COLLABORATION | COMMUNITY | EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND ANTI-RACISM | MEANINGFUL POSITIVE IMPACT | INNOVATION | SHARED LEARNING

Preparing Washington's Future Public Health Workforce through Service Learning

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How do we prepare the next generation of PH professionals for practice *before* they enter the workforce?

A world of
HEALTHY PEOPLE

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UNDERGRADUATE SERVICE LEARNING = WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Service-learning is required for all PH-GH students

How many?

- 300 students enrolled annually
- Honors cohort(~30 students) complete additional service-learning experience

Course Focus

- **Community-engaged workforce preparation** through class-wide projects
- **Student mentorship** from faculty and teaching assistants

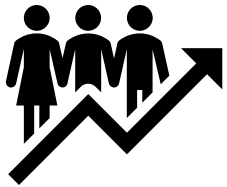
Our Goal: Create practice-ready graduates



WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

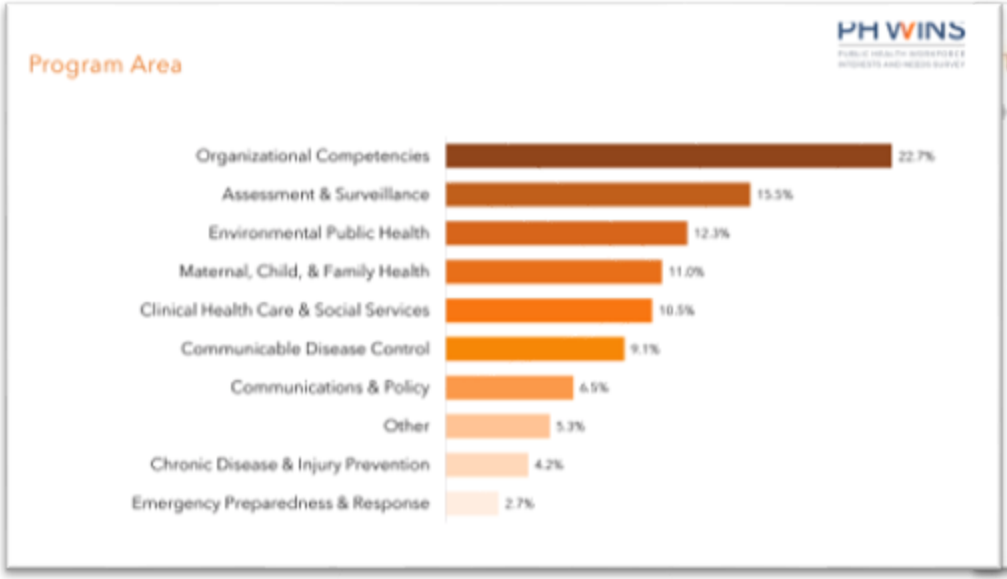
- Public health workforce shortages
- Recruitment and retention challenges
- Burden of training inexperienced recent graduates / Need for practice-ready graduates

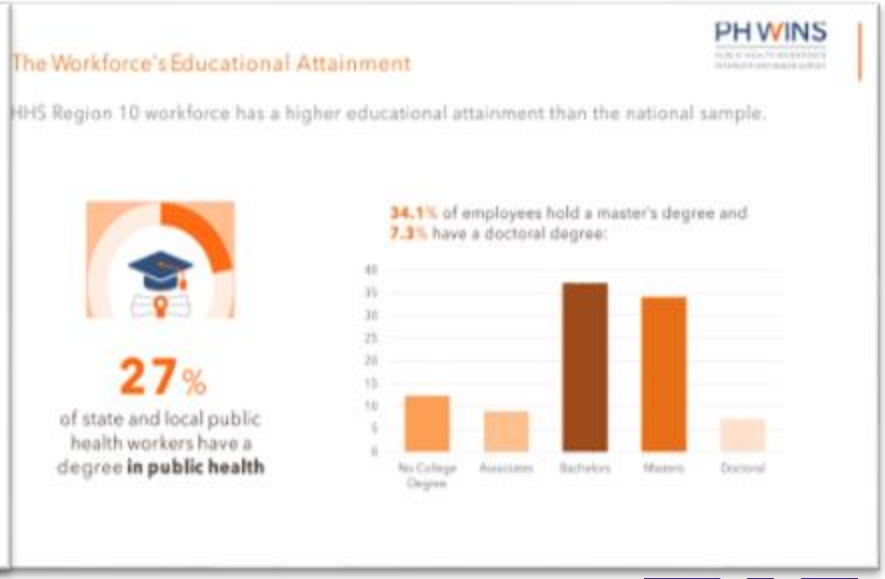
- One solution (of many) could be:
  - Universities serving as workforce development partners



PH WINS 2025 DATA

- **Public health workforce interests and needs survey (PH WINS)**





WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED

Technical Skills



- Assessment
- Research
- Program planning
- Evaluation
- MS Teams, MS Office Suite, etc.

Professional Skills

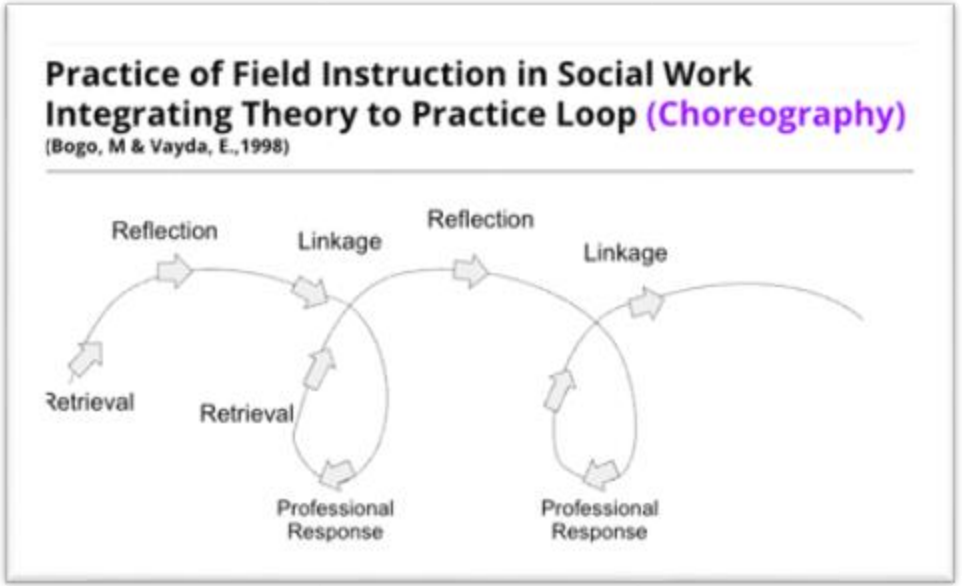


- Communication
  - Written and interpersonal
- Building human relationships in the age of AI
- Teamwork
- Project management
- Working **WITH** communities
- Humility & Respect

SERVICE LEARNING IS BOTH A TEACHING STRATEGY AND A WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

UW PH-GH MAJOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MODEL

- **Theory to Practice**
- **Course Content**
  - Service Learning: Soundtrack/Music
  - Theories, Frameworks: Dance moves
  - Theory to Practice: Choreography
- **Community partnership**
- **Applied deliverables**
- **Critical reflection**
- **Professional identity formation**



COMMUNITY PARTNERS ARE CO-INSTRUCTORS AND WORKFORCE TRAINERS

PARTNER	AREAS OF WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT
WA STATE L& I: WORK EQUITY RESEARCH CENTER	INJURY PREVENTION COMMUNICATION
U-DISTRICT STREET MEDICINE	ORAL HEALTH AND UNHOUSED POPULATIONS
SEA-MAR EL REY RADIO STATION	MULTILINGUAL HEALTH EDUCATION
KING COUNTY EMS	FALL PREVENTION EDUCATION
UW FARM	BENEFITS OF LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS
ROOTS! & MARY'S PLACE	DESTIGMATIZING UNHOUSED POPULATIONS
NEIGHBORCARE HEALTH	MENTAL HEALTH AND SEXUAL HEALTH IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ETHNO-MED	MULTILINGUAL HEALTH EDUCATION

All partners teach students to develop trust with the populations they serve

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND SERVICE LEARNING DELIVERABLES

Course Assignments

- Population profile
- Letters of Intent to seek funding
- Reflection papers
- Quizzes
- Professional development training: Resumes/LinkedIn, Cover letters, Mock Interviews

Deliverables

- Health Communication
  - Infographics, pamphlets, radio scripts, podcasts, recipe books, etc.
- Impact Reports
- Oral Histories (health beliefs and practices)
- Museum exhibits (live and virtual)
- Health Education (teaching vs. presenting)

HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS IS A CORE PH COMPETENCY

Health Communications Products are the most requested deliverable

- Radio scripts (English and Spanish)
- Multilingual health education landing pages
- Worker health messaging via infographics,
- Social Media posts/campaigns
- Podcasts (advocacy, destigmatization and health promotion topics)

Question: What deliverables would be useful to you?

EQUITY CENTERED PRACTICE

Our course content….

- **Health equity frameworks**
  - **Cultural wealth framework, strengths perspective, life course perspective, cultural humility, public health critical race praxis, trustworthiness and community engagement and many more.**
- **Application of these frameworks to every assignment, deliverable**
- **We ask students to consider:**
  - **Community defined needs**
  - **Inclusion of many voices**
- **Goal: Students embody critical reflection**

EQUITY CENTERED PRACTICE

Service learning course content….

THEORY TO PRACTICE

Health Equity Framework

- Cultural wealth framework
- Strengths perspective
- Life course perspective
- Cultural humility
- Public health critical race praxis
- Trustworthiness & Community engagement

Application

- How do these frameworks show up in assignments and deliverables?

Students must consider:

- Community defined needs
- Inclusion of many voices

Goal: **Students embody critical reflection**

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED IN TEACHING THIS COURSE

- Community partners (CP) require bespoke treatment
- CP perspectives are critical to everyone's success
- Not all CP want/can participate in the same manner (flexibility)
- CP might need a break for a year, and then comeback
- An organizational level relationship vs a relationship with an individual in the organization has pros and cons
- Opening communicate to support the working relationship
- Support your CP to be a co-instructor and take their cues when developing a project.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED IN TEACHING THIS COURSE

- Our job is to be “the hammer” with the students, not the CP
- Instructors and TAs service as project managers, NOT CPs
- Students need structured opportunities to process and to connect their practice back to public health concepts.
- Encourage CPs to provide honest feedback to students, just as they would receive in the workplace.
- Be honest with your CP! Do not put them out.
- Relationships with CP is #1. PERIOD
- Question: What would you appreciate as a community partner.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED IN TEACHING THIS COURSE

Instructors

- CP relationships is #1. Do **NOT** put them out.
- Protect structured opportunities for PH application
- Project managers
- Serve as "the hammer" with students

Community Partner

- Model workplace expectations; provide honest feedback to students

Students

- Process, connect, apply PH concepts to practice
- Develop PH professional identity

Question: What would you appreciate as a community partner?

UNDERGRADUATE SERVICE LEARNING = WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Universities can intentionally address workforce needs
- Undergraduate service learning introduces students to public health careers, builds practical competencies, develops professional identity, and establishes relationships with future employers.
- Practice Partners receive meaningful products, expanded capacity, and shape the next generation of practitioners.
- Helps us all to meet the goal of creating practice-ready graduates

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Service-learning as workforce preparation

> A structured, equity-centered service-learning model can effectively prepare undergraduate students to meet public health workforce needs by integrating theory, practice, and community partnership.

Community partners as co-educators for workforce development

> Partnerships with a diverse range of community organizations position partners as trainers of the future health workforce, ensuring that student learning is grounded in real-world public health priorities and community expertise.

Health communication as a core competency

> Developing targeted communication and health education tools (e.g., infographics, radio scripts, podcasts) builds essential, applied skills to address today's public health challenges.

Question: What skills do you most want to see in new public health graduates entering your organization?