

# Working life-orientated professional Master's degree as a way of providing continuing education for adult learners

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The ongoing health and social care reform in Finland calls for renewal and updating of the professional skills and competencies. One of the central principles of the reform is the reorganization and provision of social and healthcare services in a client-centered manner. Thus, the professionals need to possess client-centered counselling skills.

## The presentation describes the main results of the teaching experiment

carried out with 16 professional Master's degree students in 2017 (Silvennoinen & Juujärvi, 2018). The aim was to provide the students with the client-centered counselling skills via simulation pedagogy. The results highlight that the Finnish professional Master's degrees are well-suited for updating professional skills and competencies needed in working life.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND METHODS

The method of motivational interviewing (MI) can form the foundation for client-centered counselling and interaction. MI is about a professional working within the conceptual world of the client. It emphasizes the expertise of a client in decision-making: it is the client who makes the decisions concerning his/her life. Simulation pedagogy is a method in which teaching and learning take place through authentic cases.

In the teaching experiment, the students were taught the method of MI by using simulation pedagogy. In the study, the data was collected as focus group interviews.

The data was analyzed by means of theory-related content analysis.

## RESULTS

The results show that simulation pedagogy is suitable for studying motivational interviewing, since it allows for a shared learning experience and reflections for students from various backgrounds in working life. It also provides deeper understanding of multi-professional teamwork and a perspective of a client.

## CONCLUSIONS

The study shows that the professional Master's degree is an excellent way of updating the professional skills and competencies needed in working life.

The ever-present link to working life enables the students to apply and practice acquired skills in the work context immediately.

The degree acts as an important tool for lifelong learning because of its compact curriculum structure: it is possible to obtain the degree while working full-time.

The constant contact with working-life representatives and other relevant stakeholders makes it possible to modify the curriculum easily to the needs of working life.

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