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

Purpose: why this project was created

▶ 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 compatibity
  - Identifying technology to enhance communication and connectivity
  - Creating a pilot project, IRB, grant funding

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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

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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

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