

Interprofessional learning in community-based practice: occupational therapy-students' learning experiences

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Introduction: Educational institutions are responsible for healthcare- and social profession students to develop collaborative skills as future interprofessional team members.

Objectives: The aim of this paper was to describe students learning experiences from interprofessional community-based practice, with specific focus on occupational therapy students.

Method: Descriptive, qualitative approach was chosen and data were collected by means of group-interviews, questionnaires, logs and evaluating-workshops. 86 students from four undergraduate programs - occupational therapy-, social pedagogue-, and two nursing programs participated. Interprofessional teams of four students were formed for a four-week community-based practice.

Results: Occupational therapy was the most unknown profession for the other students. Furthermore, the other students discovered that occupational therapy was more than assistive technology. Students from the other study-programs learned from occupational therapy-students that "hands off" practice focusing on the patient's resources led to possibilities of mastery and independence. In all, the student groups experienced a more holistic perspective when working together with the same patients, assessing and planning intervention. They enhanced their understanding of other professionals' strengths and work-conditions. Both students and supervisors recognized changes in services given to the patients after intervention from the interprofessional student-teams

Conclusion: Occupational therapy-students experiences they benefit from both learning from, with and about other healthcare- and social profession-students. Likewise, occupational therapy-students seems to be an important part of an interprofessional learning-team both for patient-centered care and to contribute to other healthcare students' perception of occupational therapy-profession, beyond the stereotype assumptions.