

# Including sustainability in occupational therapy curriculum by creating a partnership with a community-based organization



Valérie Lafond, OT. M.Sc., Ph.D candidate in applied ethics  
Marie-Josée Drolet, Ph.D., full professor, Department of occupational therapy

Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Canada

Issue	Aim
In light of the current climate emergency (1), an increasing number of authors and organizations within the occupational therapy profession believe that sustainability should be included in its curriculum (2-7).	To present the outcomes of the partnerships between occupational therapy students and the C4E that took place during the winter semesters of 2022, 2023, and 2024.

In order to address the gap in the training curriculum, a Community Intervention Project (PICOM; 8) course was offered to occupational therapy students in collaboration with the Occupational Therapy Community Committed to Equity and the Environment (C4E; 9).

## Methods

The impact on students was assessed using the course's learning assessment tools, and the impact on the C4E was evaluated by the response to targeted needs

## Results

- 25 first- and second-year occupational therapy students selected the PICOM course in collaboration with C4E.
- This course promoted the development of several skills that are useful in occupational therapy practice, including leadership, collaboration, and communication (10). It also supported learning about sustainability within the profession.
- Their participation supported the creation of ten fact sheets and nine podcasts on sustainability, as well as the translation of seventeen existing fact sheets.



## Discussion

- The PICOM course responds to the WFOT's call to include sustainability in occupational therapy training programs (2-7) and is consistent with the study conducted by Ikiugu and colleagues (11-12).
- Experiential learning enables students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become agents of change in the context of the climate crisis (13-14).
- This educational strategy promotes sustainability in occupational therapy and supports intergenerational occupational justice (14-15).

## Conclusion

- Until the occupational therapy training curriculum is updated to address global issues, a PICOM course is a relevant short-term solution to this pressing need (14,16).
- Similar educational initiatives could be developed in collaboration with other occupational therapy networks, such as OTEA, OT-CAN, R2DE, and Groupe Ergo-Eco (17-20).

## Contact and references

Authors declare no financial disclosure.

Use the following QR code to access references and contact information :

