# A Locally Developed Pilot Writers' Workshop Encourages Scholarly Dissemination of Interprofessional Education Projects

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#### **Abstract**

**INTRODUCTION** The interprofessional education (IPE) community has long recognized that scholarly output related to program/ study design, outcomes, and evaluation is needed to strengthen the IPE evidence base. We developed, implemented, and evaluated a university-wide interprofessional writers' workshop to address this need.

**METHODS** Awardees of the Linking Interprofessional Networks for Collaboration (LINC) Seed Grant Program, which provides financial support for innovative IPE projects at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, participated in a one-month writers' workshop that included asynchronous online modules and live programming exploring IPE publication opportunities. A qualitative descriptive approach was used to analyze free-text entries from module surveys and transcripts of discussions between workshop participants (n=10) and faculty (n=6) during live programming to identify themes and sentiment.

**RESULTS** Four main themes emerged: workshop design, rationale for participation, making scholarly writing a habit, and current trends in the IPE literature. Barriers to IPE research and barriers to writing for publication had the highest proportion of codes associated with negative sentiment; participating in IPE and lessons learned from workshop participation had the highest proportion of codes associated with positive sentiment.

**DISCUSSION** The inaugural LINC Writers' Workshop pilot was perceived as a helpful first step for encouraging IPE project teams to publish their designs, findings, and lessons learned in peer-reviewed journals, and for promoting an extended network of collaborators in IPE scholarship. Findings will be used to improve future iterations of the workshop, strengthen IPE project conceptualization and design, and build a community of local authors who can support and hold one another accountable to their publication goals.

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#### Introduction

The interprofessional education (IPE) community has long recognized that sustained scholarly output related to program or study design, outcomes, and evaluation is needed to strengthen the body of literature and address existing knowledge gaps unique to IPE (Vogel et al., 2019; Health Professions Accreditors Collaborative, 2019; Reeves, Pelone, Harison, Goldman & Zwarenstein, 2017). To address research gaps in IPE conceptualization, collaboration, and evaluation as identified by Reeves et al. (2017), Vogel et al. (2019) published an interprofessional team writing guide outlining specific strategies and principles focused on three areas: authorship and acknowledgement, planning for success, and developing an IPE product. However, if such overarching guidance is to remain effective, peer-driven reinforcement at the local level is needed for long-term sustainability. The literature has shown that peer-led writing groups using a variety of models (e.g., writing circles, retreats, seminars, scholarship networking, etc.) have proven effective at increasing scholarly writing activity because they promote collegiality and psychological safety, self- and team-accountability, and continuous exchange of ideas from different perspectives (Brandon, Jamadar, Girish, Dong, Morag & Mullan, 2015; Dhakal & Tornwall, 2020; Fleming, Malinkowski, Fleming, Brown, Davis & Hogan, 2017; Franks, 2018; Findyartini, Ramani, McKimm & Fornari, 2021; Bourgault, Galura, Kinchen & Peach, 2022).

In response to this challenge, faculty representatives to Linking Interprofessional Networks for Collaboration (LINC) (LINC Organizational Model, 2022; Quinene et al, 2022), a campus-wide organization designed to strengthen interprofessional collaboration and foster innovation in IPE at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UT Health San Antonio), developed, implemented, and evaluated the inaugural LINC Writers' Workshop in January 2022. The workshop was offered to encourage and support scholarly dissemination of faculty- and staff-led IPE projects among 2019 and 2020 awardees of the LINC Seed Grant Program (LINC Seed Grant Program, 2022; Krolick et al, 2020), which provides financial support for innovative IPE research projects designed to develop competencies within learners that target the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC) (2022) framework. Prior to the launch of the inaugural LINC Writers' Workshop, a survey of LINC seed grant recipients documented numerous peer-reviewed poster and podium presentations for regional (n=6), national (n=14), and international (n=2) conferences, but no project-related manuscript submissions to peer-reviewed publications were reported. The LINC Writers' Workshop was created to address this specific gap in peer-reviewed publication dissemination.

#### **METHODS**

Workshop Objectives and Design

Workshop objectives were as follows: (1) to discuss publication options for IPE scholarship; (2) to share curated exemplars of IPE publications for review and discussion; (3) to provide an opportunity to participants to consult IPE writing experts and journal editors; and (4) to identify potential opportunities for dissemination of IPE project designs, outcomes, or lessons learned. A Canvas course was created for the workshop. Workshop content was delivered by six LINC-affiliated faculty through asynchronous online modules completed over a 3-week period followed by three live online sessions: a 1-hour peer-to-peer discussion with LINC faculty, a 2-hour writing workshop led by two nationally recognized IPE scholars, and a 1-hour Q&A featuring two editors of IPE journals (Table 1).

Asynchronous modules. Content related to the workshop overview, IPE journals, and publication options for IPE scholarship were delivered asynchronously with slides and pre-recorded video presentations featuring LINC-affiliated faculty. Assigned readings were used as exemplars for IPE publication types and anchored the video presentations. Of note, out of the nine IPE papers incorporated into presentations, 7 were authored or co-authored by the presenters themselves. This was an intentional effort to create a near-peer dynamic between LINC faculty and workshop participants, which has been shown to engender a sense of possibility and motivation (Irvine, Williams & McKenna, 2018; Orsini et al., 2022; Dudley, Menon, Mosleh & Leadbeatter, 2022; Ahmad, Farina, Fornari, Pearlman, Friedman & Olvet, 2021).

Live sessions. Ten participants attended the 1-hour peer-to-peer live online session with the LINC-affili-

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ated faculty who presented asynchronous modules. In addition, six participants also engaged in the 2-hour collaborative writing workshop and the 1-hour moderated panel discussion. All sessions were recorded and posted on the Canvas course page for future reference by workshop attendees.

Module	Delivery method	
Module #1: Workshop Overview	Recorded video presentation	
Module #2: Interprofessional Education (IPE) Journals	Recorded video presentation	
Module #3: Assigned Readings	PDFs of exemplar IPE papers corresponding to recorded video presentations for each publication type in module #4	
Module #4: Publication Options for IPE Scholarship	Recorded video presentations on the following IPE publication types:	
Live Session #1: Peer-to-Peer Discussion	Online discussion featuring Module #4 presenters	
Live Session #2: Collaborative Writing Workshop	Online workshop led by nationally recognized IPE scholars	
Live Session #3: Moderated Panel Discussion	Online discussion featuring editors of IPE journals	

**Table 1.** 2022 LINC Writers' Workshop Programming.

### **Workshop Evaluation Plan**

Data collection. Surveys were incorporated as part of each asynchronous module, live online session, and at the end of the course (Table 2) and included items with Likert scale and free-text responses. Data collection and analysis for the purposes of workshop evaluation met the criteria for program evaluation and was deemed non-human subjects research per university IRB guidelines.

Data analysis. Qualitative descriptive studies assess language at the "surface" level—as a communicative medium rather than a cultural or phenomenological structure with theoretical implications. As such, this approach was appropriate for analyzing data collected from free-text entries in asynchronous module surveys and the peer-to-peer live discussion transcript from a one-time faculty development intervention (Sandelowski, 2000). A single reviewer used NVivo to conduct three complete cycles of content analysis (i.e., generating codes, organizing codes into interrelated themes, then scoring for sentiment) until distinct themes emerged (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2020).

#### **RESULTS**

#### Themes

Four major themes were generated from the coded data with subthemes that tended to cluster according to participant type (workshop participant or module presenter) and workshop objectives: (1) to discuss publication options for IPE scholarship; (2) to share curated exemplars of IPE publications for review and discussion; (3) to provide an opportunity to participants to consult IPE writing experts and journal editors; and (4) to identify potential opportunities for dissemination of IPE project designs, outcomes, or lessons learned (Table 2).

Workshop design. Workshop participants expressed appreciation for the workshop design, which linked IPE-specific publications and publication types to specific exemplar peer-reviewed papers for reference (Table 3). Live discussions that provided ample opportunity to clarify the content presented, ask additional questions, and seek additional networking and mentoring for IPE scholarship was also valued by participants.

		Primarily associated with		
Major Theme	Subthemes	Workshop participants	Module presenters	Workshop objective
Workshop design	Workshop design	X		1,2,3,4
	• Lessons learned from participating in workshop	X		3,4
Rationale for	• Rationale for participating in IPE	X	X	1,3,4
participation	Rationale for participating in the workshop	X		1,4
	Scholarly products generated by IPE projects	X		3,4
	Future IPE projects	X		4
Making scholarly	• Barriers to writing for publication	X	X	1,3,4
writing a habit	Personal publication experience	X	X	3,4
	Publication advice		X	1,4
	Mentoring for scholarship	X		3,4
Current state of the	Barriers to IPE research		X	1,4
IPE literature	Current trends in IPE literature		X	1,4

**Table 2.** 2022 LINC Writers' Workshop Thematic Analysis.

Rationale for participation. Although workshop participants found the short-course format difficult to incorporate into their schedules, they shared that their enrollment in the LINC Writers' Workshop was motivated by their positive experiences as IPE project leaders or team members and a desire to network formally with those engaged in IPE for future collaboration (Table 3). While workshop participants had generated posters and podium presentations specific to their IPE projects, they reported that work schedules left them with little time to develop manuscripts for scholarly dissemination in the IPE literature.

Making scholarly writing a habit. Workshop participants and module presenters acknowledged that engagement in IPE was often in addition to existing teaching, clinical and/or research workloads, which they already considered the top barrier to writing for publication on a regular basis (Table 3). Module presenters shared tips on how to integrate scholarly writing into their work routine in ways that were conducive to their energy level and thinking process. Workshop participants shared that early mentorship for IPE scholarship was crucial and that enrolling in the workshop provided them with direction they had been seeking. One participant suggested that a dedicated group for those on IPE project teams would be helpful for generating increased scholarly dissemination. Module presenters also acknowledged that there was a need to provide more formalized mentorship in scholarship for current and future IPE project teams.

Current state of the IPE literature. Module presenters discussed barriers to IPE research and current trends in the IPE literature to encourage workshop participants to develop and submit manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals (Table 3). They also identified biases that tended to disadvantage IPE research publication and funding. Workshop participants and module presenters also recognized that the large diversity in manuscript types coupled with the lack of consensus across IPE research, intervention and evaluation design makes generalizability challenging. However, one presenter noted that the increased publication of IPE-focused papers outside of IPE-specific journals is a promising trend that should be taken advantage of by participants interested in IPE scholarship.

#### **Sentiment Analysis**

Themes were then organized according to scoring results (e.g., neutral, positive, negative, mixed) (Table 4). Barriers to IPE research and barriers to writing for publication had the highest proportion of codes that scored negatively, while rationale for participating in IPE and lessons learned from workshop participation had the highest proportion of codes that scored positively.

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<b>Major Theme</b>	Representative Statement
Workshop design	"the thing that I enjoyed was the breakdown in the different type [sic] of publication submissions just seeing them broken out that way really kind of forced me to look at each one differently"
	"trying to navigate IPE can be very confusing, and getting help [is] very important to create community to meet others with your same interests"
Rationale for participation	"we teach in real time, and that has to take priority"
	"I've been an advocate for IPE we collaborate well together"
	"I started having an idea to form a team to include dentistry, pharmacy, and also skilled nursing"
	"I really want to develop it but I just don't have the time"
Making scholarly writing a habit	"there's lots of expectations around producing scholarship, seeking extramural funding, and it [writing] feels very much on top of just your day job"
	"I started making myself a 30-minute appointment every day to write even if I sat in front of my laptop and typed nothing it gets me thinking and gets the juices flowing"
	"[it is] beneficial sometimes to be involved in a think tank, [an] accountability-based group if I have an idea, and I have a time set on my calendar, I'm going to hold you accountable for forward movement. I've committed to be a part of this group so I have to make time for this"
Current state of the IPE literature	"I think we often have this focus on publishing results of things that work. But very often, if we're really scientists, if we're trying things [that are] new, a lot of the time things aren't going to work according to plan."
	If you're looking for funding outside of our university, you may find that hypothesis-driven research is the way to go. [But] there's nothing wrong with descriptive research. And it's really important for people to communicate, you know, what their experiences have been."
	"I've seen [IPE-focused] commentaries [outside of the IPE literature] that almost feel hypothesis-generating really digging into a problem more specifically, and contextualizing that problem."

**Table 3.** Representative Statements Associated with Major Themes from the 2022 LINC Writers' Workshop Participants and Presenters.

	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Mixed
Themes	• Publication advice	• Rationale for participating in	• Barriers to IPE re-	• Future plans for
	• Current trends in the IPE literature	IPE	search	publication
	• Workshop design	• Lessons learned from	• Barriers to writing for	<ul> <li>Personal publication</li> </ul>
	• Future IPE projects	participating in workshop	publication	experience
	• Rationale for participating in	• Making scholarly writing a		
	workshop	habit		
	<ul> <li>Scholarly products generated from</li> </ul>	• Mentoring for scholarship		
	IPE projects			

 Table 4. 2022 LINC Writers' Workshop Sentiment Analysis.

#### **DISCUSSION**

As expected, workshop participants and module presenters engaged in discussion about expectations and challenges related to balancing their teaching and clinical practice workload with disseminating educational scholarship. Our findings were consistent with barriers identified in the literature relative to health professions faculty, which included lack of time due to clinical and administrative duties, insufficient training in scholarly dissemination for educational research, perceived ambiguity of the value of current activity for scholarly dissemination, and lack of time or financial support specifically allocated for scholarship (Jordan et al., 2018; Islam, Taheri, McBane & Talukder, 2020; Reed & Artino, 2021).

The workshop also provided an important forum for workshop participants to express their desire for formal and informal mentorship in IPE. The SHAPE model utilized by the Centre for Interprofessional Education, University of Toronto offers a viable framework that may be adapted for formal mentorship programming among interprofessional faculty and staff teams (Henry-Noel, Bishop, Gwede, Petkova & Schumacher, 2019). SHAPE stands for the core competencies embedded in the center's mentorship program: sharing clinical experiences, helping others as interprofessional colleagues, acquiring new knowledge as mentor and mentee relationships develop; promoting the benefits of interprofessional, collaborative care, and engaging in interprofessional collaboration. Equally as important, however, is the cultivation of social capital between faculty and staff across the university's component schools in order to drive both formal and informal mentorship. Duke AHEAD (Academy for Health Professions Education and Academic Development) at Duke University has outlined a three-pronged approach to leveraging structural, cognitive, and relational aspects of social capital for interprofessional faculty development (Lee et al., 2019). Duke AHEAD fosters inclusive academy membership, increasing opportunities for intra-institutional interaction, articulating clearly defined common goals and values for scholarship and sustainability, and encouraging broad participation and recognition for interprofessional group accomplishments.

Challenges in collaboration and implementation of IPE projects highlighted by workshop participants reflected

overarching issues with coordinating interprofessional faculty and staff development and collaboration at academic institutions as a whole. In their report on a failed university-wide IPE faculty development initiative, Doll, Maio and Potthoff (2018) noted that successful student-directed IPE activity did not necessarily translate to success in complementary IPE programming for faculty. They demonstrated that enthusiasm among a small group of faculty IPE leaders and early adopters was insufficient for overcoming an overall faculty lack of understanding related to potential value of IPE and uneven endorsement for IPE engagement at the faculty and administrative levels. Paradis and Whitehead (2018) also articulated what workshop participants and presenters acknowledged: overcoming the complexity of planning and executing IPE is also complicated by the difficulty in leveling IPE across learners in their pre-professional development.

Finally, workshop participants and presenters alluded to ongoing issues related to bias in the IPE literature. Since the 2017 Cochrane review conducted by Reeves, Pelone, Harrison, Goldman and Zwarenstein, other systematic reviews have identified the same risks for bias in the IPE literature: single group or non-equivalent group design, response bias (based on degree of receptiveness to IPE), and issues arising from non-standardized assessment tools and incomplete evaluation (Spaulding et al., 2021; Almoghirah, Nazar & Illing, 2021). While the LINC Writers' Workshop was intended as a pilot intervention, the post-workshop evaluation we employed produced rich, informative feedback that had not been captured via surveys alone from previous LINC faculty and staff development-focused offerings. Based on these findings, use of a live, semi-structured peer-to-peer discussion in tandem with free-text survey entries will be implemented as a standard method for evaluating learner outcomes, assessing the effectiveness of workshop design, and identifying program gaps.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Participants and module presenters perceived the LINC Writers' Workshop as a helpful first step for encouraging IPE project teams to disseminate their project designs, findings, and lessons learned through manuscript submissions to peer-reviewed journals, and for promoting an extended university-wide network of collabora-

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tors in IPE scholarship. Two important changes within LINC are planned for the next academic year based on outcomes from the inaugural LINC Writers' Workshop: incorporation of dedicated project conceptualization- and design-focused content into faculty and staff development programming and a new program dedicated to building a community of authors who would benefit from peer support and accountability to achieve their publication goals.

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#### **DISCLOSURE**

The authors report no conflicts of interest related to this project and manuscript.

#### **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

GGB, KAK, and JAZ contributed to the conception of the workshop and all authors contributed to its successful implementation. GGB acquired and analyzed data. GGB and JAZ completed data interpretation and developed the first draft of the manuscript. MRF, KAK, RM, and TAR critically reviewed and revised the first draft, and all authors approved the final version to be published.

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