

CREATING SYNERGY FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION: AN EXAMPLE FROM GREECE

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Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a systematic and structured process varies between countries. In Greece there is no statutory requirement and therefore CPD must take place on an individual basis, as a result of a conscious decision to improve practice. The national association, wishing to support members' CPD, must combine experience from other national systems with the particular characteristics of the local context.

Objectives

This presentation will outline the development, implementation and outcomes of 'Learning to Learn', a programme developed within the Hellenic Association of Occupational Therapists, at the initiative of a group of graduates in order to support their CPD.

Description

A working group was formed, consisting of the initiating graduates and occupational therapists experienced in education and practice, from which emerged the concept and content of 'Learning to Learn'. An important characteristic of the programme is the structure which is based around the European competences for occupational therapy developed by the Tuning Project. The resulting programme runs over one year, combining theory and practice, European and national lecturers and facilitators, and a variety of learning methods.

Discussion

During the planning stage the graduates' exploration of their own learning needs combined with the experts' knowledge of practice and participation in CPD programmes, created a synergy which pushed the possibility of a programme into a dynamic reality. Central to the programme is the recognition of the need to nurture a life long learning culture which will also support initiative, creativity and mutual support.

Conclusion

Early results indicate benefits for individual participants but also the emergence of a dynamic towards learning, development and networking across levels and areas of expertise within the association, with exciting spin-offs. Evaluation results are being incorporated into the ongoing development of the programme, particularly focusing on the complexity of facilitating life long independent learning.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy

'Learning to Learn' illustrates a dynamic learning process located in a particular professional context which will be of interest to associations in other countries working to establish initiatives supporting the CPD of their members.