Community-Academic Partnerships Enrich the Wisconsin Experience for Health Education Students

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Velocity Project

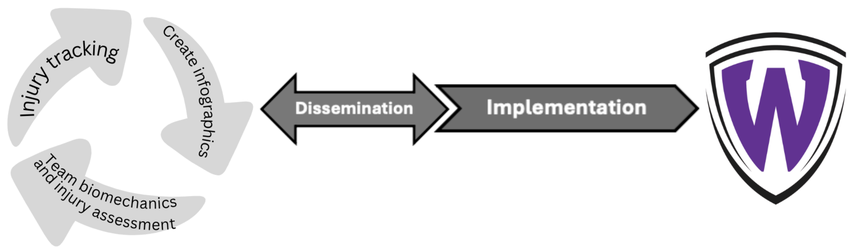
INTRODUCTION

- Current research supports the development of community-academic partnerships.
- Partnerships improve the student experience and foster community.
- Partnerships promote active learning, create deeper interaction and engagement between learners and faculty, promote critical thinking, and enhance clinical reasoning.
- Involving the community ensures research is valued by the members and meets their needs.

Involvement in the Velocity Project was aimed to merge our academic experience with our personal interests of running. Through this community-academic partnership, we applied our knowledge to foster connections with the Waunakee Community High School track and field team to identify connections between running biomechanics, sleep, and stress to reduce injury rates.

PARTNERSHIP

Through our collaboration with the Waunakee track and field team, athletes completed daily surveys tracking fatigue, stress, recovery, training intensity, and injuries. After a full season of data collection, we developed infographics to help educate both coaches and athletes on potential training issues ahead of the 2025 season. To further investigate injury causes, we conducted onsite biomechanical assessments, gathering detailed insights into the athletes' running mechanics.



METHODS

Sleep
Duration
Quality

Well-being
Stress
Fatigue

Biomechanics
IMU
At practice

Training
Workout intensity
Mid/long distance
- GPS sync
- Athlete report

Sprints & Jumps
- Coach log

Injury
Diagnosis
Onset
T&F related
Impact
Recovery

Performance
Meet results

Students were responsible for data collection, management, and producing evidence-based materials for high school track and field athletes and coaches.

DISCUSSION

- This opportunity enhanced the student experience at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.
- Collaboration between undergraduate and graduate students fostered peer collaboration and dissemination of knowledge.
- Students learned how to apply their knowledge when communicating research findings to the community partner.
- Our findings are similar to research from nursing education supporting the development of community-academic partnerships to allow students to explore how their future career can broadly impact health.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Through this project we transferred knowledge learned in the DPT program and effectively communicated it to a targeted audience. Further, we learned how physical therapy extends beyond the clinic and how we can positively impact the communities we work with. We were able to recognize the different factors that influence an individual's performance that will improve our patient care.

Graduate Student Experience

Through cross-collaboration with faculty and graduate students, I was able to engage with the off-campus community. This experience strengthened my understanding of the role of relationship-building and evidence-based interventions in supporting community wellness.

Undergraduate Student Experience

CONCLUSION

Community-based partnerships should continue in future years to enhance the student experience and give them the opportunity to engage with community members about their expectations of healthcare professionals and collaborating on implementing positive changes.

CITATIONS

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