

# Grow Great Health Educators through Community-Based Learning

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## PROFESSIONALLY PREPARED HEALTH EDUCATORS

As the Health Education field grows, professionally prepared students are more important than ever. The required skill set of a successful practitioner is constantly evolving and academic requirements should advance to better prepare students.

Professionally prepared students should minimally be able to<sub>1</sub>:

- Perform needs and resource **assessments**
- Manage personnel and programs
- Act as a **resource** for health education
- **Advocate** for health issues
- Promote healthy behaviors and preventive care
- Conduct research as appropriate for programs
- Market health programs and services
- **Plan, Implement and Evaluate:**



Health education programs and services  
Mass media campaigns  
Health risk appraisal instruments  
Educational materials and curricula



## COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

Community-Based Learning is typically defined as the *collaborative engagement* of students, faculty and community partners designed to *provide students with rich, real world opportunities* that enrich student learning, personal development and civic involvement while also contributing to the enrichment and well-being of the greater community<sub>2</sub>



## CREATE A COMMUNITY-BASED ACADEMIC COURSE

The course will operate as a "business" to develop a health education program or service for a community partner.

*Examples: (the opportunities are endless and will vary by university/professor)*

- Plan and implement a health-fair for the organization
- Conduct a needs assessment of the organization's target population
- Create and implement a wellness program for employees

Ideally, the elective course should be offered prior to the internship in order for students to gain community-based experience in a supported environment.

### Tips for Success:

1. Search existing and archived courses for a course that emphasizes teamwork, communication and notes a required field experience.
2. Meet with Internship Director to brainstorm potential health education community organizations that may want to partner. Location should be close to campus.
3. Meet with community organization to discuss projects. Their buy-in is critical. Look for organizations that are well-organized and led by Certified Health Education Specialists.
4. Explain limitations of working within semesters and with students
5. Agree on detailed scope of work with timeline. Clarify expectations again.
6. Design syllabus (a based on timeline and scope of work. In lieu of textbook, require a fee for a working budget. Create detailed policies.
7. Base evaluation on weekly timecards and quality of individual contribution.
8. Design a midterm and final evaluation for students, site and professor.
9. Advertise so students are aware of the practical work and field experience involved. Be sure to note required releases, travel and background check.
10. Organize students to function as a business: Project Managers and Committees, etc. A class size between 20 – 30 students is ideal.
11. Plan to spend several class meetings at the community site throughout the semester. The site usually conducts a thorough orientation. A class that meets twice per week is ideal
12. Plan an event at the end of the semester to "celebrate" the student work.

<sub>1</sub> Retrieved from [www.nchec.org](http://www.nchec.org) 2010

<sub>2</sub> Retrieved from [www.unf.edu](http://www.unf.edu) 2010

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