

Cross-Cultural e-Learning between Cypriot and American Occupational Therapy Students: A Pilot Study

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Rationale: Culturally competent practice is necessary for occupational therapists (OT) working with clients from different backgrounds, values, and beliefs. Developing sustainable methods for providing students with cross-cultural experiences reinforces a global understanding of the profession and broadens students' views of clinical practice.

Objectives: Investigate potential benefits of cross-cultural collaborations for student learning. Identify facilitators and barriers of cross-cultural educational collaborations for development of curriculums that give students opportunities to evaluate cultural variations in occupation.

Approach: This pilot study will be implemented in phases, the first of which has been completed. OT students from the European University of Cyprus and the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, St. Augustine campus met in small groups to discuss occupational justice related concepts for 30 minutes. Meetings were held virtually through online platforms. Tutors assisted with translations. A debrief discussion took place at each campus to allow for student feedback regarding the process, benefits, barriers and impact on learning.

Results: Despite technical difficulties related to internet connection and audio quality, students were enthusiastic about this experience. Longer discussion sessions were suggested by participants to facilitate further understanding of the opposite culture. Students recognized similarities and differences between the two countries; one being the different focus of OT practice.

Conclusion: Taking into consideration participant suggestions and observations, collaboration will be extended to include other topics. Further exploration of impact on student learning will be explored through qualitative and quantitative analysis.