The "Trilogy": An Innovative Course Sequence for Training Community Health Professionals

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The "Trilogy" is a three-course sequence designed to take Master of Public Health students on an experiential learning path through the theory and practice of community health while partnering with a community organization or agency. Over three consecutive semesters, students follow a selected priority population and a related real life health issue, refining and expanding their knowledge and skills, while providing invaluable service to their partnering agencies and target communities.

Trilogy Course Descriptions

PUBH 5110 Community Health Assessment Research – This is the first course in the sequence and provides students with the opportunity to develop and apply strategies and techniques for identifying and prioritizing individual and community health assets and needs. It includes development, administration, analysis, and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative assessment strategies including stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and survey questionnaires. Students select a health issue and priority population to be the focus of assessment projects during the semester and in subsequent Trilogy courses.

PUBH 5120 Community Health Program Planning and Evaluation – This course focuses on the planning of specific health programs and services to meet needs identified in the first course. Students are guided through the process of writing a research proposal that focuses on development of a community health program and evaluation methods to determine its effectiveness. Once the program is formally proposed, students develop and pretest program content, materials, and evaluation tools for the identified population and community health issue investigated.

PUBH 5130 Consulting and Implementation of Health Programs and Services – This course builds on the activities and experiences in the previous courses and focuses on implementation and evaluation of the specific health interventions that students have designed for community and organizational settings. It integrates guided consultative activities involving group process training, interpersonal communication, and organizational and community development. The final product is a written program report, complete with evaluative findings and research implications.

Below is a comparison of learning strategies utilized before and after incorporation of the Trilogy into the curriculum:

OLD CURRICULUM WITHOUT "TRILOGY"		***NEW CURRICULUM WITH TRILOGY"***
Classroom-based	→	Community-based
Didactic	→	Experiential
Episodic	→	Longitudinal
Random	→	Sequential
Individualistic	→	Collaborative
Knowledge-based	→	Competency-based
Deductive-analytic	→	Inductive-synthetic
Unidisciplinary	→	Interdisciplinary