

Building International Interprofessional Education Opportunities for Occupational Therapy, Social Work, and Nursing through Virtual Case Studies



EASTERN
MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY



UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Colaiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh



**UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK**
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

The authors have no financial disclosures.

Educator Collaborators:

Ireland:

Pauline Boland (OT), Ann-Marie Bright (Nursing), Mairead Cahill (OT), Olwen Halvey (SW), Edwina Rush (OT)

USA:

Adrienna Bartnicki (OT), Jillian Graves (SW), Sharon Holt (OT), Hailee Lauritzen (SW), Margaret-Ann Paauw (SW), Vicki Washington (Nursing), Andrea Zakrajsek (OT)



Objectives:

By the end of this presentation, participants will:

1. Recognise the value of interprofessional education in addressing global occupational therapy and wider healthcare needs.
2. Describe the design and implementation of a virtual interprofessional education event.
3. Discuss evaluation outcomes and recommendations for future events.

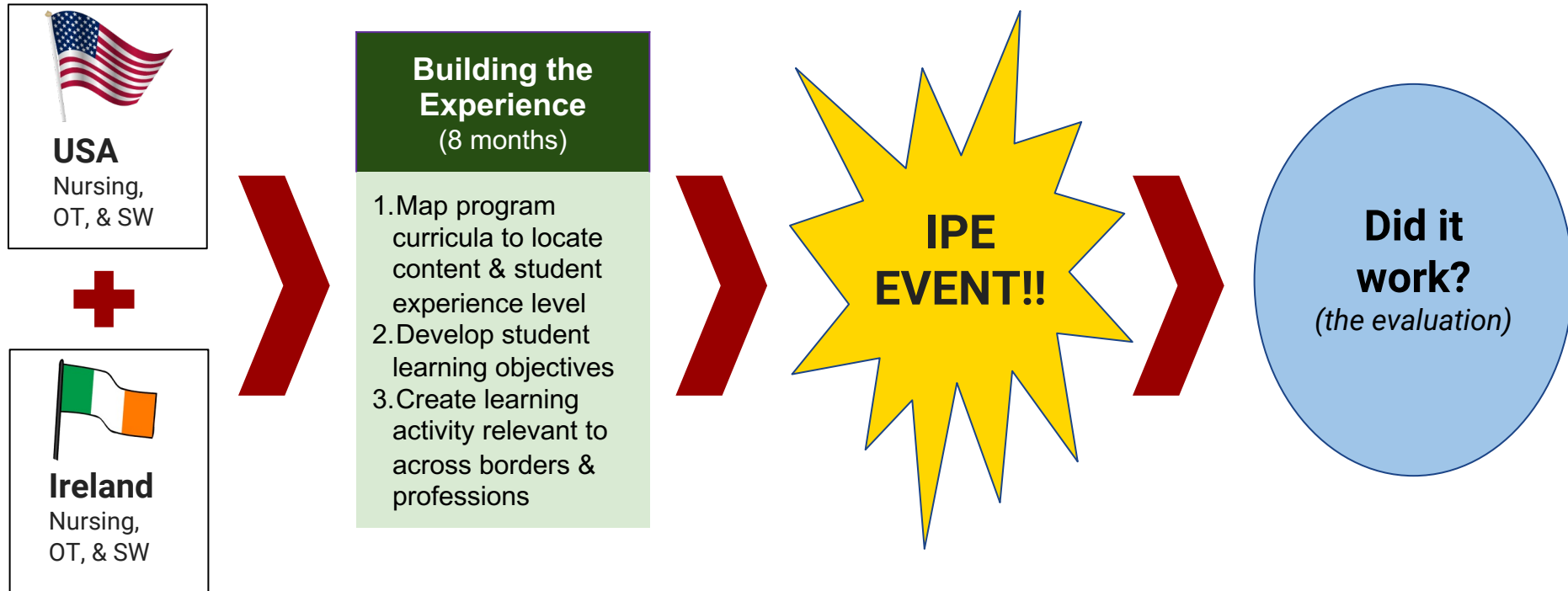
The importance of Interprofessional Education for Occupational Therapy:

Interprofessional education and **international collaboration** prepares students for global healthcare challenges and helps students share knowledge across borders
(Pinho & Reeves, 2020)

ACOTE (US accreditation standards) emphasises IPE and requires OT programmes to develop competencies in communication, role clarification, shared reasoning, and team-based decision-making.

CORU (Ireland's Regulatory Body) requires IPE as part of OT curricula. For example, Criteria 5.3 stating that programmes must include evidence of interprofessional learning whenever OTs work within interprofessional environments.

Creating the International IPE Experience: *The Process*



Creating the International IPE Experience: *Our Student Learning Objectives*

1. Articulate an understanding of the **required education, practice requirements, scope of practice, and ethical principles** of each participating health care profession.
2. Demonstrate **effective communication & collaboration skills** necessary for effective interprofessional teams.
3. Describe the **roles and responsibilities** of different healthcare professionals in **providing care to people with mental illness**, specifically nurses, occupational therapists, and social workers.
4. Identify **similarities and differences** in roles and responsibilities of health care providers in Ireland and the United States.

The Virtual Case

- **Goal of Virtual Case:** Facilitate Irish and US students comparison of their mental-health systems and share professional perspectives on their roles supporting people with mental illness.
- **David:**
 - An Irish student who had a history of mental health issues traveling abroad to the United States for summer.
 - Stopped medication and increased substance use while abroad.
 - Friends noticed relapse signs: missed work, poor self-care, talking to himself.
 - Crisis team intervened and coordinated care with his Irish mental health team



Data Collection:

- Measurement Tool: [SPICE-R Instrument](#) (standardized)
 - Student Perceptions of Interprofessional Clinical Education–Revised
 - 10-item questionnaire, likert scale 1-5 (strongly agree-strongly disagree)
 - Sample questions:
 - My role within an interprofessional healthcare team is clearly defined
 - I understand the roles of other health professionals within an interprofessional team
 - Health professionals should collaborate on interprofessional teams
- Open-Ended Survey Questions
- Pre- & Post test
 - Gave time at the beginning (5 minutes) but ran out of time at the end so response rate was lower for post

Findings:

Who participated in the IPE experience:

OT n=50(60.0%); **Nursing** n=23(27.0%); **SW** n=11(13%)

USA n=36 (42%); **Ireland** n=49 (58%)

**approximately 115 students participated in the IPE experience in total; 94 students consented to participate in the evaluation research; 83 completed pre-test; 42 completed post-test.*

Student Readiness for Interprofessional Collaboration:

Pre & Post SPICE-R2 Factor Scores:

post-scores were significantly higher than pre-scores in **all item comparison scores****

***Data were assumed to be normally distributed. Completed pre/post comparisons were made with paired t-tests; statistical significance was determined based on $<.005$.*

Highlights of responses to open-ended questions

- Similarities in professions but with shared values and nuanced differences:

“Nursing has a large role in medication and symptom management. OT focuses on this as well, but their primary focus is on OCCUPATION in all areas of their clients’ life.”

- Differences between countries/culture:

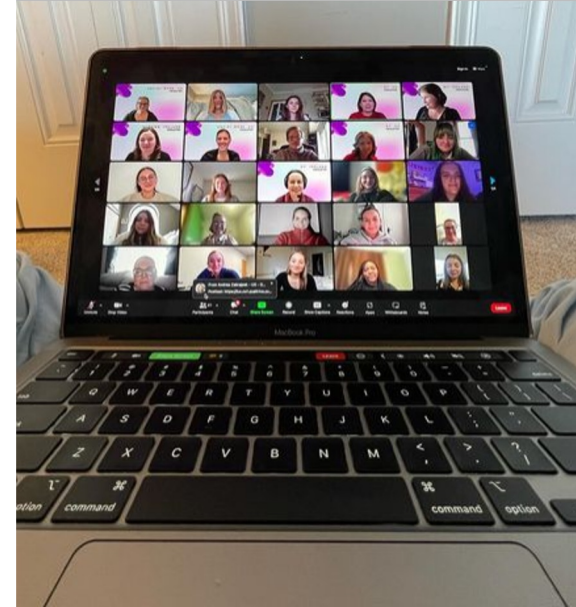
“Knowing the values of another culture can be different than your own is important in your approach with the client and for developing rapport”

- Health insurance and law surrounding substances (recreational marijuana is illegal in Ireland but legal in US).

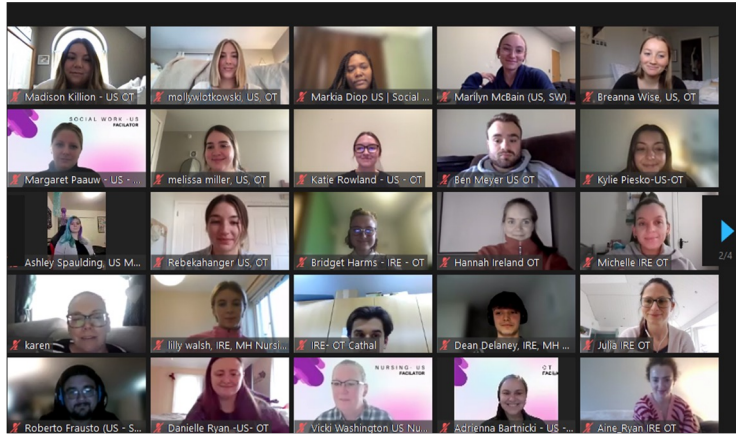
“the differing laws and policies made a difference with regards to consent and recreational use of marijuana in both places.”

Lessons Learned:

- Pre-interaction with the case study needed prior to the event
- Creating groups with equal distribution of disciplines (recruitment challenge)
- Longer duration needed
- Challenge of technology across time zones can be navigated with creativity and trust
- Facilitation techniques could be harmonised



Events like this and OT Education Elsewhere:



- Increases clarity and recognition of the OT role across disciplines.
- Strengthens OT students' ability to articulate their professional identity and unique contribution.
- International experiences enable OT students to develop greater cultural awareness and understanding of cross-country healthcare differences
- Enhances interprofessional communication and collaboration skills.
- Reinforces the need for IPE within OT curricula and teaching practice.

“ I think this was amazing. I loved it so much! It made me feel so inspired and excited for my future as an occupational therapist to be able to work alongside other professions. I would love to physically go to another country and see how everything is ran and gone about in person!!” ~ OT student