



How is it Possible to Learn Physiotherapy Off Campus? Report from a Decentralised Part Time Bachelor Program in Physiotherapy

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PURPOSE: The political purpose of developing and starting the program was to meet the needs of students, who have problems attending the ordinary full time program. From the perspective of Physiotherapy Education however, the purpose was to enhance the quality of education and to bridge the gap between education and practice. **RELEVANCE:** The project is a new program for education in itself. It makes use of internet-based technology and clinical placements in new and innovative ways, which probably will have an impact on both education and practice. **DESCRIPTION:** The program consists of four, interrelated elements: 1) On campus education, 2) Clinical placements, 3) Weekly skill-training with physiotherapists in clinics and 4) Internet supported group- and self studies, the last two exclusive to this program. The challenges in this program are many. We will focus on a few: Creating a good interaction between the four arenas of study. Establishing a beneficial cooperation between the clinicians and the teachers, between physiotherapy as clinical practice and physiotherapy education. Utilising the possibilities of the Internet medium to develop new methods of communication and working relations between students, individually and in groups, between students and teachers, and between college and physiotherapists in the health service. **RESULTS:** This concept of educating physiotherapists has been met both by scepticism and interest. The people directly involved are concerned about which kind of knowledge the program enhances and - inhibits. At the same time they are enthusiastic about the opportunity to have more impact on developing a relevant physiotherapy program. The students appreciate the possibility to plan the study situation more according to their own needs. At the same time they find the way of learning quite demanding. **CONCLUSIONS:** Since the implementation of the program started 20th October 2003, our results are preliminary and there are no conclusions so far. However, by November the students will have had their first exams and finished the first 60 ECTS. We will then be able to share more of the interesting experiences we have made so far.

