**Completed Problem Statement Worksheet**

Topic: Oral Healthcare Curricular Integration

**CONTEXT**

**What is the current situation?**

Health professions faculty have to integrate oral health competencies into their curricula.

**What is wrong with the current situation (i.e., what is the *problem*)?**

Non-dental faculty struggle to integrate oral health competencies into their curricula due to a lack of training/lack of being oral health specialists.

**What are the most recent events that led us to the current situation?**

2000 Surgeon General’s Report — called for healthcare providers to help fight the oral health crisis.

2010 Affordable Care Act —healthcare providers must work in teams and deliver integrated care — nurses, physicians, and physician assistants to provide basic oral health exams, preventative oral health education, and referrals to dentists.

**What is the setting of the problem?**

Healthcare professional education programs

**KNOWLEDGE GAP**

**What have researchers in *similar* settings explored or discovered?**

Health professions: surveyed health professionals to determine barriers and challenges to integration which include lack of leadership support, lack of oral health education, and professional hierarchies, to name a few.

Researchers of curriculum change have said that faculty like to have control of their curricula and are hesitant to embrace major changes.

**What have researchers in *other* settings explored or discovered?**

Not sure yet

**What remains unknown about the problem?**

While \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is known, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is unknown.

While barriers and challenges to oral health integration have been identified for health professions faculty, it is unknown what faculty’s experiences are with oral health integration in the context of curriculum change.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

**Why is it important to fill the knowledge gap?**

**Scope: How big is the problem, and how many people are affected in the field or specific context you are studying?**

Large:

* + Millions of Americans suffer from poor oral health, and oral disease is largely preventable.
  + A large portion of the population does not visit the dentist regularly (but does visit their primary care provider).

**Consequences: What are the consequences of not addressing the problem?**

Healthcare faculty may continue to struggle without the requisite knowledge and skills needed to integrate oral health into their curricula. Without foundational oral health knowledge skills, healthcare professionals cannot integrate these competencies into their practice. The larger problem (oral healthcare crisis) may remain unaddressed.

**Contribution: How will your study contribute to the problem’s solution? How does filling the gap help?**

Understanding health professional faculty’s experiences with oral health integration might:

* uncover strategies for successful curriculum change
* help healthcare provides diagnose and refer patients with oral healthcare issues
* perhaps contribute to solving the oral healthcare crisis

**Draft of Desi’s Completed Problem Statement**

Health professions faculty have been tasked with integrating oral health competencies into their curricula to fight the ongoing oral health crisis in America and keep up with changes in the practice environment. I suspect that non-dental faculty struggle to do so because they did not receive oral health education and training. The 2000 Surgeon General’s Report called on all healthcare providers to help fight the oral health crisis. Ten years later, with the passage of the Affordable Care Act, health providers are now required to work in teams and deliver integrated care. This requires providers such as nurses, physicians, and physician assistants to provide basic oral health exams, preventative oral health education, and referrals to dentists. Researchers have surveyed health professions faculty to determine barriers and challenges to integration which include lack of leadership support, lack of oral health education, and professional hierarchies, to name a few. Researchers of curriculum change have said that faculty like to have control of their curricula and are hesitant to embrace major changes. While barriers and challenges to oral health integration have been identified for health professions faculty, it is unknown what faculty’s experiences are with oral health integration in the context of curriculum change. Millions of Americans suffer from poor oral health, and oral disease is largely preventable. However, a large portion of the population does not visit the dentist regularly, but many people visit their primary care provider. Oral disease can be prevented when caught early, which will be possible if all healthcare providers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to address their patients’ oral health. One strategy is educating future healthcare providers on how to perform basic oral health exams and coordinate care with a dentist. Understanding health professional faculty’s experiences with oral health integration might uncover strategies for successful curriculum change, thus, leading to a reduction in widespread oral disease across the nation.