



Making internationalisation a reality for occupational therapy students (MIROTS) - a community engagement project

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Making Internationalisation a Reality for Occupational Therapy Students (MIROTS)

A community engagement project

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LUND UNIVERSITY

Background

Occupational therapy – enable people to participate in the occupations of daily life

Participation in society and with valued daily occupation is important for health and wellbeing

People face challenges to their daily occupation on;

- The personal level
- The occupational level
- The environmental level

Social exclusion can impede daily occupation due to socio-economic factors, stigma, discrimination and lack of advocacy.



Enable “doing”

Context

What was happening.....

- A history of service learning in occupational therapy undergraduate curricula
- Focus:
 - To develop practitioners who are able to work in partnership with the clients and populations that they serve
 - To use collaborative problem-solving to overcome challenges to daily occupations
 - In recent years, this has extended into advocacy
 - Raising awareness of issues
 - Using videos and social media
 - Activism

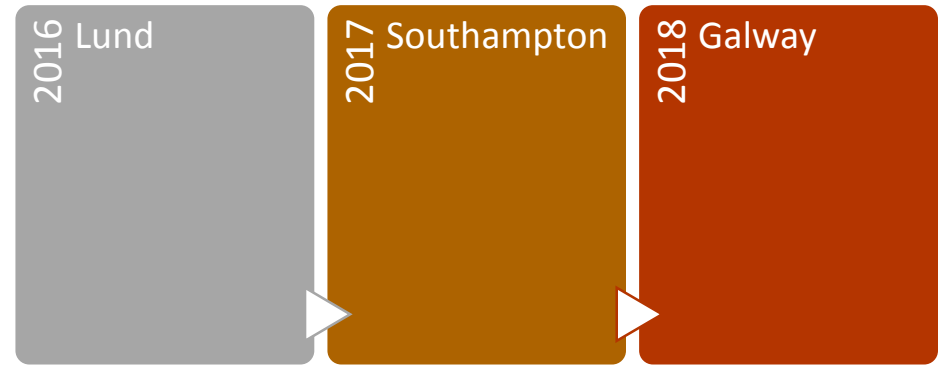
What was needed.....

- Opportunities to challenge student's own and national views
- An international understanding of how an occupational perspective might add value in addressing global health needs
- Develop practitioners who can work outside of traditional areas of practice
- The “international classroom”
- Opportunities to strengthen professional identity through reflection, debate and hearing the international and community perspectives
- Develop practitioners who can advocate for the rights of individuals, families and communities

The MIROTS Erasmus-funded project

- Pilot unfunded project between UoS and LU
- This was evaluated using students as co-researchers
 - Feedback from community organisations was positive and they wished to continue involvement
 - “voices have been heard”
- Erasmus project developed by UoS, LU and NUI Galway
- Funding for 3 years for student international exchanges, web exchanges and collaboration

Description



- Introductory reading and preparation. Allocated to groups
- One week in the host country
 - Keynote lectures
 - Group development
 - Visits to community organisations
 - In collaboration with the organisation, explore the challenges to occupational participation for that group
 - Link with theory and literature
 - Conference
- Ongoing online contact
- Students collaborate with similar organisations in their own countries
- 6 web-exchanges
- 2nd web-based conference

Expectations

NUI Galway students

- Enhance group work skills and skills working with others in the community
- To gain an understanding of the healthcare systems in other countries
- To make a difference for the client groups
- Language barriers
- Meet new people- time to meet students on a social level after class/lectures
- Learn from lectures/broaden knowledge on different of OT relevant to our studies
- Learn how OT is different in UK and Sweden
- To make a difference in socially excluded groups
- To collaborate with other OT students from different universities
- To experience university life in Lund
- How culture affects occupation
- Have a better understanding of different client groups
- Insight into the viewpoint of other students in Southampton and Lund

University of Southampton students

- Experience New Culture – foods, values, language
- Improve interpersonal skills
- Life experience – memories
- Understanding OT from a different cultural perspective
- Working with different client groups
- Being more independent in my learning
- Working with other OT students from different countries
- Understanding other morals and values
- Spending time with peers and lecturers; Develop international links and friendships
- Similarities and differences of our OT theory and practice
- Exchange learning experiences – similarities and differences
- OT Bonding
- Learning more about different group projects
- Similarities/differences in welfare/healthcare systems
- Team building and Communication skills

The partnerships



What have we gained?

Students

- Personal and professional confidence
- Willingness to work in diverse/emerging areas of practice
- More collegiate with staff
- Understanding of contextual factors in society
- Students as hosts – skill building

Partners

- Opportunities for issues to be highlighted
- Have a tangible outcome of the collaboration e.g. an awareness-raising video, an information leaflet or advocacy
- Opportunities for practice placements

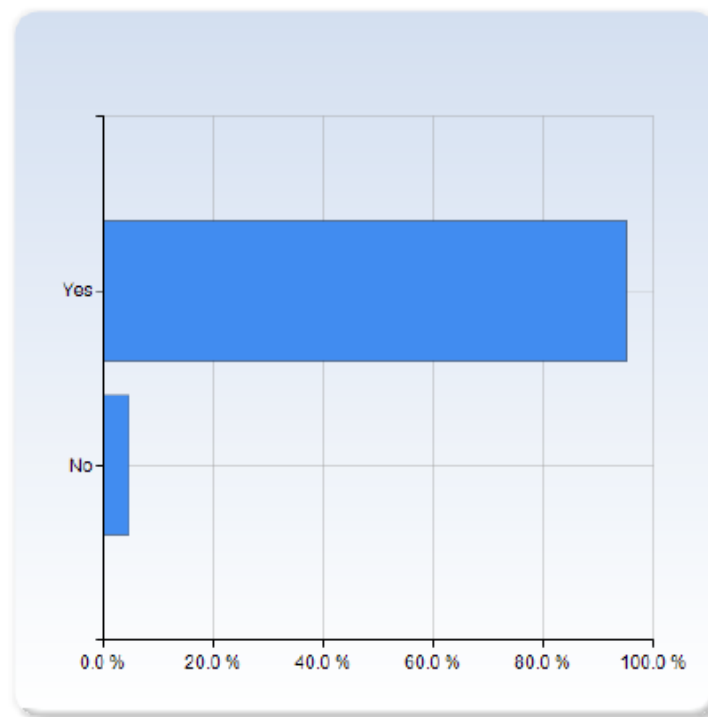
Staff

- Academic opportunities in teaching and publication
- Skills in project management, technology and collaborative working
- Deepening our own knowledge of the occupational perspective of health

Evaluation (n=105)

Did this partnership influence a feeling of being part of a global health OT community?

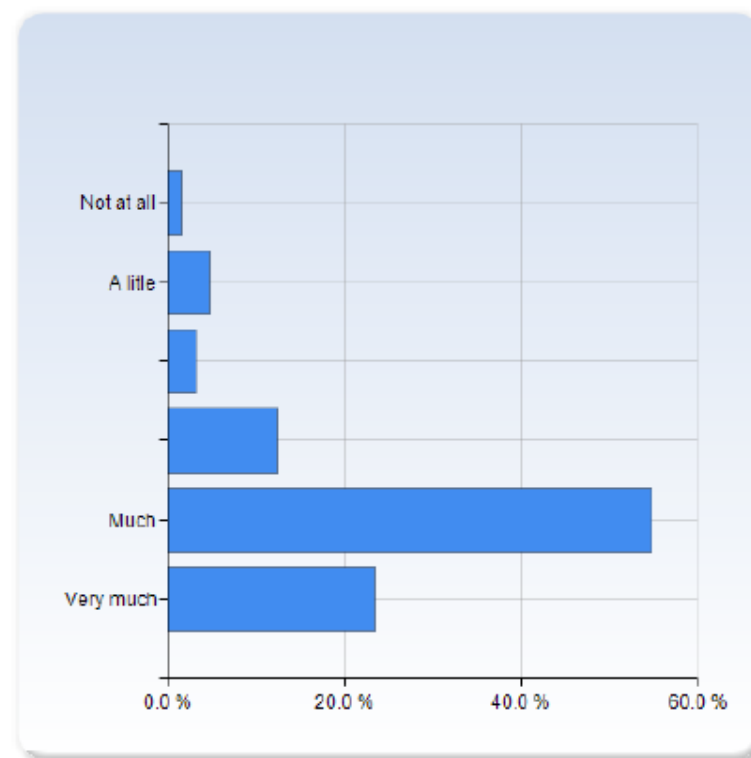
Did this partnership influence a feeling of being part of a global health OT community?	Number of Responses
Yes	60 (95.2%)
No	3 (4.8%)
Total	63 (100.0%)



	Mean	Standard Deviation
Did this partnership influence a feeling of being part of a global health OT community?	1.0	0.2

To what extent did you engage in this exchange?

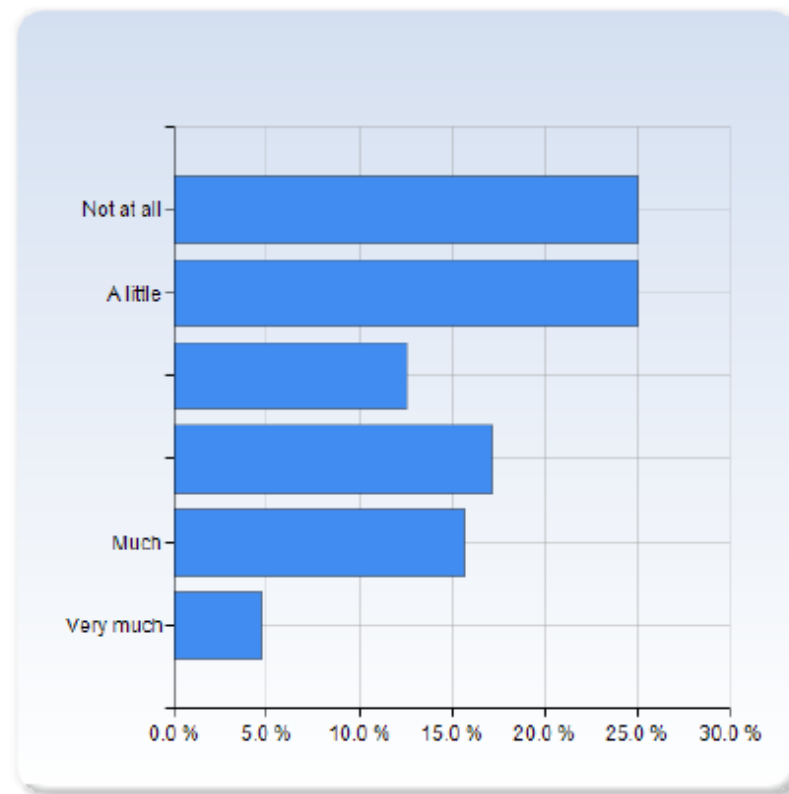
To what extent did you engage in this exchange?	Number of Responses
Not at all	1 (1.6%)
A little	3 (4.7%)
	2 (3.1%)
	8 (12.5%)
Much	35 (54.7%)
Very much	15 (23.4%)
Total	64 (100.0%)



	Mean	Standard Deviation
To what extent did you engage in this exchange?	4.8	1.1

To what extent have you learned to use or manage new technology in this project?

To what extent have you learned to use or manage new technology in this project?	Number of Responses
Not at all	16 (25.0%)
A little	16 (25.0%)
	8 (12.5%)
	11 (17.2%)
Much	10 (15.6%)
Very much	3 (4.7%)
Total	64 (100.0%)



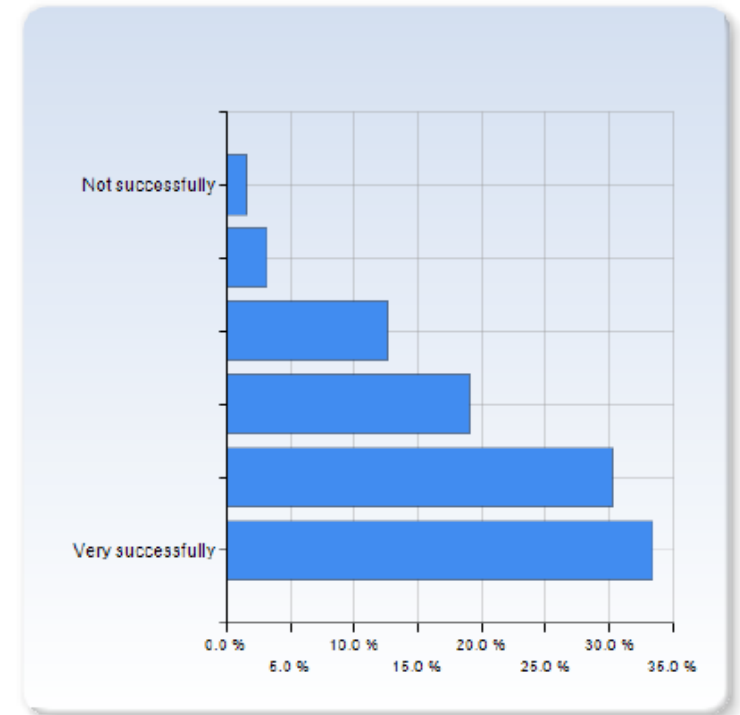
To what extent have you learned to use or manage new technology in this project?	Mean	Standard Deviation
	2.9	1.6

To what extent did the web-exchange

...

Offer students exposure to international perspectives and comparisons?

Offer students exposure to international perspectives and comparisons?	Number of Responses
Not successfully	1 (1.6%)
	2 (3.2%)
	8 (12.7%)
	12 (19.0%)
	19 (30.2%)
Very successfully	21 (33.3%)
Total	63 (100.0%)

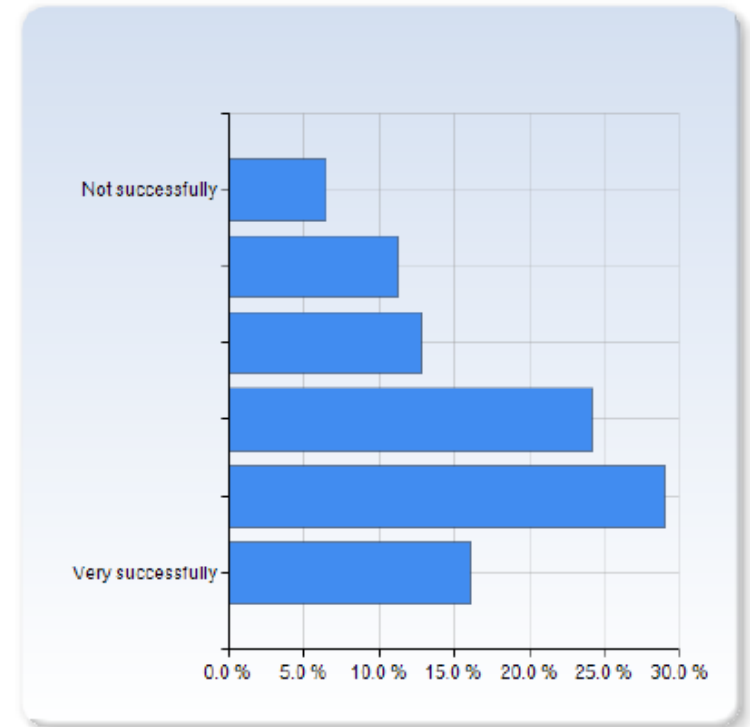


	Mean	Standard Deviation
Offer students exposure to international perspectives and comparisons?	5.9	1.9

To what extent did the web-exchange ...

Increase students' confidence about the possibility of working abroad?

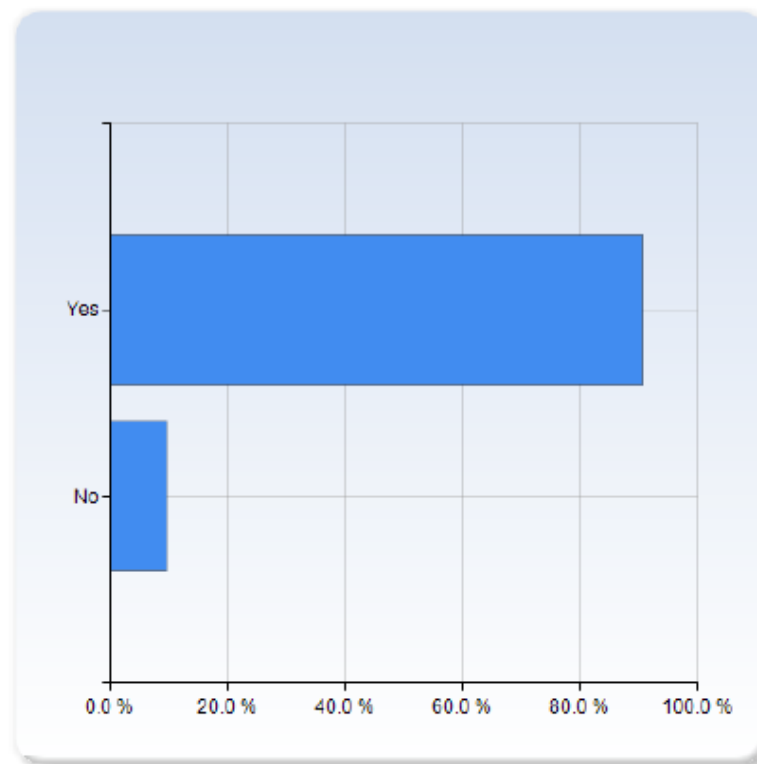
Increase students' confidence about the possibility of working abroad?	Number of Responses
Not successfully	4 (6.5%)
	7 (11.3%)
	8 (12.9%)
	15 (24.2%)
	18 (29.0%)
Very successfully	10 (16.1%)
Total	62 (100.0%)



Increase students' confidence about the possibility of working abroad?	Mean	Standard Deviation
	4.9	2.1

Did you experience any informal learning, such as cultural similarities and differences?

Did you experience any informal learning, such as cultural similarities and differences?	Number of Responses
Yes	57 (90.5%)
No	6 (9.5%)
Total	63 (100.0%)



	Mean	Standard Deviation
Did you experience any informal learning, such as cultural similarities and differences?	1.1	0.3

Reflections

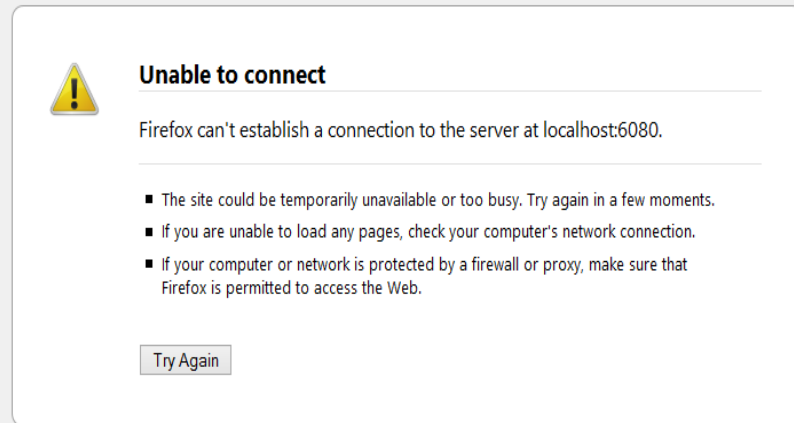
- Technology

- Linking 3 countries
- Need for a designated person responsible for technology during events
- Students aren't as tech-savvy as we believe them to be!

- Considering the students who cannot travel

- Integrating the project into the existing curriculum

- Sustainability – with a new group of students each year, how do we make it beneficial for the community partners each year?



- Sustainability post-Brexit

- Logistics – travelling, accommodation and costs

- Need for administrative support

- The importance of social events in building collegiality – “deep hanging-out”

Future plans

- Meeting in Southampton in Autumn 2017
- Building research into the project
 - Does participating in the project influence the professional identity of student occupational therapists?
- Producing a handbook for other universities planning similar international collaborations
- Teaching materials – to be made freely available
- Opening out the keynote lectures and the webconference to second year students in each institution





Thank you for your kind
attention

