

Teaching Foundations of Depth Psychology in a Master's Program for Complementary Health Sciences. Evaluation research using qualitative content analysis

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Objektive

To classify which aspects of the module *Foundations of Depth Psychology* in a Master's Program for Complementary Health Sciences influenced the students' view of their own professional work most.

Introduction

Integrating *Foundations of Depth Psychology* into the traditional competency field of professionals in complementary medicine, complementary healing arts and progressive teaching was defined as an essential goal of a Master's Program funded by the European Commission (Leonardo project). The *inter-uni.net for integrated health sciences* (www.inter-uni.net) developed a teaching and learning module geared to this aim which included 3 months distance learning and 2 on-site workshops whose benefits were evaluated after being offered for several years.

Methods

The question (cf. Objective) was posed to 121 students who had completed the module. Members of helping professions with a "complementary" or "progressive" focus and usually long years of professional experience supplied a handwritten response to the question (one page). The ratio of female to male respondents was 3:2. The responses were investigated and categorized via qualitative content analysis (Mayring).

Results

Approximately 60% of the respondents stated that as a result of the module, assistance provided (to clients, patients and, in the case of teachers, to pupils) had *increased in efficiency*. 54% cited an improved understanding of factors which are decisive where *interpersonal communication* is concerned – for example in their helping interactions. In particular the dynamic of transference was named. Some 41% claimed to have deepened their *self-awareness* through the module. Another frequently cited category (37%) was *improved subjective satisfaction with one's profession*. 10% claimed that the module had reduced their own *prejudices against depth-psychological concepts*.

Among the spontaneously cited power factors of optimized communication which the module under investigation had offered access to, an *authentic relationship* (54%), *harmony between empathy and confrontation* (24%), the *importance of attention* (21%) and an *open view* (17%), the capacity for *holding and containing* (17%) as well as *humor* were named (9%).

Conclusion

Teaching *Foundations of Depth Psychology* in a Master's Program for Complementary Health Sciences appears to be a suitable means for optimizing one's own professional work in the sense of increased efficiency and an enhanced degree of professional satisfaction.