

Lifelong Learning in Applied Fields (LLAF) Tempus funded consortium is Promoting Curriculum reform in Optometric Education

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Background: The Lifelong Learning in Applied Fields (LLAF) is a Tempus funded consortium that has members from 8 countries collaborating to create curricular reform for Lifelong Learning (LL) in health care and other fields. Three departments of optometry are participating in LLAF.

This project was launched December 2013 and aims to develop and pilot models for training students in LL to improve their ability to transfer knowledge, concepts and skills learned in class to real-life context.

Case Report: Optometric educators have difficulties in "packing" all of the information in the field into a 3 or 4 year curriculum. The information and state of the art practice is changing so quickly that what we teach the students today may no longer be relevant several years later. Therefore, we must teach the students to ask the right questions and find the information themselves, to ensure that they maintain their competency throughout their careers. A curriculum based on Evidence Based Practice (EBP) is the best way to achieve this goal.

EBP is a system that integrates clinical research evidence with individual clinical expertise and patients' values. It requires the appropriate selection of tests and treatments based on research evidence whenever possible, rather than relying only on authoritative sources such as expert opinion, anecdotal evidence, case reports and tradition.

LLAF is designing pedagogical strategies based on constructivism theories for LL and EBP. Optometric educators will be able to choose from different strategies to embed in their current curriculum with the goal of promoting LL and the learning

outcome of skills in EBP. This presentation will describe several examples pertinent to optometric education and strategies to embed them in previously existing curriculum: personal learning network, values and knowledge education and case based learning.