Evaluating the Efficacy of Occupational Therapy Curriculum through Student Self-Perceived Preparedness in Level II Fieldwork
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Abstract
Level II Fieldwork (FW II) is an opportunity for students to display their clinical knowledge and foundational skills acquired through their academic coursework. The experience allows students to learn about the demands and expectations in current clinical settings in order to become competent clinicians.

Methods

Participants
- 34 third year students in the OT Program at SUNY Downstate
- 34 third year students in the OT Program at SUNY Downstate

Survey Results
- Student Survey
- Respondent participation
- New Innovations Database

Student Survey
- Generally, students felt adequately prepared in assessment, treatment, and diagnosis represented in Figure 1.
- Figure 2 represents areas where students indicated indifference choosing Neither Agree nor Disagree (3).
- The 2nd Round of surveys found that the overall responses ranged from Somewhat Agree (4) to Strongly Agree (5) in all areas.

Qualitative Data:
- Q. 1: "Did you use assessments at your FW II that you did not have exposure to during the OT Program?" The answers include: Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA), the Box and Blocks Test, Action Research Arm Test (ARAT), ADL Placement assessment, AMPAC, Barthel Index, Bivaba, BRIEF-2, CAM, Care tool, FIM, Functional Upper Extremity Levels (FUEL), Letter Cancellation Test, Quick DASH, Word Copying Test.
- Q. 2: "...are there any specific topics you feel needed to be addressed more during...the OT Program?" Answers: interventions (11 participants), note writing (10 participants), pediatrics (8 participants), assessments (7 participants), acute care (6 participants), manual therapy (6 participants), sensory integration (4 participants), transfers (3 participants).
- Q. 3: "Are there any specific topics you feel needed to be addressed less?" Answers: lengthy assessments (3 participants).
- Q. 4: "Is there anything notable to improve the OT Program?" Answers: interventions (4 participants), assessments (4 participants), note writing (4 participants), transfers (4 participants), pediatrics (2 participants).

Procedure
- Two rounds of surveys:
  - Rd 1: at the end of the summer FW II
  - Rd 2: at the end of the fall FW II

Discussion
Consensus among respondents shows that topics related to specific interventions, assessments, note writing, transfers, and pediatrics warrant greater attention within the academic curriculum. It is highly suggested that accessible supplemental resources are available to students when time constraints prevent attention to topics within the curriculum. As programs have limited time to address topics, providing supplemental materials may help support students and improve preparedness.

The survey was distributed to the students twice to accommodate two segments of FW II placements. Both results were combined in the data analysis. This may reveal discrepancies between the responses. The second response could be influenced by acquired learning and confidence from the first FW II affiliation. While this is anticipated, it will affect the current conclusions drawn. For future research, analyzing the data separately would be more informative regarding FW II preparedness. It would be beneficial to study how the perceived confidence by students has changed through their level of experience, or whether they do not have the foundational knowledge from a flawed curriculum to be effective in their affiliations.

Limitations
- The survey length and format might have been tiresome for participants, which may have affected the results.
- This study is limited to one year of students. A larger sample of students would make conclusions drawn more statistically significant.
- As this survey was self-perceived, actual performance and confidence of students cannot be attained.

References