As Professor Gary Kapelus sees it, taking an interprofessional approach to diabetes education just makes sense.

According to the Canadian Diabetes Association, 9 million Canadians live with Diabetes, 90% of them with Type 2 Diabetes. The prevention and management of the disease often involves an interdisciplinary team of healthcare professionals, yet no curriculum existed to prepare students for this team approach.

Under Kapelus’s direction, and with seed funding from the George Brown Research Office, Health Promotion Specialist and George Brown professor Jessica Elgie and fourth-year Nursing student Glenna Fraumeni developed and delivered an interprofessional course on diabetes care.

In November 2010, seventeen Nursing students joined with twenty two others from a combination of Dental Hygiene, Health and Fitness, Social Services, and Activation and Gerontology—to learn about Type 2 Diabetes and to learn from each other. “The whole point of inter-professional education,” Kapelus explains, “is to get people to open their minds to other approaches, to see that other professions have expertise beyond their own.”

Asked about the value of the experience, Fraumeni says, “It felt good to see [the students] getting out of using their jargon and their silo thinking. It taught me I need to be a leader in bringing this into my own practice.” After the success of this first experiment in learning, Kapelus hopes to extend the curriculum to include a larger group of students.

Cooperative Learning
George Brown students come together to learn more about a disease that affects millions of Canadians.

Project Essentials
Principal Investigator: Gary Kapelus
Years Active: 2011
Campus: Casa Loma
Support from: George Brown Seed Funding

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GLENNA FRAUMENI, NURSING STUDENT