



# Designing Evaluation Courses to Incorporate High Impact Educational Practices

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## Abstract

As part of a "Making Learning Visible" cohort at the University of Alaska Anchorage, Corrie Whitmore worked to incorporate high impact education practices, including community engaged learning, "flipped" classroom techniques, and team-based learning into the evaluation courses offered by the Health Sciences department.

In the fall 2016 semester evaluation students are partnering with a statewide Parents as Teachers home visiting program to provide evaluation consulting and participate in community engaged learning.

## University Context

The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) is Alaska's largest university, with approximately 17,000 students. UAA is an open-access university with academic programs leading to occupational endorsements; undergraduate and graduate certificates; and associate, baccalaureate and graduate degrees (UAA, 2016).

The Department of Health Science offers a **Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences (BSHS)** degree with Health Educator and Pre-Professional Tracks. Those in the Pre-Professional Tracks plan to become Physician's Assistants, Physical or Occupational Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, or Pharmacists. There are approx. 550 BSHS Majors and Pre-Majors in the Health Sciences Department.

*HS 420: Program Evaluation* is a required course for all Health Sciences Majors and a popular elective for students pursuing a Minor in Public Health through our department. This course is cross-listed with the School of Social Work, who also offers it each semester.

## What are (some) High Impact Educational Practices?

### Community Engaged & Service Learning:

In community-engaged and service learning courses, students are involved "work outside the classroom that contributes to the public good." This requires careful linkages between student learning outcomes and service to partnering community agencies (UAA CCEL, 2015)

### Team Based Learning (TBL) & "Flipping" the Classroom

TBL provides students working in teams with the opportunity to apply course content to solve problems. This approach encourages mastery of conceptual and procedural knowledge and the development of important interpersonal skills necessary for the workplace (Michaelson, Sweet, & Parmalee, 2009).

## What can High Impact Educational Practices look like in Evaluation Courses?

In the Fall 2016 semester, we partnered with the local Community Action Program's statewide Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, to provide RurAL CAP with an outside perspective on their current evaluation materials, with an eye toward strengthening future grant funding. This partnership also benefited the students by grounding their learning around program evaluation in a real program, improving the training of the future healthcare and human services workforce.

Our department also uses flipped classroom techniques and case studies to incorporate team-based learning in evaluation courses. Students respond well to these opportunities to apply the concepts they are learning.

## Challenges and Successes

### Reciprocity:

We want students to learn from community partners, while also providing them with meaningful work. Identifying evaluation work that is both a real help to our community partners *and* that can be done by students in their first evaluation course is a challenge.

### Assessment:

Organizing a course around "client" products, rather than exams, is unusual, and requires much communication with students & our community partner.

## Future Directions

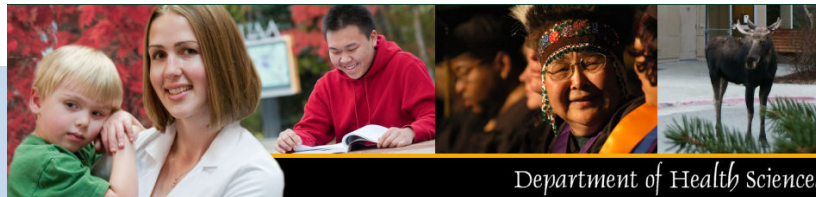
In the Fall 2017 semester, HS 420 students will design and complete the first comprehensive evaluation of UAA's Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences program.

We continue to recruit additional community partners for future sections of HS 420. Our goal is to have enough "clients" for all students to participate in TBL, with each team addressing real evaluation challenges in the community.

## References

- Michaelsen, L., Sweet, M. & Parmalee, D. (2008) Team-Based Learning: Small Group Learning's Next Big Step. *New Directions in Teaching and Learning*, Number 116 (7-27).
- UAA. (2016). *About UAA*. Retrieved from <https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/about> on 10/5/16.
- UAA Center for Community Engagement and Learning (CCEL). (2015). *Designation Process for Community Engaged Academic Courses*.

**Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences  
Health Educator &  
Pre-Professional Tracks**



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