

Workforce Assignment

The Workforce Wiki assignment is designed to provide students with an opportunity to (a) examine the context of a specific setting within public health education and (b) develop web-based materials for a specific audience. In groups, students will examine the roles, responsibilities and ethical considerations of public health educators within a specific setting (school, community, workplace or healthcare). They will also examine the availability of jobs in this setting, their requirements and growth potential as well as gather information on cutting-edge topics and/or potential future trends within that setting. Students will interview at least one public health educator working in the field (I will supply list of possible sources) and at least one faculty member whose research is in that field. Interviews can be conducted in person, on the phone or via email.

This assignment will be conducted in two stages. For the first stage each group will develop a wiki page designed specifically for undergraduate students interested in finding employment in the specific setting. The Workforce Wikis should provide a general overview of the setting, what types of positions are available in the setting and what experiences and skills are useful to get a job in that setting. The wikis will also include descriptions of working within the setting from interviews with professionals as well as provide the 308 students with an understanding of some of the cutting-edge topics in the setting, potential future trends for the setting and ethical considerations that might arise in the setting. Wiki pages will be reviewed by 308 students.

The second phase of the assignment will be a 20 minute group presentation to the 601 class. In this presentation your group will need to make a case for the importance of focusing health education efforts within your setting. Your group will need to describe how your setting can be more than a location or a convenient venue for reaching a population; provide examples of health education efforts (research or practice) within the setting and tie them to one or more of Whitelaw et al's models described in class; describe unique issues that arise in your setting that may affect health education efforts. The primary aim of the presentation is to outline the extent to which a "settings approach" is being and/or could be done within your setting. The presentations need to go beyond the wiki page. It should integrate and synthesize the information you've gathered into a comprehensive picture of your setting within the field of public health education. Grading for the entire assignment will occur by me (70%), by your peers in the class (15%), and by 308 students (15%).

Presentations should last approximately 20 minutes with 5 minutes for questions. Presentations should be done in PowerPoint and should NOT include Wiki pages. The class will independently review the Wiki pages.

Interview

1. As a group, review the attached list of example questions. Identify the types of questions that will provide you with the type of information you are seeking. You can use these questions, make up your own, or use a combination of these questions and your own.

2. As a group, identify faculty member and health educators who you think would be helpful in learning about your assigned setting. Each student must conduct at least one interview and each group must have at least one faculty member and one health educator.
3. Individually, students should telephone or e-mail the professional and request a meeting. State that you would like to secure information on what a professional health educator does and/or advice regarding what an entry-level health educator should do when looking to enter the workforce (or looking for a job after graduation).
4. Have your list of questions that you would like to ask (with back-up questions just in case) and be prepared to tell things about yourself. They may want to know about your skills, interests and experiences.
5. You should either take notes during the interview or write detailed notes as soon as the interview is complete.
6. Write a brief summary of your interview from your notes. This summary should be shared with your group and, as a group, you should decide how to post interview summaries on the Wiki page.
7. Remember to send a “thank you” note within 24 hours after the interview and ask if you can keep in touch.

Sample Questions for Interview

Questions about Career Choice:

1. How did you become interested in this field?
2. Are there courses that you found to be particularly helpful in your work?
3. How did you get your job?
4. If you could do it all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?
5. Is there anything that you would change?

Questions about the Health Education Setting

1. What are the main responsibilities associated with work in your field?
2. Please describe a typical day, week, and month.
3. What interests and skills are needed for successful employment in this field?
4. What kind of work could I expect to do as an entry-level professional in this field?
5. What are the qualifications that you look for in a health educator?
6. What entry-level health educator jobs are best for learning as much as possible?
7. What are the advantages of working in this field? Disadvantages?
8. What salary and benefits can I expect?
9. What type of work schedule does this field require?
10. How does being a Certified Health Education Specialist help me?
11. Are jobs in this field limited to any particular geographical area(s)?
12. How do people find out about job openings?
13. What opportunities exist for advancement and/or lateral movement?
14. What are the emerging jobs in this field?
15. What is the current outlook for new college graduates in public health education?
16. Are you satisfied with your field? How could it be improved upon?

17. What do you see happening to public health education practice in the next ten years? Twenty years? Thirty years?

Questions about Health Educator Practice:

1. Which part of the job is most challenging for you?
2. What skills are important to be able to do your job well? (For example, writing, presenting, or specific quantitative skills.)
3. From your perspective, what are the drawbacks and rewards of working in this industry?
4. What types of individuals are successful in this field/organization?
5. How are employees evaluated?
6. How is information about employee performance communicated?

Questions about Professional Advice:

1. What education and experiences will make someone more marketable?
2. How do you see jobs in this field changing in the future?
3. Are there professional organizations and journals that you would recommend?

Questions about a Specific Organization/Setting

1. Please tell me more about your organization and its purposes.
2. Is your organization growing, shrinking or maintaining its current size?
3. How does your organization compete or cooperate with other organizations within public health education?
4. How do you think your job would be different if you worked in a larger or smaller organization?
5. How is your organization funded?
6. What is unique about your organization?
7. In the future do you think your organization will need more employees in your field?
8. What is your job security within this organization?