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Increase in quality of skills training at OT universities in the Netherlands

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The aim of OT education is to assure the quality of students in applying OT skills critically and flexibly in professional situations all over the world.

The skills lab method, developed by Maastricht University, is a systematically training program to acquire integrated OT skills. Since 1996 it has proved itself as a tool for skills training in the curriculum of the department OT, Zuyd University in The Netherlands.

In 2002, OT universities in the Netherlands collaboratively developed educational material resulting in 44 integrated OT skills (visualized on CD-ROMs) in 14 student workbooks.

In the context of continuous quality improvement, a renewal is implemented in 2009 focusing on professional improvement of skills training material, on the following topics:

- - Updating OT content on recent evidence based practice,
- - Describing skills from a strong occupation based point of view,
- - Shifting towards demand-driven, client centered angle.
- - Matching ongoing developments in society by representative range of diversity in cases
- - Adjusting to developments in education: E-learning material, wide variety of critical examples and contexts.
- - Challenging the current generation students to critical thinking: variations to be applied, when, and especially why.

This educational program is a cooperate product of all OT universities in The Netherlands. Next to the practitioners and teachers writing the material, also other practitioners, clients, students, publisher and multi media producer are involved. A sounding-board group of students, teachers, practitioners and the Dutch Association of OT is implemented. Students are actively involved by the development of content and design.

The result is a step by step description and visualization of 50 integrated OT skills, reflecting the reality of OT practice and focusing on latest developments. Advised by students, the study material is available in books and online.

This material enables students to practice skills in a variety of formats and circumstances throughout the curriculum. Besides motivational effects the developed skills training provides students with an early and clear impression of future professional practice.

This educational methodology can be used worldwide challenging educational institutions to improve the quality of skills training within their curricula.