

0691

The Recognition of Excellence in Practice: A Critical Evaluation of the Award of a Credit Grade in Practice Education for Welsh Pre-registration Occupational Therapy Students

Maria Clarke

Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom

Introduction

"Practice education forms a central focus of the curriculum and an essential component of the students's experience" (Practice Education Team for Wales, PETfW. 2007. p. 14) where they engage in "the integration of knowledge and practical skills with clinical reasoning." (Allison & Turpin, 2004. p. 126). The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) identify that all students need to undertake a minimum of 1,000 hours of supervised practice education (Hocking & Ness, 2002).

Practice education placements do not contribute to the students' final degree classification, so a mechanism that recognises excellence in clinical practice was introduced. The award of Credit for practice placements "recognises the achievement of students who perform particularly well during placements (recommended by educators and moderated by PETfW). This practice must exceed the expected level of achievement specified in the learning outcomes for each placement." (PETfW, 2007. p. 18). If students achieve three or more Credits for placements, a Certificate of Excellence in Practice Education is awarded.

Objectives

To critically evaluate the award of Credit from the perspective of occupational therapy students studying in Wales and members of PETfW by:

- Critically evaluating the perceptions of credit award of pre-registration students.
- Investigating and critically analysing the perceptions of PETfW members on the award of a credit.
- Critically reviewing current practice in order to inform future practice in determining the award of a credit.

Method

A qualitative, interpretative approach with naturalistic features was adopted to explore the perceptions of students and PETfW members in relation to the value they place on the award of a credit. The target samples in this study were PETfW members and occupational therapy students on pre-registration programmes in Wales.

Results & Conclusion

This study will be complete by May 2009. Preliminary findings indicate that students do value the award of a credit for practice education. The study also highlighted the need to review current moderation procedures.

Contribution to the evidence base of occupational therapy education

This study will contribute to the evidence base of practice education regarding recognition of clinical excellence and implications for assessment of this.