

HUMAN PLUS 2004

**First Conference of the Archipelago of Humanistic Thematic Networks
"The role of the humanistic arts and sciences in European society, education and research"**

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Work group: 4

Thematic Network: ENOTHE

ENOTHE (The European Network of Occupational Therapy in Higher Education) was founded in 1995 within the framework of the European Union and funded by the European Commission, SOCRATES programme since 1997.

Occupational Therapy as a profession is concerned with promoting health and wellbeing through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life.

One of the primary aims of ENOTHE is to enable Occupational Therapy Educational Institutions, professional Associations and other stakeholders to liaise on Occupational Therapy in order to advance the body of knowledge of Occupational Therapy. An extremely important emerging area of knowledge is that of Occupational Science which studies the human as an occupational being. Since the early 1990's scholars from a number of fields including anthropology, sociology as well as occupational therapy have addressed a diverse range of topics from familiar everyday occupations such as going for a run (and the cultural, social and personal meanings embedded in such occupations), through the impact of disability on the performance of occupations, to the interaction between occupation and global issues such as health, unemployment and the ageing population.

While Occupational Science can be said to be still in its infancy it is already providing knowledge of occupation that is being included in many undergraduate programmes for Occupational Therapy throughout Europe. However the importance of the knowledge being developed by Occupational Science is not limited to Occupational Therapy but is important for all fields concerned with the human being, health and wellbeing and research needs to be expanded and extended across disciplines.

I would suggest that in relation to the mapping of missing or emerging knowledge and it's support it will be necessary to consider the following:

1. To define what is meant by missing or emerging knowledge, e.g. is it a particular area of knowledge held only by a small group of people? What does knowledge refer to – an area of research, theoretical concepts, an area of expertise or skill (perhaps related to subject area or teaching)?
2. How can these areas be identified? Eg scanning journals, peer discussion...
3. How can the relative importance/ significance of a particular area be determined?
4. How can those areas selected as important/ significant be developed? Eg information dissemination, links and networks...

