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

Leopold-Opara M. ¹, Kohler S. ¹, Paß P. ¹, Endler P.C. ¹
¹Interuniversity College for Health and Development, Graz / Castle of Seggau, Austria

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.