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“Un avance en las Credenciales Académicas de los Terapeutas Ocupacionales. Experiencia Educativa en la Universidad Central de Venezuela”

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Introduction

Central University of Venezuela, committed to venezuelan society, has brought about educational changes to achieve the education of Occupational Therapists with competencies that enable them to participate and act according to strategic plans for health promotion and prevention, enablement and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The education programme in Occupational Therapy began in 1967. From 1980 onwards, it granted the Title of Higher Level Technician in Occupational Therapy and in the year 2005, the Bachelor in Occupational Therapy degree was approved. This advance in academic credentials for Occupational Therapists created the need for mechanisms to enable previously qualified Higher Level Technicians in Occupational Therapy to attain the Bachelor qualification. In 2007, the professionalization programme was started for this purpose.

General objective

To graduate Bachelors in Occupational Therapy through a professionalization programme at Central University of Venezuela.

Description

The Professionalization Programme is an educational experience developed at Central University of Venezuela to provide an opportunity to Higher Level Technicians in Occupational Therapy in the country, who require the Bachelor Degree in order to advance in their personal and professional development. The programme improves their education through a curricular model with constructivist-cognitive principles that aims to strengthen their competencies for research and health management, and to underpin philosophy, concepts and paradigm of occupational performance. The program lasts a year and it demands attendance but also applies the modality of distance education.

Results

In 2009, the first 50 Bachelors in Occupational Therapy with a full four year programme graduated, 23 Higher Level Technicians attended the Professionalization Programme, and 27 students continued in the under-graduate programme.

Conclusion

This education process is providing an opportunity to develop human resources of high quality and social vision, and raising the academic level of the Occupational Therapy career in Venezuela.

Contribution to practice

The advancement of the qualifications of Higher Level Technicians in Occupational Therapy to the Bachelor Degree, allows the development of research and social participation, and is aligned with the Minimum Revised Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists (World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2002).