

Focus on underprivileged children during international intensive programme in Lithuania

Giedre Kavaliauskiene¹, Erwin Vanroye², Carol Campion³, Ausra Nikolajevienė⁴
¹*Klaipeda University, Klaipeda, Lithuania*, ²*PXL University College, Hasselt, Belgium*,
³*Coventry University, Coventry, UK*, ⁴*Klaipeda Baby Home, Klaipeda, Lithuania*

Introduction: Babies living in institutions for several years is still a reality in Lithuania. Studies show that Institutionalized children experience sensory deprivation. An International Intensive programme (IP) was developed to enable students to understand how a sensory deprived environment impact children's' development and participation.

Objectives: To demonstrate the value of an IP in enhancing cultural competence.

Method: IP „Sensory processing disorders“ was organized by Klaipeda University in collaboration with Erasmus partners from PXL and Coventry Universities annually for one week from 2014-2017. PBL approach was utilised to analyse real life cases identified through practical sessions in the baby home. A variety of study methods: case study, role play, group work, practical observation of children and academic debates were used to facilitate active engagement of participants. Students presented their case studies to tutors and staff from the baby home in feedback session. Collaborative discussion about the cases enabled staff from the baby home to consider how suggestions could be implemented to enhance children's participation.

Results: Qualitative analysis was undertaken. Emerging themes regarding the value of the programme from a students - practical experience with babies; working with students from different cultures; good balance between learning activities to stimulate engagement. Tutors valued: rich learning environment in which professional reasoning as well as intercultural thinking and competence were enhanced.

Conclusions: IP helps OT students to understand the influence of the environment on participation. The immersive nature of the course necessitates the development of cultural competence to ensure successful outcomes for the underprivileged children.