Health Club: The Pursuit for a Diverse Healthcare Team

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**Health Club: The Pursuit for a Diverse Healthcare Team**

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### Background
- According to the US Census Bureau (2022), the White race comprises 75% of the population as the majority group (Vespa, et al., 2020).
- The majority of occupational therapy (OT) students identify as White, while only 25% of students identify as a minority racial/ethnic group, including Hispanic, African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander groups (American Occupational Therapy Association [AOTA], 2022).
- Demographic projections in the US predict that by 2045, minority groups will become the majority group (Vespa, et al., 2020). The current demographics and projections further create a need for ethnically and racially diverse OT practitioners and (2) fail to anticipate the educational needs of the increasingly diverse population at both an academic and clinical level (Banks, 2022).
- The lack of an ethnically and racially diverse OT workforce contributes to health disparities among minority populations (National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities [NIH], 2022).
- A diverse OT workforce results in improved patient rapport, medical compliance, and overall healthcare outcomes (Mattingly, 2018; Wilbur et al., 2020).
- The most significant barrier contributing to the diversity gap includes a lack of awareness about health professions, such as OT (Ching, 2019).
- Exposure to OT at a young age (Arrington, 2000; Bumgarner et al., 2003; Magnuson & Starr, 2000; Zayas & McQuigan, 2006), such as during high school, is pivotal to foster career development and support efforts to create a diverse OT workforce.

### Problem
Currently, the ethnic and racial demographics of OT students do not reflect the US’ diverse populations due to general lack of awareness about OT among diverse high school students.

### Purpose
This project involved developing an after-school program for ethnically and racially diverse high school students to foster awareness about health professions and promote diversity in healthcare teams such as OT.

### Methods
This capstone project consisted of five phases implemented over a 17-week period:

#### Strengths and Needs Phase
- Interviewed and observed high school students and faculty
- Reviewed existing curriculum/materials related to health professions

#### Program Development Phase
- Created the after-school enrichment program

#### Program Implementation Phase
- Implemented the after-school enrichment program

#### Program Evaluation Phase
- Evaluated and refined the program and the materials

#### Dissemination Phase
- Created a presentation to share with school stakeholders and OT student organizations
- Wrote a manuscript for OT Practice Magazine

### Theoretical Frameworks
- Person-Environment-Occupation Model (Law et al., 1996)
- Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994)
- Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978)
- Collaborative Learning (Britton, 1985)

### Program Overview
**Description**
Health Club was an after-school enrichment program for students grades 9-12 who are interested in exploring health careers. Health Club meets for one hour once a week for six weeks.

**Program Outline**
- **Week 1: Introduction to Health Club**
  - Presentation: Health professions, academic requirements, scope of practice, settings, populations, specialty areas (OT, PT, SLP, Nursing)
  - Activity: Identity map, health professions template

- **Week 2: Introduction to Medical Terminology**
  - Presentation: Prefixes, Root Words, and Suffixes
  - Activity: Medical terminology game: Define the Condition

- **Week 3: Introduction to Anatomy: The Skeletal System**
  - Presentation: Anatomical position, directional terms, planes, and the skeletal system
  - Activity: Build the Skeleton Race, skeletal system labeling, and crossword puzzle

- **Week 4: Introduction to Anatomy: The Muscular System**
  - Presentation: Functions, types of muscles, identification of muscles & muscle groups
  - Activity: Muscle Memory Game

- **Week 5: Skills 101**
  - Presentation: Vital signs, use of gait belt & body mechanics, therapy equipment and application, therapeutics exercises
  - Activity: Skills Lab

- **Week 6: Health Club Jeopardy**
  - Activity: Comprehensive Jeopardy game on content presented during weeks 1-5

### Discussion
**Significance**
The Health Club is important for several reasons:
- Serves as an initial effort to promote awareness about OT among ethnically and racially diverse populations
- Supports student’s interest and career development in health professions such as OT
- Provides a blueprint for local and national OT organizations to use in their communities
- Expposes high school students to foundational knowledge that will be useful in their college and professional careers

**Implications for Practice and Research**
- Examine Health Club outcomes using scientific methods
- Develop after-school programs focused solely on OT education
- Explore the application of Health Club with different grade levels

### References
- This project did not involve human subjects and did not require IRB approval.

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