

Master of Public Health Applied Practice Experience

by

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Chapter 1 - Portfolio Products

This Applied Practice Experience (APE) was conducted in coordination with Utah State University (USU) Extension, Assistant Professor Jenna Dyckman, and the Logan City School District in Logan, Utah. USU Extension's Create Better Health program serves as the contracted SNAP-ed provider for the state of Utah. The project centered on designing and implementing a nutrition-based Healthy Summer Challenge for participants of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Each Monday during the 7-week program, a display table was set up featuring physically active games for youth, a MyPlate display, flyers for Create Better Health's SNAP-ed classes, information about the challenge, and samples of healthy recipes. Parents and guardians were invited to recreate the recipes at home and attend nutrition classes to earn entries into a raffle. Spanning May through September 2024, this APE involved a total of 240 hours, encompassing the creation of the portfolio products listed below and in-person site work. My responsibilities included program design, budget creation, promotional material development, pre- and post-survey design, booth layout and activity planning, reporting, and presenting the project results to Create Better Health leadership to inform future programming.

Table 1.1 Summary of Portfolio Products

Portfolio Product		Description
1	Budget for the project	I developed a project budget to support the planning of USU Extension's Create Better Health summer programming in the county. The budget included the costs for recipe sample supplies and printing promotional materials. This budget was submitted to and approved by my supervisor.
2	Program Design	I designed this project as a method to promote healthy nutritional habits and awareness of Create Better Health

		programming in the community. I researched other nutrition interventions and adapted them to fit the needs of the program and to be sustainable for future iterations.
3	Promotional Materials	I created flyers and posters to inform summer food program participants that the health challenge was occurring. I received approval for the posters I made from the marketing coordinator for Create Better Health.
4	MyPlate nutrition education table	The MyPlate education table provided information on highlighted fruits or vegetables, healthy recipes, recipe samples, class information, surveys, how to enter the raffle, and a MyPlate display. A physical activity to engage youth was also offered.
5	Surveys	Pre- and post- surveys were provided at the beginning and the end of the challenge. The surveys collected quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the program's impact on participants' nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.
6	PowerPoint presentation for Create Better Health	A PowerPoint Presentation was provided to inform Create Better Health leadership about the successes and struggles of the community health challenge. I shared insights in who was drawn to the challenge, working with the Summer Food Service Program, and we brainstormed ways to improve community health challenges for future use.

7	Program evaluation tool	I utilized the Systems Archetypes – Success to the Successful tool to evaluate strategies for improving the success of the Healthy Summer Challenge project, particularly if other employees want to incorporate it into Create Better Health (SNAP-Ed) programming. This tool was chosen to examine how resources and efforts might be redirected to maximize program impact.
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Table 1.2 Portfolio Products and Competency Addressed

Portfolio Product		Number and Competency Addressed	
1	Budget for the project	10	Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management
2	Program Design	9	Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention
3	Promotional materials	18	Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
4	MyPlate Nutrition Education table	19	Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
5	Surveys	2	Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context
6	PowerPoint presentation for Create Better Health	19	Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation
7	Systems thinking tool	22	Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than a standard narrative

Chapter 2 - Competencies

Table 2.1 Summary of MPH Foundational Competencies

Number and Competency		Description
2	Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context	I created pre- and post-surveys that were designed to gauge where participants were on the Transtheoretical Stages of Change model and their nutrition habits and knowledge.
9	Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention	I designed this program with the goal of improving awareness of Create Better Health and improving health behaviors for the participants of the Summer Food Services Program.
10	Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management	Create Better Health (SNAP-ed) is a grant funded program so having a budget for the project was essential. Having a budget is important to ensure the project will be sustainable for future iterations.
18	Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors	I created posters and flyers to inform families in the Summer Food Services Program about the Healthy Summer Challenge, how to participate, and to provide nutrition information.
19	Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation to a nonacademic, non-peer audience with attention to factors such as literacy and health literacy	The MyPlate education table provided information on highlighted fruits or vegetables, healthy recipes, recipe samples, class information, surveys, how to enter the raffle, and a MyPlate display. A physical activity to engage youth was also offered.
		I provided an oral PowerPoint Presentation to Create Better Health leadership to help facilitate ideas for improving community health challenges and working with Summer Food Service Programs.
22	Apply a systems thinking tool to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than a standard narrative	Systems archetypes- Success to the successful model was used to analyze how to adapt the project in the future to benefit from enthusiastic youth participation.

Competency 2 – Surveys are an important and heavily utilized tool in the Create Better Health Program. I created pre- and post-surveys for the Healthy Summer Challenge to assess participants' nutrition knowledge, behaviors, and readiness for change based on the

Transtheoretical Stages of Change Model, as well as their interest in Create Better Health SNAP-Ed classes. I collaborated with LaCee Jiminez, who oversees reporting for the program, to refine the surveys. These surveys, available in digital and hard copy formats, gathered quantitative data on dietary habits and knowledge, along with qualitative insights through open-ended questions. Participants who completed the surveys earned raffle tickets for the program's prize drawing. Fourteen parents/guardians filled out pre surveys and only one completed the post survey.

Competency 9 – This program was designed to address the nutritional needs of the broader community during the summer months, a time when nutritional intake often decreases for low-income families. The primary goal was to target youth nutrition by engaging their parents or guardians. The program utilized effective communication strategies, integrated SNAP-Ed classes, and formed partnerships with local community organizations. Through this intervention, I created accessible opportunities for families to engage in health-promoting behaviors, directly contributing to the overall health of the population. The design and implementation of the program reflect a targeted, evidence-based approach to addressing public health goals based on the specific needs of the local community.

Competency 10 – Budgeting played a crucial role in the successful implementation of this program. As Create Better Health is funded through grants, it was essential to have a clear plan for program costs. I developed an estimated budget to be submitted for approval, which included expenses for promotional materials and ingredients for the recipe samples. I researched the cost of ingredients for each planned recipe, calculated how many samples each recipe would yield, and estimated the total number of samples needed based on the typical attendance at similar public educational displays organized by Create Better Health. This

budget ensured that the program could be executed within financial constraints while meeting its objectives.

Competency 18 – Effective communication strategies were vital in raising awareness about the Healthy Summer Challenge. I designed flyers to share with interested participants and created posters to draw attention to the MyPlate table display. To encourage engagement, I also developed flyers promoting SNAP-Ed classes, enabling participants to earn raffle entries by attending. Interactive activities helped capture the interest of youth, who often brought their parents and guardians to the table. Additionally, I created QR code displays for easy access to surveys and provided posters with clear instructions for participating in the challenge.

Competency 19 – Effectively communicating audience-appropriate public health content was essential to the success of the Healthy Summer Challenge project. The MyPlate table display engaged both youth and adults. Each week, educational posters highlighting a featured fruit or vegetable used in the recipe samples were displayed to reinforce key nutritional information. The MyPlate setup served as a consistent reminder of the importance of a healthy, balanced diet. Additionally, physical activities were incorporated with nutrition education elements, helping youth better understand and remember key MyPlate concepts while staying engaged in the program. This combination of visual aids and interactive activities effectively facilitated learning, particularly among youth participants.

Communicating the project results to Create Better Health leadership was important for generating insights to improve future community health challenge initiatives. I delivered an oral presentation accompanied by a PowerPoint to facilitate brainstorming. In my presentation I outlined the research that laid the foundation for my project, emphasizing the Transtheoretical Stages of Change Model and its role in shaping the surveys that were created for the challenge.

Additionally, I reviewed the project's goals, challenges, successes, and the implications of the results. I concluded by facilitating discussion to generate actionable recommendations for improving future community health challenges.

Competency 22 - To enhance the future effectiveness of the Healthy Summer Challenge, I applied Systems Thinking Tools, including the "Success to the Successful" archetype. This framework was valuable in identifying opportunities to adapt the program for greater impact in the future. While the original target audience was parents and guardians of youth participating in the Summer Lunch Program, the project predominantly attracted youth participants. This indicates that a shift in focus to youth engagement may yield greater success in engagement with the community health challenge. By leveraging the natural enthusiasm and involvement of the youth, the program could indirectly influence household nutrition behaviors and potentially enhance class attendance over time.

Table 2.2 MPH Foundational Competencies Course Mapping

22 Public Health Foundational Competencies Course Mapping	MPH 701	MPH 720	MPH 754	MPH 802	MPH 818
Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health					
1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice	x		x		
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context	x	x	x		
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate	x	x	x		
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice	x		x		

Public Health and Health Care Systems					
5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings		x			
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels					x
Planning and Management to Promote Health					
7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health		x		x	
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs					x
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention			x		
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management		x	x		
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs	x	x	x		
Policy in Public Health					
12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence		x	x	x	
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes		x		x	x
14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations		x			x
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity		x		x	
Leadership					
16. Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue		x			x
17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges		x			
Communication					
18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors	DMP 815, FNDH 880 or KIN 796				
19. Communicate audience-appropriate (i.e., non-academic, non-peer audience) public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation	DMP 815, FNDH 880 or KIN 796				
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content		x			x
Interprofessional Practice					
21. Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health		x			x
Systems Thinking					
22. Apply a systems thinking tools to visually represent a public health issue in a format other than a standard narrative			x	x	