

Unintended outcomes and unconventional partnerships

Background

With varying student placement times for over 7000 learners across the seven sites of a multihospital academic network (University Health Network, Toronto, Ontario, Canada), logistical challenges with the coordination of Structured Interprofessional Education (IPE) placements are an issue. A Structured IPE student clinical placement requires the participation of students from three or more professions. The students must be participating in profession-specific placements within the same clinical area/unit during the same four week period.

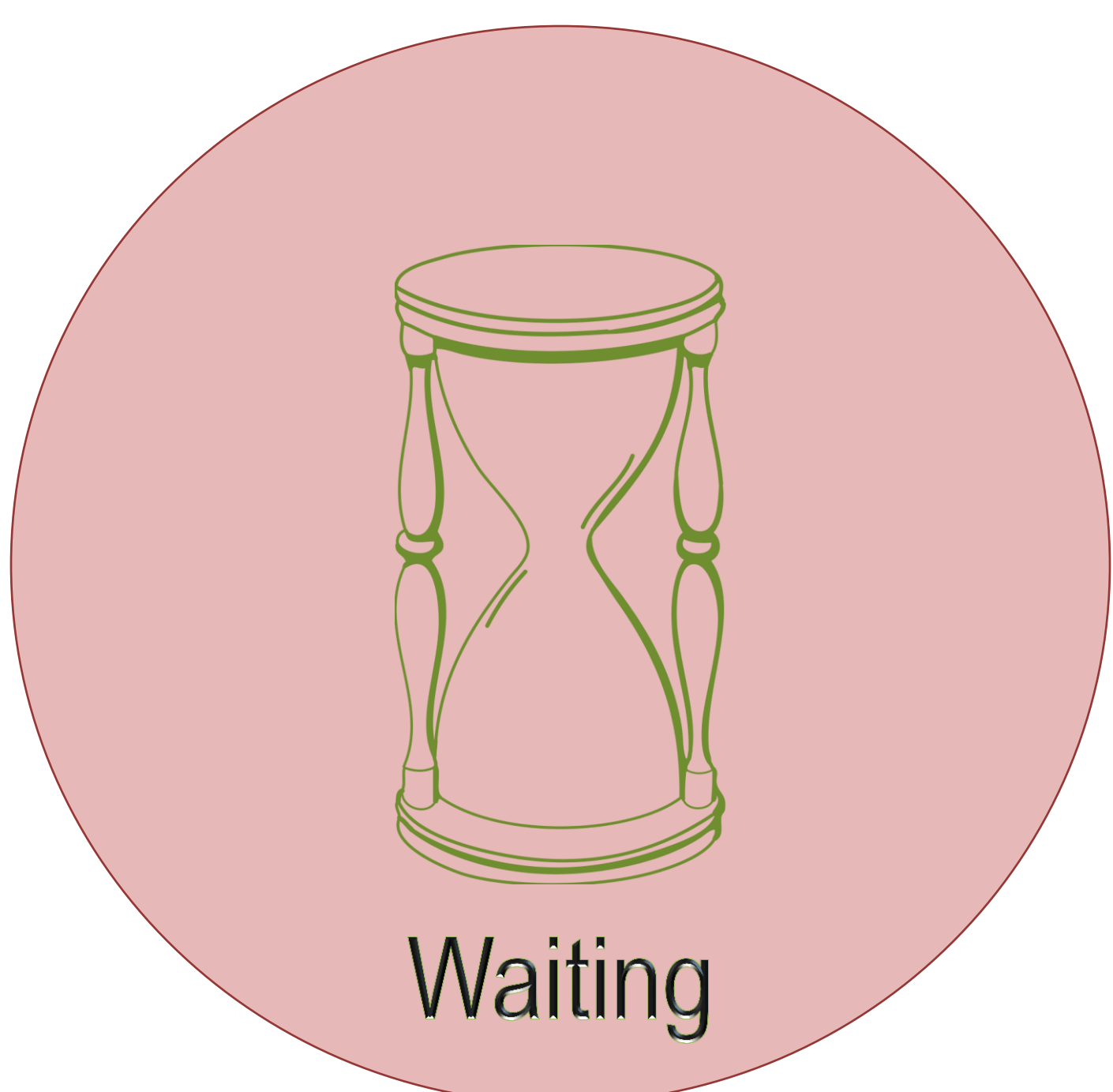
Objectives

Improve the current process for the coordination of IPE placements across University Health Network (UHN).

To accomplish this objective, the use of LEAN methodology was explored with the aim to streamline the current process and to build a more sustainable, efficient model for the future.

Methods

1. Baseline data was collected to determine the time and workload involved in coordinating a Structured IPE placement at UHN.
2. A process mapping exercise was conducted with a skilled LEAN facilitator, an interprofessional education/care coordinator and two interprofessional education/care leaders in order to identify opportunities for improvement within the Structured IPE placement process.
3. Identified the optimal flow of events for the process.
4. Collaboration with each of the clinical professions at UHN to increase awareness of IPE placement opportunities and to facilitate a pull mechanism for the coordination of Structured IPE placements at UHN.
5. Continuous improvement of the process through feedback from key stakeholders in the process (e.g., students, facilitators, IPE/C Co-leaders and IPE Coordinator).



Non-utilized Talent

What did the IPE team report regarding a change in process?

“ there was tons of “back and forth” between all relevant players (e.g. , profession-specific clinical coordinators, potential IPE facilitators, student clinical instructors and students) in what seemed like an endless loop of e-mails, voice messages and telephone discussions. Now relevant players seem much more “in tune” to providing the information needed and in a more timely manner.” - Tracy

Results

The initial process mapping exercise enabled the participants to visualize immediate opportunities for improvement and the overarching need to create a sustainable model for the coordination of IPE at UHN.

Actions taken to improve the process:

- Master calendar of placements
- Placement Calendar
- E-mail template
- Yearly coordination table

Professions	Duration	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Anesthesia Assistants													
Audiology	January – March (1)												
Audiology	February – April (1)												
Audiology	May – June (1)												
Behavioral Therapy	January 8 th – March 2 nd												
Behavioral Therapy	March 2nd week – April												
Behavioral Therapy	September – October												
Bioethics	January – March												
Chiropractic													
Clinical Nutrition	May – June (2008)												
Clinical Nutrition	January – March (2011)												
Clinical Nutrition	April – May (2011)												
Kinesiology	September – April (1/2 day for 1000)												
Medicine													
Medical Radiation (RTs)	September – April												
Medical Radiation (RTs)	May – June												
Medical Imaging (CTs)													
Medical Imaging (CTs)	September 8 th – December 1 st												
Medical Imaging (CTs)	January 4 th April 12 th												
Nursing													
OT	April 15 th – June 15 th												
OT	July – August												
OT	September – December												
OT (out of catchment)	January – February												
OTs	January – February												
OTs	March – April												
OTs	November – December												
Pharmacy (6 weeks of 10 September)	May 20 th – August												
PT													

	Before Lean Process Mapping	After Lean Process Mapping
Total time to retrieve most Information	45 days	14 days
Total # of e-mails	82	65
Total # of phone calls	50	11

Learnings

The application of LEAN methodology holds tremendous potential to address longstanding process-related challenges associated with interprofessional education. Collaborating with process improvement colleagues in this work enabled learning about, from and with one another to improve the experiences of all involved.

What’s new:

- Targeted e-mails to the clinical professions at UHN at specific timeframes throughout the year
- Participation in Structured IPE placements by additional clinical professions (e.g., Laboratory Medicine)
- More efficient approach to coordination, leading to less waiting, and more effective use of the UHN IPE team’s talent

Evaluation

- The process improvement exercise helped to streamline the collection of information required to coordinate Structured IPE placements through implementation of a coordinated schedule for email communications and follow-ups with key stakeholders from each of the clinical professions at UHN.
- The implementation of a master schedule for clinical placements at UHN enabled the identification of additional IPE opportunities (e.g., scheduled an additional modified IPE placement) and the development of a robust plan for Structured IPE placements for the year ahead.

References

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LEAN PRINCIPLES



Mapping the value stream and establishing flow

