

Nationwide occupational medicine training program in the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

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Background: Teaching of occupational medicine is an integral part of the training of specialists in occupational health. This training takes place in the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health in Helsinki and its four regional offices. A challenge is that instructors in different regions have different skills and resources.

Summary of the work: Here we present our new, nationwide occupational medicine training program, which has recently piloted and launched. It consists of six modules that correspond to the learning objectives given in the university curricula. Each module includes lectures, workshops and self-study but also practical tasks, such as workplace visits, outpatient work, literature search and written reports making. In teaching we use web-based learning platform. The program was developed in collaboration with a selected group of trainees and all the instructors in the various regions.

Summary of the Results: Feedback from the instructors and trainees involved in the development has been positive.

Benefits for trainees

- Trainees receive the same kind of training, regardless of location they specialize.
- Trainees can view lectures later on video
- Trainees can discuss with other trainees and all instructors regardless of location.

Benefits for the instructors

- Instructors can take advantage of each other's material
- We can employ modern pedagogic theories and teaching methods
- Instructors can more easily communicate with their trainees

Discussion: Social constructivism is a sociological theory of knowledge, which suggests that human development is socially situated and that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences. It serves as a theoretical framework for our program. Trainees and instructors construct together our training material (which is continuous process) and web-based learning platform enables trainees to acquire knowledge and know-how through different activities such as lectures, self-studies and practical tasks (e.g. outpatient work) regardless of location they specialize. The web-based learning platform also makes it possible for us to take advantage of instructors' different skills and to use new pedagogical theories and methods in our teaching. The program has been well received by trainees and instructors. Relationships between different parts of our training program is presented in figure below.

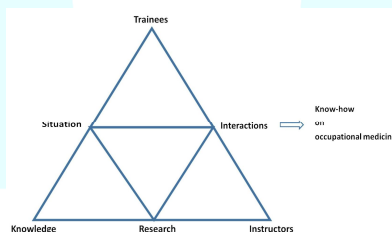


Figure: A modified pedagogic triangle describes relationships between different parts of our training program