

# Virtual Community and Global Health Course: United States and Ghana

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## Background

The RESP 620 Community and Global Health (CGH) course was developed as an integral and required course in the KU Respiratory Care (RC) program in 2019 as an avenue to prepare respiratory care students for engaging with the increasingly diverse patient populations they will serve upon graduation. The course explores a wide variety of significant health topics and issues that impact people worldwide, aiming to expand students' awareness and understanding of factors that influence access to healthcare, burdens and treatment of disease, public health education, resource limits, and governmental approaches to population health.

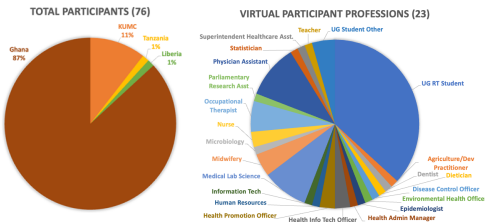
After a successful initial 8-week pilot program in 2022, where 25 University of Ghana Respiratory Therapy (UG RT) students joined the CGH course virtually, it was determined that real-time engagement of students in both settings was beneficial. Students participated in rich discussions while learning from healthcare providers from across the globe.

## Method

Faculty from the KU RC and UG RT programs collaborated to develop an entire semester (16-week) virtual CGH course to expand on the pilot experience. Faculty and participants met weekly for approx. 1.5 hours via Zoom. Faculty from both institutions guided their respective courses, including required demonstration of learning and deliverables to meet course expectations. Faculty facilitated the virtual platform, participant engagement, discussions and technology in their respective institutions and worked collaboratively to ensure the alignment of course content for weekly sessions. Course materials were shared electronically with participants 1-2 weeks prior to each session. This included PowerPoint slides, recommended discussion questions, YouTube videos, and website links that supported each content area.

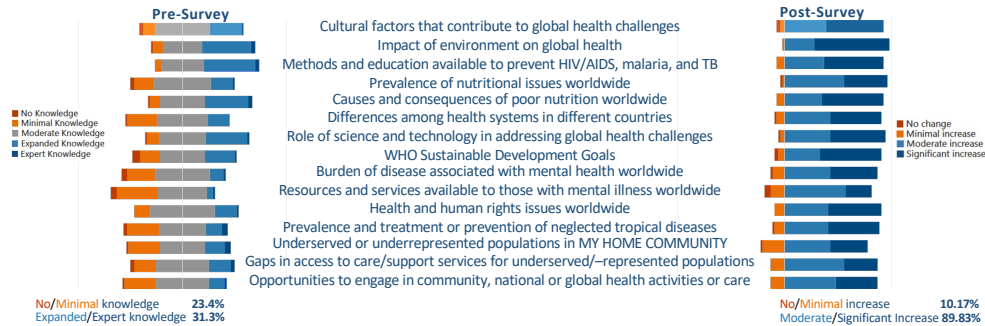
Pre- and post-surveys were developed to evaluate participants' overall experience in the course. The surveys included questions related to cultural competency and empathy, global understanding of healthcare access and delivery, and the widespread anticipation of/engagement with students and faculty from another country as an adjunct to support learning.

## Participant demographic based on initial registration

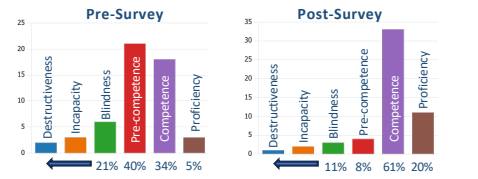


## Results/Findings

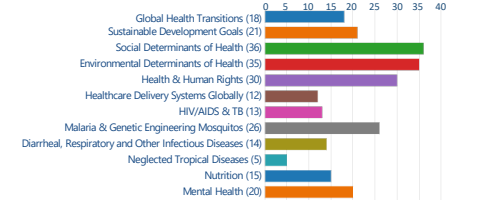
Participants were asked to rank their knowledge and understanding of 15 topics to be discussed throughout the course. Following the completion of the course, participants were asked to rate how their experience and knowledge of each topic was impacted after having completed the course. 70% (n=53) of participants responded to the pre-survey, and 71% (n=54) of participants responded to the post-survey.



At the beginning of the course, participants learned about the cultural competence continuum and completed a self-assessment. They were then asked to rank themselves according to the continuum. After completing the course, students were asked to rate themselves on the same scale. Those identifying as competent or proficient increased from 39% to 81% after course completion.

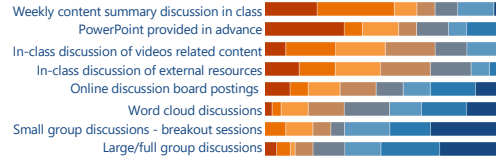
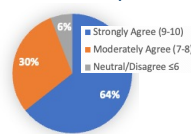


Students were asked to select five classroom discussions from which they learned the most. Social and environmental determinants of health ranked the highest, with 36 and 35 students selecting each topic, respectively. Health and human rights ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> (30), followed by malaria and genetically engineering mosquitos (26) and sustainable development goals (21).

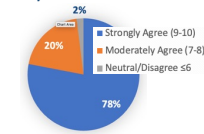


Participants were asked to rank how beneficial or impactful each means of exploring content was to their overall learning. The content summary discussion ranked highest. The summary discussion for each content area was outlined and guided by instructors rather than directly lecturing from PowerPoint slides. The least impactful was large group discussions, likely due to the difficulty of engaging 60+ virtual learners in a meaningful group discussion.

## Course materials were accurate and helpful



## Engaging with participants in US/Ghana was beneficial



## Student Quotes

**My greatest learning moments during this course**  
 "Students with diverse backgrounds and the experiences shared; healthcare being a multisectoral and multi-faceted issue; knowledgeable, interactive and wonderful lecturer; and learning a global perspective of healthcare services and delivery systems."  
 "The opportunity I [had] to receive information, learn, interact with new people from different professions and studies. Most importantly, I was able to share my views and be heard and understood by course mates and lecturers [which] was very fulfilling and rewarding for me."  
**Participating in this course with healthcare providers and students from another country will impact my patient care and profession in this way**  
 "To understand and appreciate the beliefs, culture and behavior of patients and how best I can come to their level to be able to achieve the best healthcare outcome."  
 "I am more mindful of cultural diversity and how it may influence clinical outcomes."  
 "It will help me identify patients' needs and attend to them [while] keeping in mind their rights."  
 "This course has given me the platform to meet, interact and learn from people from all walks of life to improve myself in terms of communication and my professional job. This will allow me to get the right medical information from the right client at the right time and to ask questions about their medical information that are not clear to me in order to correct misunderstandings and build trust between myself and them."

## Conclusion

As reflected in the pre- and post-survey results, the combined virtual experience benefited participants from both institutions. However, challenges to delivering this course included a 4-hours time difference, varied internet accessibility and other technical difficulties, a limit of 1 hour for live content discussions, and the size of the virtual participant group. Despite these challenges, faculty met with their respective participants before and after the 1-hour group session to summarize and discuss further. Overall success of this experience is due to many factors. The diversity of environment, educational level, healthcare profession, years of experience, resource accessibility, burden of disease, culture, and variety of content delivery are among the most impactful. Additionally, faculty from both institutions approached content planning and delivery with mutual respect for varying circumstances and a sincere desire to allow all participants an opportunity to share their respective experiences. Participants were encouraged to approach the course with a willingness to learn from and share experiences with an open mind and without judgement. All comments were welcomed and respected.

It is recommended that similar hybrid classroom experiences be developed to add value to the healthcare learning experience.

## Resources

Scan QR code for additional information, course syllabi, survey summaries, and other course resources

