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Learning from each other locally - sharing the experience globally

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The increasing complexity of health problems, presented by clients in Denmark being a small Welfare Society, requires a high degree and quality of interdisciplinary teamwork. To meet these demands students must have the opportunity to discuss professionally in ways of reasoning in OT and related health professions. Also understanding of health systems, health promotion, life conditions, lifestyle and health behaviour, related to cultural, political and social issues are required knowledge.

At the University College Sealand we have developed a concept for enabling interdisciplinary competences of our students. Throughout the education, OT-students along with fellow students from related bachelor professions develop their qualifications and ability to work in an interdisciplinary team within health and social sectors locally and globally.

The core of the concept consists of theoretical courses, focusing on quality development and best practice in regard to: treatment of clients, working procedures, comprehension of and knowledge about other professions. The aim is to develop an open-minded and committed view on health strategies in one's own profession as well as in others and communicative and collaborative competences levelled at professional practice.

Summary of major points in our presentation are:

- Interdisciplinary courses promote development and clarification of the professional identity as an OT. The courses enable students to formulate their unique contribution and professional approach to health services and the interdisciplinary teamwork
- Participation in interdisciplinary courses qualifies OT-students problem solving in interdisciplinary teamwork and promotes the ability to handle complex situations
- The experience of benefits and challenges by teaching interdisciplinary courses is valuable in developing other parts of the OT-curriculum

Implications for occupational therapy practice:

Results from systematic evaluations show that newly graduated OT's are qualified for and ready to enter into interdisciplinary teamwork for the benefit of clients. They are also well constituted in their professional identity, and well aware of the knowledge base of the colleagues in related professions, which enables them to initiate teamwork relevantly to the benefits of clients. Interdisciplinary competences give quality to the health system and the occupational therapy practice.