

MAPH

Evaluation Update

News and information from Management Academy for Public Health
School of Public Health • Kenan-Flagler Business School
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

April, 2001

- **Enrollments on Target**
- **Participants Have Found the Curriculum Relevant**
- **Participants Want to Keep Learning**
- **Participants Expect Support for Applying Skills, but May Need Additional Resources**
- **Test Results Show Learning and Gains in Confidence**

A public health nursing supervisor tells how UNC's Management Academy for Public Health has benefited her:

The MAPH really made me take a look at how I was doing things. I was the kind of supervisor who tended to hold on to a lot of things because I felt like my staff was already overburdened. So, I saw myself in a lot of the articles we read for MAPH, and found out from the 360 feedback that the staff didn't think I trusted their skills. So, I came back from MAPH and in my Individual Development Plan, I looked at how I was not utilizing my staff and creating a situation that was impossible for me. The staff already had solutions but they were giving the problems to me and I was taking them all on. I had three lists of things to do.

So I've begun to let go of a lot of things and allow my staff to perform at their level of expertise so that they've been able to grow and do a better job than I was doing in managing the projects, because I didn't have time. And now I can do some of the management things I need to do.

The Management Academy for Public Health (MAPH), at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is completing the second year of the four-year national demonstration project. Sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the program will develop 600 public health managers in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia in methods for managing people, finance, and data. The Academy also tries to instill an entrepreneurial spirit, showing how public health agencies can collaborate with community partners and businesses to improve health status. The goal is to develop a replicable, sustainable model for developing management skills in local and state public health managers.

Teams from local and state health departments apply for selection into the Academy. In June, teams of participants in the Academy ("members") are notified of their acceptance. Members are then asked to prepare for the Academy by reading advance material, completing managerial self-assessments and soliciting colleagues to assess their managerial ability. In August, teams of 2-6 members from local, district, and state public health departments attend a one-

week management development course in Chapel Hill. The program is a collaborative effort between the UNC/CH School of Public Health and the UNC/CH Kenan-Flagler Business School. Faculty from both schools teach the courses, such as Strategic Management, Managing People, Marketing, and Finance. Each course lasts from four to eight hours and involves readings, lectures, case studies, exercises and discussions. In addition, members receive feedback and coaching on their managerial skills based upon the assessments they and their colleagues complete.

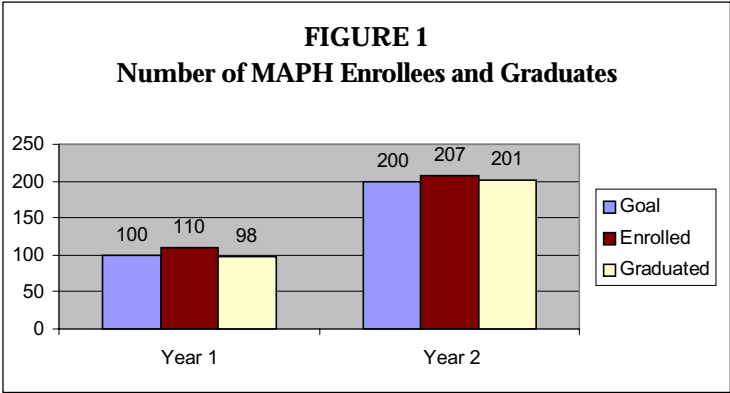
Back home, the teams complete an MAPH business plan to help them apply the skills taught, with the help of MAPH business plan coaches. Members also complete individual activities to improve their skills, and carry out web-based learning activities and course assignments. In November they return to Chapel Hill for a three-day program emphasizing finance, human resources, quality improvement and information management. In May, the members return to Chapel Hill to receive more instruction, present their business plans, and graduate. Six hours of graduate credit are available upon graduation, but for most members the Academy is "continuing education" rather than part of a degree program.

MAPH Enrollments on Target

MAPH hit its enrollment goals of one hundred participants in Year 1 and two hundred participants in Year 2. The attrition rate has been 6%. In Year 1, 110 members enrolled and 98 graduated, while in Year 2, 207 members enrolled and 201 are expected to graduate (Figure 1).



Dr. Ben Rosen, Hanes Professor of Management, Kenan-Flagler Business School, leads the class through the Harvard McGregor case study. One member remarked, "The level of instruction was superior! Faculty had a true grasp of needed skills for public health management."



The target audience for the Management Academy was managers working in local and state public health departments without formal training in management. Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate that the Academy has successfully attracted and retained the target audience.

TABLE 1
MAPH Member Characteristics - Years 1 and 2 Combined

Current managers	98%
College or graduate degree	85%
Ethnic minorities	21%
Mean age (years)	44

Teams were encouraged in Year 2 to invite a key stakeholder in public health not employed in governmental public health. As Table 2 illustrates, 96% of the members work in health departments with the remaining four percent being physicians, hospital administrators and other local officials.

TABLE 2
MAPH Member Employers - Years 1 and 2 Combined

Health Departments	96%
Multicounty/District	43%
City/County	39%
State	15%

Why do participants come? How motivated are they to learn? The answers to these questions are important predictors of the quality of learning and professional growth that results from any continuing education program. Academy members have been highly motivated to learn the skills and ideas MAPH teaches.

The MAPH faculty and staff have observed that the members are enthusiastic about the opportunity to hone their management skills. The Academy members also report strong interest when asked their reasons for attending the Academy. Table 3 reflects the percent of Year 2 members who rated various factors as influencing them considerably or very strongly to attend.

TABLE 3
“Considerable” or “Very Strong” Influence on Attending MAPH

Improve my management skills	85%
Interest in management as a topic	84%
Improve my agency’s community impact	83%
Improve agency’s internal functioning	79%
I was required to come	11%

Participants Have Found the Curriculum Relevant

So most participants want to come to the Academy and are interested in learning about management. But when they arrive, do they find the curriculum relevant and appropriate for their needs? MAPH asks this question on each course evaluation. The average for all of the courses is shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Perceived Relevance of the MAPH Curriculum

Intend to apply skills on job	90% *
Skills relevant to my job	88% *
Better manager due to MAPH course	79% *
Would recommend MAPH to colleagues	95%

* Percent strongly agree or agree for all courses combined

These Academy member comments reflect their impressions:

This is a superb method of giving public health managers better tools to do our jobs. I certainly hope the program can continue.

I am very impressed with the Management Academy. Attendance should be mandatory for all managers working in the public health arena.

Absolutely should be a national model program. A learning experience I’ll value and build on for years to come!

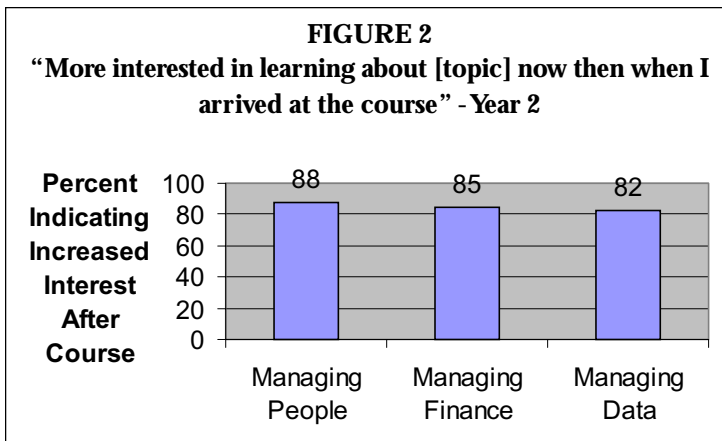


Dr. Tom Ricketts, School of Public Health Professor and Director of the North Carolina Rural Health Program, teaches partnership and civic entrepreneurship models. “This was an excellent presentation on how to change the paradigm,” one member remarked.

Participants Want to Keep Developing their Management Skills

MAPH recognizes that participants can only learn a small amount during the brief time they are in the classroom, as in all professional education. Much more is learned later through practicing new methods on-the-job, and by referring to books, articles, faculty, colleagues, and other resources made available during the training.

MAPH strives to pique managers' interest in learning more about management after the Academy by providing a stimulating introduction to the topics. MAPH also provides readings and opportunities to practice the skills taught, especially through the Business Plan and Individual Development Plan. To see if the Academy had increased interest in learning, members were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement, "I am more interested in learning about managing people now than when I arrived at the course." The same question was asked about managing data and finance. Most participants indicated that MAPH had increased their interest in learning more about managing people, finance, and data (Figure 2).

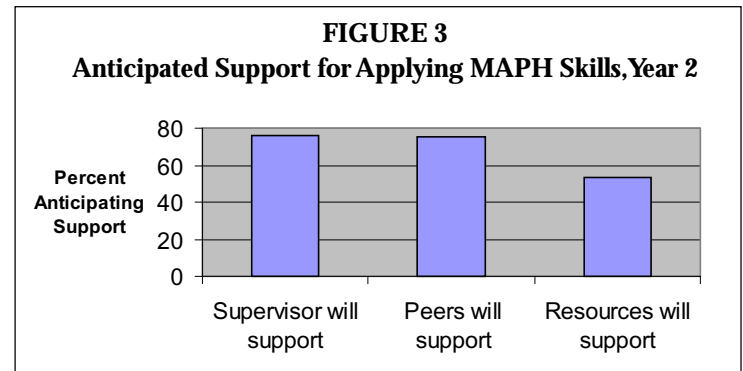


Participants Expect Supervisory and Peer Support for Applying MAPH Skills, but May Need Additional Resources in Some Skill Areas

As in any training course, MAPH managers cannot easily and immediately apply all of the skills and concepts taught in the Academy. Applying the skills on the job requires the support of supervisors and peer managers, resources such as money and staff, and enough time to develop and try new methods as opportunities present themselves.

Academy members generally anticipated support from their supervisors and peers, but many did not think their organization would provide enough resources for them to apply the skills being taught (Figure 3). On average for all courses, only 53% indicated that "My organization has enough resources (money, staff, tools and equipment, other) to support me in applying the skills taught in this course in my job." This percentage varied by course and across the three general topic areas of managing people (60%), money (56%), data (51%) and civic entrepreneurship (23%). Some skills and ideas were perceived as quite easy to implement in most organizations, such as ways to interview job candidates and conduct performance

reviews, write business communications, and start basic quality improvement initiatives. Other material was perceived as more difficult to implement, such as carrying out civic entrepreneurship ideas and planning information systems.



Test Results Show Learning and Gains in Confidence

MAPH conducted a pre-post test to ascertain whether members were gaining knowledge from the courses. The test also examined changes in agreement with beliefs that the MAPH faculty want Academy members to develop, and changes in confidence that managers can implement key skills the courses teach. In a nutshell, members showed significantly increased knowledge in four out of the seven courses that measured knowledge, six out of the eight courses that measured agreement, and eight out of the eight courses that measured confidence (Figure 5).

For seven of the courses, two to five multiple choice items were designed to test student knowledge before and after the course. In



The Academy uses extensive small group work to foster in-depth learning that students can apply back home. Carrie Worsley (Family and Community Health Education Director, Forsyth County, NC) and O'Dell Covington (Primary/Managed Care Administrative Manager, DeKalb County, GA) work on a case study. "Exploring case studies [was the most useful learning strategy]...I'm anxious to return to work and try some new approaches" one member said.

four of the seven courses measured, knowledge gains were significant (Table 5).

Many MAPH courses also seek to influence participant beliefs, or “agreement” with the Academy course concepts. For example, in social marketing, the professors wanted students to agree with these statements by the end of the course: “Word of mouth is an effective way to promote public health programs,” and “Public agencies should conduct market research on a regular basis.” Students were asked to rate whether they “strongly agree,” “agree,” “disagree,” or “strongly disagree” with each statement before and after the course, on a four point scale. For most courses, one or two agreement items were designed. In six of the eight courses, agreement gains were significant.

TABLE 5
Significance of Test Results for MAPH Courses, Year 2

Curriculum Categories and Courses	Knowledge	Agreement	Confidence
Managing People			
Human Resources	NS	••	•••
Communication	†	•••	•••
Managing People	•••	NS	•••
Managing Data			
Informatics	NS	•	•••
Social Marketing	•	•••	•••
Quality Management	•••	•••	•••
Strategic Management	•••	†	•••
Managing Finance			
Finance	NS	•••	•••
Civic Entrepreneurship	†	NS	•••

- NS Non-significant results, paired samples t-test
- † No items were used for this construct in this course
- p<.05, paired samples t-test
- p<.01, paired samples t-test
- p<.001, paired samples t-test

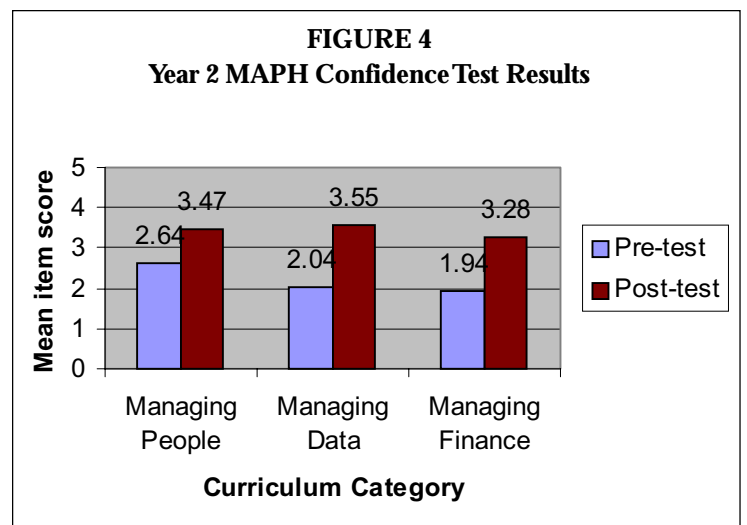


Jan Blackwell (Child Health Program Manager, Catawba District, SC), Sabrina Locklear (Administrative Officer, Robeson County, NC) and Melissa Packer (Information and Communication Specialist, Robeson County, NC) interact during a welcome break. One member noted that the August session was “an extremely intense week, but truly inspiring.”



Mary Padgett (Nursing Supervisor, Chesterfield, VA) presents her group’s recommendations for the Rhododendron County case during a strategic planning course taught by Dr. Janet Porter, Associate Dean of the School of Public Health.

Another key objective is to increase participants’ confidence in their ability to implement skills in the work setting. For each course, members were asked to use a scale to rate their level of confidence that they could perform two key management skills emphasized in the course, with “1” being “not at all confident” and “5” being “completely confident.” For every course, students were significantly more confident that they could perform the key skills after the course than that they could have performed the skill on the day they arrived for the course. In addition, when the confidence scores were combined for individual courses into overall scores for the main three categories of courses in the curriculum, members were much more confident after the MAPH (Figure 4).



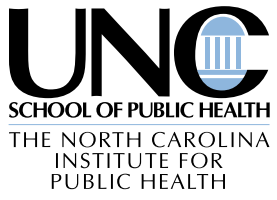


MAPH keeps class size to fifty members to ensure interaction quality. Here, one of the classes celebrates at the end of a long but rewarding week. One member called the Academy “a learning experience I’ll value and build upon for years to come!”

Summary

The Management Academy has met its enrollment targets for Years 1 and 2. Members have attended because they have strong interest in management topics and in improving their agency and its impact. Most have found the Academy curriculum to be relevant to their work and a stimulating introduction that has piqued their interest in further developing their management knowledge and skills. While most members anticipate supervisory and peer support for skills application on the job, some believe their departments may not be able to give them the resources they need to implement some of the skills. Test results show that Academy members have gained knowledge and confidence in managing people, money and information. Many have changed their perspective on managerial roles and processes.

As originally planned, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill plans to recruit, select and develop three hundred additional public health managers to further evaluate the replicability and sustainability of the Management Academy model. Further evaluations will examine changes in behavior on the job and tell how other managers are using better ways to manage people, money, and information.



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