

Veterinary Interprofessional Education Resources (vIPER)

By the Royal Veterinary College

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Contents

A Brief Introduction to Interprofessional Education 2

The Aims of this Project 2

Requirements Capture 2

Development of the Resources..... 3

 Talking Walls 3

 Communication Skills Scenario 3

 Emergency Case Role Play 3

The Teaching Resource Packs 4

Evaluation of the Resources 4

References 5



A Brief Introduction to Interprofessional Education

CAIPE (Centre For The Advancement Of Interprofessional Education) in 2002 defined Interprofessional Education (IPE) as:

Occurring when two or more professions learn with, from and about each other to improve collaboration and the quality of care.

The potential benefits of IPE are becoming more widely realised, for example Sargeant et al. (2008) report:

Teamwork and interprofessional practice and learning are becoming integral to health care. It is anticipated that these approaches can maximize professional resources and optimize patient care.

IPE is therefore increasingly used in human medicine, and aviation for example, however it remains largely unutilised in veterinary education.

There are a number of methods for teaching IPE cited in the literature. For example, different professions teaching each other (Gill et al., 2006); training on simulations together (Baker et al., 2008); online resources such as discussion boards (Santy et al., 2009), visual technique workshops (Parseell, Gibbs and Bligh, 1998); and non-formal learning (Robson and Kitchen, 2007).

The Aims of this Project

The veterinary Interprofessional Education resources (vIPEr) project aimed:

1. To assess the need for veterinary-specific IPE resources through requirements capture.
2. To develop resources based on this stakeholder consultation. These resources were designed to be relatively cheap and easy to run. Teachers can access the resource packs via the internet at: www.live.ac.uk/html/activities_professionalism.html
3. Perform a preliminary evaluation of the resources.

This project focused on the main interprofessional relationship within a veterinary practice; that between the veterinary surgeon and the veterinary nurse.

Requirements Capture

Three focus groups were held with stakeholders: practicing vets and veterinary nurses, student vets, and student nurses. Thematic analysis on the transcripts highlighted several issues, for example, concern about working with other professions, the continued existence of stereotypical views and misconceptions on professional roles and the importance of communication and an effective team. All groups agreed that undergraduate IPE would benefit students in their future careers within a practice.

Development of the Resources

Three teaching resources based on issues mentioned in the focus groups were designed, which aimed to improve the interprofessional skills of veterinary students and veterinary nursing students in various ways:

1. 'Talking Walls' as described by Parsell, Gibbs and Bligh (1998) – to improve understanding of roles
2. 'Communication Skills Scenario' – to recognise and address interprofessional issues
3. 'Emergency Case Role Play' – to improve teamwork

Talking Walls

Talking Walls (Parsell, Gibbs and Bligh, 1998) is a simple technique adapted from commercial situations of exploring issues, analyzing problems or developing action plans. It is used in this case to encourage students to start discussions with members of profession/s they will work with in the future. In small groups, students are asked to write down the roles of the 'other profession' i.e. vets if they are a veterinary nurse and vice versa. This allows the students to see what the other profession really thought about their profession's roles. Students are encouraged to discuss (and try to overcome) misconceptions.

Communication Skills Scenario

This resource is a series of short videos depicting an interprofessional issue and confrontation between a veterinary surgeon and a veterinary nurse. The videos explore a scenario whereby both the vet and nurse consider the patient, a cat, should be euthanized, however the owner disagrees, and a lack of communication between the members of the two professions (vet and nurse) leads to a confrontation. An interprofessional group of students watch the videos and discuss the issues that arise, both with regards to communication and interprofessionalism.

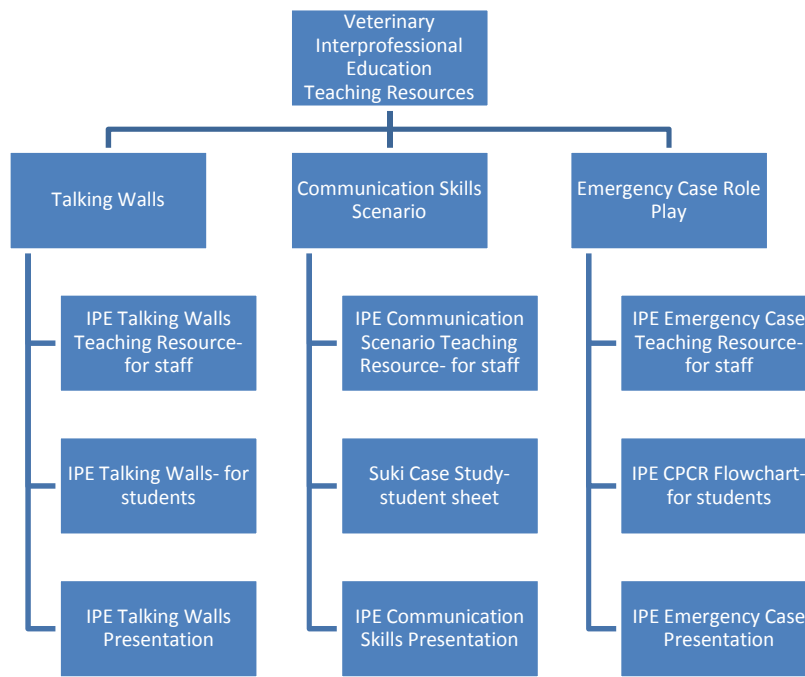
Emergency Case Role Play

In pairs, students carry out an emergency case (cardiopulmonary cerebral resuscitation – CPR) role play. Each pair is made up of one veterinary surgeon and one veterinary nurse. They are introduced to the scenario by a facilitator who then observes as they carry out CPR. The facilitator gives feedback highlighting the interprofessional points that arose as well as any significant steps that were missed (based on a CPR flowchart). The flowchart was created through cognitive task analysis (CTA) of training sessions in a teaching hospital and discussions with practitioners.

The Teaching Resource Packs

For each resource a pack has been produced consisting of:

- A teachers' guide
- Handout/s for students
- A PowerPoint presentation



Evaluation of the Resources

Preliminary analysis on feedback from students and staff using these resources has been very favourable. A selection of typical quotes from students can be seen below:

“I feel that VNs and V/S have/had a wall between them, we never tend to mix and this creates problems in the future. This Talking Walls session really helped us to get issues out in the open.” (Talking Walls; Veterinary Nurse).

“Good to keep groups small – the number of people today was ideal to get honest discussions. Think it should be part of the curriculum.” (Talking Walls; Veterinary Surgeon).

“I found this role play helpful because it helped me to work effectively with a vet student. It was useful to learn CPR with a vet student rather than just pretending this is what a vet would do. I didn't feel intimidated by the other people and enjoyed this session.” (Emergency Case Role Play; Veterinary Nurse).

“Was great to get the chance to work with and meet other veterinary professionals whilst learning new skills. Very enjoyable and well run!” (Emergency Case Role Play; Veterinary Surgeon).

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