

Occupational Therapy Practice Education: Involving and Engaging Key Stakeholders in the Profession

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Introduction

Scarcity of occupational therapy practice education placements reached crisis point in Queensland, Australia in 2004. The formation of Queensland Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Collaborative (QOTFC) a State-wide professional collaboration involving major stakeholders provided a vehicle to address these challenges and increase placement opportunities.

Objectives

QOTFC aims to promote occupational therapy practice education and encourage the development of new and innovative placement for occupational therapy students. This paper will provide an overview of the achievements of the collaborative to date.

Description/Report

Some of the strategies utilised by QOTFC include the development of a website to support practice educators, successful funding application for projects aimed to increase placement through innovative role emerging placements, facilitating practice education symposiums and conference workshops.

Results/Discussion

Many health professions share the problems associated with a shortage of clinical placements. The formation of QOTFC and its subsequent success demonstrates a commitment by a group of occupational therapists to work collaboratively to solve this professional issue. The model has been adopted by a number of other disciplines and has been supported by health service policy makers.

Conclusion

Through this unique collaboration QOTFC has not only increased the availability and perceived importance of practice education within the profession, but has been acknowledged by health policy makers

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy.

Increasing educational programs in occupational therapy is dependent on providing sufficient and varied practice education opportunities for students. The experience of QOTFC in supporting the expanding scope and availability of practice education provides a model for others in the profession