Video Project Brings New Life to Community Engagement

Trying to motivate and find projects for students that can be used in the community can be exhausting for educators. Students report being tired of creating posters, pamphlets, and research papers. How can educators engage students in their community as they address a current health care need in a unique manner?

A lengthy Internet search led me to a contest on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Web site that challenged students to create a video, 90 seconds in length or shorter, using statistics or research from the CDC Web site to address violence or injury prevention in their community. This content fit perfectly for my graduate-level special population course, although it may be tailored for any academic level. The students (N = 10) were e-mailed the CDC contest information prior to the beginning of the course and were asked to research a topic. As this was a summer course, the students would have only 4 weeks to complete the assignment.

On the first day of the class, students met with staff from our university media center. The media center staff explained the importance of creating story boards before filming to get a sense of direction for their projects. Students were able to borrow equipment from the media center for filming and were offered support services to help with film editing. The students did not incur any cost to complete this project. The contest required that the students choose a topic that addresses injury or violence prevention in their own community. The videos were to be judged on creativity, use of injury and violence topic area, communication of a positive injury or violence message, length of the video, and video and audio quality (CDC, 2012). The judging criteria were transformed into the class grading rubric.

The students were given the option of working in pairs or working independently. Two students chose to work independently due to driving distance and schedules, and the other eight worked in pairs. Then, students were instructed to choose a topic relevant to our class from a list provided by the CDC. The topics they chose included elder abuse, cyber-bullying, motorcycle helmet safety, unintentional drug overdose, adolescent driver safety, and fire safety. Each student felt passionately about his or her topic. The students met with leaders within the community to determine what the leaders were doing to prevent injury or violence regarding their related topics. Students chose to present their information in a variety of ways, including the use of stills with voice-overs, interviews, and student actors. The media center assisted with any technical difficulties during filming or editing. After completion, the videos were submitted to the CDC for judging.

The students were required to write a reflection after completing the video. All 10 students thought this project was worth their time and effort. They encouraged me to conduct a similar project with the next group of students in the course. A sense of accomplishment was felt by the students after creating these videos. The safety videos created by the students are currently being used in various ways to educate varied communities, including the Girl Scouts, the coroner’s office, multiple schools, the police department, fire stations, and a nursing home. A survey requesting feedback relating to how the students’ projects affected the community is currently being sent to the various organizations that participated in this video contest. Some students were apprehensive about filming and editing, but each student was thrilled they learned something new and felt challenged in a new way.

In nursing education, we are challenged to meet National League for Nursing (NLN) standards for nursing education excellence (2006) in new and innovative ways. This project met NLN standards by prompting students to be leaders and agents for change; to think critically and communicate effectively with community leaders; to find, manage, and use the acquired information collected from the community; and to manage change and feelings of ambiguity and uncertainty with using different technology with which no student was initially familiar. This video project engaged not only the students but also their community. This project can be transformed easily and used in various nursing classes; alternatively, new contests can be accessed at http://challenge.gov/search. The videos from this contest are available at http://saferlens.challenge.gov.

References


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