

## **A Shared Space: A Pioneering Approach to Interprofessional Education in New Zealand**

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**Abstract :** In recent decades health and social service delivery have become more collaborative and interdisciplinary. Emerging trends suggest the need for an integrative and interprofessional approach to meet the challenges faced by professionals navigating the complexities of health and social service practice environments. Terms such as multidisciplinary practice, interprofessional collaboration, interprofessional education and transprofessional practice have become the common language used across a range of social services and health providers in western democratic systems. In Aotearoa New Zealand, one example of an interprofessional collaborative approach to curriculum design and delivery in health and social service is the development of an innovative Masters of Professional Practice programme. This qualification is the result of a strategic partnership between two tertiary institutions - Whitireia New Zealand (NZ) and the Wellington Institute of Technology (Weltec) in Wellington. The Master of Professional Practice programme was designed and delivered from the perspective of a collaborative, interprofessional and relational approach. Teachers and students in the programme come from a diverse range of cultural, professional and personal backgrounds and are engaged in courses using a blended learning approach that incorporates the values and pedagogies of interprofessional education. Students are actively engaged in professional practice while undertaking the programme. This presentation describes the themes of exploratory qualitative formative observations of engagement in class and online, student assessments, student research projects, as well as qualitative interviews with the programme teaching staff. These formative findings reveal the development of critical practice skills around the common themes of the programme: research and evidence based practice, education, leadership, working with diversity and advancing critical reflection of professional identities and interprofessional practice. This presentation will provide evidence of enhanced learning experiences in higher education and learning in multi-disciplinary contexts.

**Keywords :** diversity, exploratory research, interprofessional education, professional identity

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