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Title

How can simulation help with learning project work skills? : Experiences from higher education in Finland / Mari Salminen-Tuomaala and Tiina Koskela

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Abstract

Background: Effective project management and project work skills are important requirements in higher education and many other work place settings. Simulation-based learning, with its use of simulated scenarios and environments, may be a helpful way of supporting skill development. However, much more needs to be understood about the possibilities and challenges that can be involved in the application of this method of learning and teaching, from the perspectives of the learners. Purpose: This exploratory qualitative study sought to describe university lecturers' experiences and views of simulation as a method of learning and teaching project skills. The simulation method was tested in Finland, in the context of the national Research and Development Expert Coaching Programme, which was developed for the staff of the Universities of Applied Sciences. Research methods: Data were collected via a questionnaire with two open questions, to which total of 12 multi-professional participants, all lecturers from Universities of Applied Sciences, were asked to respond in essay form. The data was analysed using inductive content analysis. Results:

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Overall, our analysis suggests that participants felt that simulation-based learning was suitable for learning project work. According to the participants, the method helped them learn concrete project work skills, identify and manage challenging situations and promote dialogical sharing between professionals. Conclusion: The results indicate that simulation can be used to promote project work competence of both new and more experienced project workers in various fields. It is suggested that the method is suitable for both initial and continuing education.(HRK / Abstract übernommen)