

The Teaching Scholars Program at the University of Washington is a one-year professional development program for educators in the health professions who have a passion for teaching and a desire to become academic leaders. The program goals are to prepare scholars: 1.) to become academic leaders, 2.) to conduct research related to their educational endeavors, and 3.) to develop and disseminate educational innovations.

Each year, a group of health professionals meets throughout the year to address topics related to the interests and teaching responsibilities of the participants. Since the early years of the program, the Teaching Scholars Program cohorts have participated in The Rowers' Code team building workshop tailored specifically to their needs.

Challenge

The Teaching Scholars Program seeks to *galvanize scholars into a force for educational innovation and change* and the program directors wanted to get scholars moving in this direction early on in the program. The scholars are typically individuals who value their expertise and independence. How could the program help them be equally strong learners and team players too? The Teaching Scholars program engaged The Rowers' Code to develop a learning experience that would help build a collaborative community that is truly a force for change.

Solution

The Rowers' Code created a one-day team building workshop that takes place within the first few weeks of the Teaching Scholars' year-long curriculum. Using rowing both as a metaphor for teamwork and as a hands-on experience, the workshop introduces participants to team building skills and quickly gets them in the role of learner.

During the morning, the group learns the basics of Olympic-style rowing, then take to the water in coxed 8 person rowing shells. Scholars are introduced to the 7 principles of The Rowers' Code which helps remind them to demonstrate a sense of team by giving every seat in the boat equal value, putting the team above their own interests, leading by example and working out issues directly.

Through the rowing experience they explore different team needs and identify team members' unique talents and attributes.

The workshop teaches scholars how they can:

- Tap into the strength of peers
- Stay in sync with others
- Work issues out directly with teammates
- Find success through collaboration

In the afternoon, scholars review their Team Management Systems profiles, based on questionnaires completed prior to the session. These profiles provide insight into work style preferences. Interactive exercises spur lively discussions about work style differences and how to leverage this diversity and minimize conflict.

Results



Since 2003 The Rowers' Code has delivered annual workshops to almost 200 participants. Satisfaction rates are high— 94% of the participants report that they would recommend the session and the same percent respond that they will apply what they learned to their jobs.

The Teaching Scholar Program directors and participants agree that the workshop provides a transformational experience:

The Rowers' Code puts the Teaching Scholar into the role of a learner.

- *"It provides a simple, concrete experience that promotes reflection about teaching and learning: What did the coach do that helped my learning or impeded my learning? How can I translate into my own practice some of the coaching that was so helpful to me?" – Program Director*
- *"The most useful aspect was putting me back in the role of learner." – Participant*

The Rowers' Code provides a credible means of reinforcing the value of teamwork.

- *"We don't have to "yak yak" about the value of teamwork. Instead, the boat gives them immediate feedback about teamwork -- whether they are working as a team or not, whether they found their right places in the boat, etc." – Program Director*
- *"I learned to appreciate the team, not just being the leader." – Participant*

The Rower's Code workshops are fun and engaging with concepts that stick.

- *"The Rowers' Code engages all the senses to promote learning that sticks! Scholars remember the lessons learned and recount those lessons in stories long after the experience." – Program Director*
- *"This certainly was one of, if not the most creative and enjoyable training experiences. The concepts learned will become a large part of my decisions and future." – Participant*

About The Rowers' Code

We offer a selection of unique hands-on services including Team Building Workshops, Leadership Programs, On-Water Rowing Events, and Speaking Engagements. Our mission is to help our customers experience the power of successful collaboration. Our vision is to provide unique programs which are engaging, challenging and fun. We value open and honest communication, innovation and hard work. But, most of all we value people. www.rowerscode.com

To schedule a workshop contact:

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