers at all levels, the California Community College Health Care Initiative (HCI) commissioned a study in 2002 to investigate and identify effective practices that had been developed by health occupations programs in spite of the major challenges impacting these programs. The primary focus of the study was to identify practices that were effective in improving recruitment, orientation and other pre-program activities and those designed to increase the effectiveness of early intervention and remedial student support services. The Center for Student Success, directed by primary investigator Brad Phillips, coordinated the research project.

The study was three-tiered and included a *literature review* of existing research on successful strategies, a *survey* of 250 California Community College health occupations program directors, and an *ethnographic study* that included site visits and in-depth phone interviews with more than 150 faculty, administrators, students and staff from 25 programs. The study included seven allied health occupations fields: Nursing, Radiologic Technology, Respiratory Therapist, EMT/Paramedic, Dental Hygiene, Medical Assisting, Dental Assisting, and Psychiatric Technician.

Based on the findings of this research, the California Community College Chancellor's Office allocated resources through the Economic and Workforce Development Program Health Care Initiative to develop a Model Curriculum designed to overcome common identified barriers and to enhance student success in health occupations programs. The development of the model curriculum was initiated by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. Funding was provided from the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (VTEA) as well as from the Economic and Workforce Development Program, California Community College Chancellor's Office.

The first phase of the development project, involved the collection of data from educators in community colleges across California that offered courses designed for this purpose. Most of the programs responding with course outlines and materials, offered pre-nursing courses, presented in a classroom format, that were to be completed prior to entry into the program. Two of the courses provided an Internet based distance-learning option. Phase I of the development project resulted in the identification of eight modules, based on content demonstrated in the greatest number of existing courses.

The second phase of the project produced the Model Curriculum – Strategies for Student Success in Health Occupations. This phase of the project involved the compilation of available data, identification of gaps in the available data, further research and application to target populations, development of learning tools for target populations, selection and adaptation of Internet resources and a review of additional resources provided. The model curriculum will be included in the Student Success Kit, a major project of the statewide Health Initiative/Regional Health Occupations Resource Centers.

The development of the model curriculum was initiated by the State Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges with funding from Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical

Education Act of 1998 (VTEA) and additional funds granted from the Los Rios Community College District.

I. Introductory Section

A. Purpose of the Model Curriculum

The purpose of this model is to provide a curriculum resource that can be used in its entirety or adapted as needed by faculty for instruction. The model curriculum may be beneficial to those starting new programs, involved in program improvement, or program review. The “*Strategies for Student Success in Health Occupations*” model curriculum is available to any educational entity in the State of California interested in providing students with the tools and skills to be successful in health occupations programs.

B. Description

The *Strategies for Student Success in Health Occupations* Model Curriculum was developed to attract and support students with an interest in health occupations to gain the skills essential for success in these careers. Based on research conducted by the Center for Student Success and information provided by fifteen community colleges in California, essential elements were identified and content developed. Along with input from the instructor, counselor and mentor, this course will provide the student with the knowledge and skills to determine a career path, critically analyze strengths, develop strategies to identify and strengthen areas needing improvement, identify and locate social and financial resources, develop and/or enhance language, math and communication skills, develop and enhance critical thinking skills and enhance self-assessment and accountability skills.

C. Purpose Statement

The purpose of this model curriculum is to provide a prototype curriculum that can be used in its entirety or adapted as needed by educators for instruction. The intent of this curriculum is to provide current or potential students interested in the health occupations with realistic and useful strategies to enhance their success in reaching this career goal. We believe that there are multiple factors involved in student success in health occupations that can be organized under four main headings:

1. Academic preparation and basic study skills,
2. Realistic understanding of the profession,
3. Critical thinking skills and communication skills,
4. Social support networks

This curriculum is designed to provide the student with the knowledge and skills to determine a career path based on a realistic understanding of the occupation and their aptitude for the role. Specific activities assist the student to critically analyze strengths; develop strategies to strengthen areas needing improvement; identify and locate social and financial resources; develop and/or enhance language, math and communication skills; and to develop and enhance self-assessment and critical thinking skills.

D. Core Behavioral Objectives

At the completion of the core course content, the student will be able to:

1. Identify the roles and responsibilities, scope of practice, opportunities for professional growth and advancement, educational requirements and personal characteristics associated with a career in a specific health occupation.
2. Identify and apply the legal, ethical and professional principles to common situations encountered in the health occupations.
3. Identify and formulate a plan to access necessary resources to support success in terms of self-care, time management, peer and instructor support, study skills, and financial resources.
4. Self-assess learning style preferences and develop strategies to maximize learning by enhancing preferred style and expanding abilities in other styles.
5. Analyze and expand current ability to apply critical thinking skills to common situations encountered in the health occupations.
6. Utilize professional verbal and non-verbal communication skills to establish and enhance the therapeutic/helping relationship inherent in health occupations.
7. Accurately use (spell and pronounce) common medical terms and abbreviations used in health occupations.
8. Complete basic skill exercises in Math and English in preparation for assessment testing or for remediation as indicated.

E. Learning Modules

- Module 1 Understanding the Health Care System
- Module 2 Identifying Legal, Ethical and Professional Issues in Health Occupations
- Module 3 Establishing a Personal and Professional Support Network
- Module 4 Maximizing Learning
- Module 5 Developing Critical Thinking Skills
- Module 6 Enhancing Communication Skills
- Module 7 Understanding Medical Terminology
- Module 8 Assessing English and Math Skills

Acknowledgements

A special thanks to all of the specialists and educators who assisted with the development of this model curriculum by sharing their research and resources, course descriptions, outlines, and materials. An additional thanks to members of the Regional Health Occupations Resource Centers for review and feedback as the course evolved.

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USER’S GUIDE

It is expected that some educators will use this curriculum in its entirety and others will select modules most suitable to their needs. The modular format supports this strategy as each module is designed to stand alone depending on the needs of the students. For example, Modules 1 and 2 are designed to be used for those students desiring a career in the health occupations, but uncertain of the specific discipline that will be the best career choice for them. Module 6 and 7 – Communication Skills and Medical Terminology can also be used for these groups as the content is useful to all health occupations. Module 8 - Assessment of Critical Skills can be used for remediation for those students needing support in English and Math skills. The entire curriculum can be structured to fit a two or three unit format, depending on the amount of time spent on individual activities. Specific time allotments for each module are left to the discretion of the individual programs.

Another option is to provide the CD or individual modules to students to use as a self-paced course.

Please note that the URL’s for all websites were current at the time of publication. Many websites remain active for only a short period of time. If any website referenced in this curriculum is no longer active, please do a web search to find a comparable website.

The entire course material on the CD is organized by module. Each module has two files; one for the course content and one for the handouts/exercises/answer keys.

Module Structure

Modules 1 – 7 are structured with a common format: Module Title, Suggested Time Frame, Goal Statement, Module Description, Learning Objectives, Resource Listing, Content Outline and Learning Activities. Module 8 varies from that format in that learning objectives are not specifically identified. Module 8 contains a number of Basic English and Math Assessment Tools that can be used as a supplement or for an individual prescription for success.

Module Format

Modules 1 through 7 are formatted with specific content for each learning objective outlined on the left side of the page. Suggested learning activities are described on the right side of the page adjacent to the referenced objective. Each objective begins on a separate page to facilitate the selection of specific objectives when desired.

Learning activities that include the use of assessment tools, surveys or situations are included in the Handouts/Exercises/Answer Keys file found at the end of each module.

Handouts, Exercises and Answer Keys are labeled as follows:

Module 1 Handouts – Handout 1.1, 1.2, etc...

Module 1 Exercises – Exercise 1.1, 1.2, etc...

Module 1 Answer Keys – Answer Key 1.1, 1.2, etc...

Module 2 Handouts – Handout 2.1, 2.2, etc...

Module 2 Exercises – Exercise 2.1, 2.2, etc...

Module 2 Answer Keys – Answer Key 2.1, 2.2, etc...

In the text of the content outline, all handouts and exercises are referred to by title and number. (i.e. Communication Flow, Exercise 6.1
Study Skills Checklist, Exercise 4.6)