

0304

**Developing a competency based curriculum: from conceptual stages to accreditation high praise.**

Paulette Guitard, Jean-Pascal Beaudoin, Michèle Hébert  
*University of Ottawa, Ontario, Canada*

*Introduction:* The transition from a Bachelor to a Masters degree has provided the opportunity to revisit course delivery in a Canadian University OT program. It has led to the implementation of a new curriculum that allows students to develop entry-to-practice competencies within an adult education framework.

*Objective:* The objective of this presentation is to provide an overview of the new curriculum's conceptual foundation, development and implementation stages; share tips and discuss the challenges of using an adult education approach for curriculum development.

*Description:* The new curriculum was developed and refined over a six year period. It was built from humanistic, student-centeredness, competency-based and quality improvement integrative approaches. The steps leading to the curriculum's development will be presented. These include creating the curriculum synthesis, course specific referential tables and learning tools; and conducting a content validation with regional OT community through advisory committees. Finally, the curriculum mapping content and format will be outlined to fully demonstrate how rigorous and congruent this educational planning approach is.

*Discussion:* This curriculum, in use since September 2007, has already been through two quality improvement evaluations and one national accreditation process. Adjustments have been thoughtfully made. The new curriculum mapping tables regroup courses, objectives and competencies linked through a developmental scale (novice/intermediary/advanced). The tables include both theoretical and fieldwork courses. This structure limits the risks of redundancy or gaps in competency development throughout training. Although this approach has been time consuming and has led to many work-habit-changes discussions among Faculty, it was well worth the efforts.

*Conclusion:* A new curriculum was developed to structure the learning experiences of future OTs within the context of new national standards. It is based on competency and adult education theories. Content, development, implementation, tips and challenges will be discussed.

*Contribution to the education of occupational therapists:* This new educational planning approach to curriculum mapping offers a congruent, rigorous and global yet specific overview of learning pathways leading to graduation. It contributes to bringing competency sound newly graduated OTs to the service of individuals and populations in need, at the regional, national and international levels.