Cross-Cultural E-Learning Between Cypriot and American Occupational Therapy Students: A Pilot Study

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Exploring the Benefits of Cross-Cultural Collaborative Learning Projects: A Pilot Study.

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Overview

- How the project began
- Why the collaboration was created
- Leveraging resources
- Creating, funding, and running the project
- Preliminary outcomes
Background: How the project began

- Understanding the impact of digital teaching and learning
- Expanding our reach as campus communities
- Identifying gaps in student exposure and experience with cultural diversity
The intent of this project was to expose students to other cultures.

To broaden students’ understanding of the impact of illness, social issues, and economy on the health of our local and global communities.

To provide students with an opportunity to learn about the role of occupational therapy in other parts of the world: educational preparedness, job roles, barriers and supports.
Leveraging Resources

- Who we are:
  - University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences
  - European University of Cyprus

- Global Network of Education
  - A network of educational communities under one company

- Partnering and Making connections: Networking
Creating the project

- Where did we start?
  - Planning & Logistics
- What considerations did we make?
  - Student engagement & Impact
  - Language and time zone barriers
- How did we move forward?
  - Small pre-pilot to test connections, communication, and compatibility
  - Identifying technology to enhance communication and connectivity
  - Creating a pilot project, IRB, grant funding
The Pilot:

- Students were invited to meet each other via Facebook and asked to post a comment and introduce themselves.
- The Cultural Awareness Scale for Occupational Therapy students was used to establish a baseline of awareness (pre-post).
- Students were placed into groups of 5-7 and dates and times were established for discussion.
  - Used zoom and interpreter services.
- After the final discussion group met, the students on each campus were brought together to debrief the experience.
What did this look like for the students?
Facilitating Discussion

- Agenda for each session included the following
  - Introductions
  - Identification of the discussion topic with a brief summary of the perspective of each culture related to the topic (sessions were recorded)
  - Discussion facilitator asked each group to consider each of the following questions:
    - Describe how your culture views the vulnerable population you were assigned.
    - What barriers and supports exist for this population for general participation in everyday tasks?
    - Are there stigmas associated with the population? How might we help overcome these?
    - What is the role of OT in working with the population?
    - How might we best prepare you all as future practitioners when considering the needs of this population?
  - Open discussion for interaction and summary
Preliminary Outcomes

- Currently evaluating the surveys
- Student qualitative response: Enhancing and evolving perspectives
  - Relating
  - Understanding
  - Expanding

- We want more time to chat!
Future Plans

- Continue to run the project with enhanced communication and more free form discussion
- Find ways to continue the communication and collaboration among students
- Expand the project: evaluate the potential to include other universities and student groups
- Focus on continuing to align the project with the mission and vision of both Universities as well as a focus on the mission, vision, and focus of WFOT


