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The Student Perspective on Role-Emerging Fieldwork Placements in Occupational Therapy: A Review of the Literature

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Abstract

Role-emerging fieldwork placements are increasingly being used in entry-level occupational therapy programs. However, published reviews have yet to focus on synthesizing the experiences and perspectives of students. This review aims to identify the opportunities, challenges, and future directions of role-emerging fieldwork placements based on the student perspective. A literature review using scoping review methods was conducted, including an electronic database search, hand-searching of journals, and citation tracking. Descriptive and thematic analyses of the articles were performed. Thirty articles were identified through the literature search. Themes that emerged related to opportunities were professional and personal development, independence and autonomy, client-centeredness, and new occupational therapy perspective. Themes that emerged related to challenges were defining a professional role, lack of structure and support, and high level of responsibility. Future directions centered on recommendations for future students and establishing roles within sites. Students benefited from the self-directed nature and client-centered practice in their role-emerging fieldwork placements, while the challenging environment contributed to their overall development. Students recognized a need for occupational therapy services in the wider community and saw role-emerging settings as legitimate career opportunities. Future research is encouraged to explore peer models, student-initiated role-emerging fieldwork placements, and postgraduate experiences.

Comments

Keywords

challenges, fieldwork, future directions, nontraditional, opportunities

Cover Page Footnote

Credentials Display

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Throughout the last few decades, role-emerging fieldwork placements have been increasingly used in entry-level occupational therapy programs as an alternative to traditional fieldwork placements. Traditional, or role-established, fieldwork placements are settings with an established occupational therapist who supervises a student's practice skills (Bossers, Polatajko, Connor-Schisler, & Gage, 1997). In contrast, Bossers, Polatajko, Connor-Schisler, and Gage (1997) defined role-emerging, or nontraditional, fieldwork placements as fieldwork placements that are designed for the student to develop an occupational therapy role in a setting where there is no established role or program. As the profession of occupational therapy continues to grow and become more diverse, there is support for the use of nontraditional fieldwork placements to expand into new areas of practice (Fitzgerald, Smith, Rehman, & Taylor, 2017; Jung, Solomon, & Cole, 2005).

A critical understanding of student experiences and opinions is necessary to determine the effects of role-emerging fieldwork placements on the development of students into occupational therapists, as well as their influences on defining the occupational therapy role. While much has been written about role-emerging fieldwork placements, a scarce number of reviews have attempted to synthesize the contemporary student perspective in this literature. Cooper and Raine (2009), for example, provided valuable knowledge on the use of role-emerging fieldwork placements. However, their opinion article did not include student perspectives or experiences when discussing the impact on students, and it was limited to role-emerging fieldwork placements in the United Kingdom. In addition, Cooper and Raine did not provide sufficient evidence to support their arguments, in part, because of the nature of opinion articles.

A review by Overton, Clark, and Thomas (2009) examined a variety of existing fieldwork placement, or practice placement, education models and how they are currently delivered. Information pertaining to the rationale, benefits, and limitations of role-emerging fieldwork placements were presented in the findings, but student experiences and perspectives were included relatively less than those of occupational therapists and educators. Student experiences were only emphasized in the topic of limitations of role-emerging fieldwork placements, and student perspectives toward the future directions of role-emerging fieldwork placements were not addressed. Although Overton et al. provided student experiences and perspectives from the literature they reviewed, this was not the focus of the article, and further exploration is required to fully appreciate the student perspective. In addition, the methodology was unclear, as the authors did not state the specific type of review that was followed. The literature sources were identified through electronic databases, hand searching of journals, and searching reference lists of published articles, but the exclusion criteria were not included.

A more recent review by Clarke, de-Visser, Martin, and Sadlo (2014) provided an overview of the literature written on role-emerging fieldwork placements while considering the contextual health care changes in the UK. Following the methodology of a critical review, the authors evaluated past reviews and attempted to summarize the literature in terms of the rationale, benefits, and limitations of role-emerging fieldwork placements. Although student perspectives and experiences were presented in the findings, they were frequently combined with information and recommendations related to occupational therapists, educators, and authors, thus resulting in a rather clustered overview among the different perspectives and segments of results. Congruent with the review by Overton et al. (2009), the authors of this review did not address student opinions toward the future directions of role-emerging fieldwork placements. Clarke, de-Visser, et al. presented important findings that added to the growing body of knowledge of role-emerging fieldwork placements found in the literature; however, the personal

experiences and perspectives of students have not been critically evaluated and summarized in the literature review. This is supported by recommendations from the authors themselves, who encourage future research to focus on exploring the personal experiences of students and the developmental process that occurs during role-emerging fieldwork placements.

Student perspectives and experiences are not adequately understood in the literature based on the limited number of reviews on role-emerging placements and a lack of emphasis on student experiences. There is also a gap in the literature that considers the perspectives of students on the future directions of role-emerging fieldwork placements. This knowledge gap is crucial to consider. As students become the next generations of occupational therapists, their perspectives on the future sustainability and aptness of role-emerging settings will shape how fieldwork evolves in the profession. This paper aims to gain a deeper understanding of student experiences with role-emerging fieldwork placements by exploring their perspectives on opportunities, challenges, and future directions.

Method

To address the objectives above, we conducted a literature review using scoping review methods adopted from Arksey and O'Malley (2005) with additional considerations from Levac, Colquhoun, and O'Brien (2010). However, it is important to note that requirements for a full scoping review were not adopted for the following reasons. This was undertaken as part of an undergraduate research project and, consequently, it was only conducted by one of the authors. The role of the second author consisted of topic supervision and guidance related to methods and interpretation of the literature. As stated by Levac et al. (2010), scoping reviews involve a multidisciplinary team consisting of at least two authors who review the literature. In addition, while it is in the nature of scoping reviews to scope both published literature and grey literature, this review focused exclusively on published literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010). The decision to include only published literature was made to limit the number of articles to be reviewed in order to adhere to the time period given for the undergraduate research project. Nevertheless, scoping review methods were used to enhance the credibility of the literature search procedure, results, and discussion provided in this review. Scoping reviews can be used to summarize and disseminate research findings and draw conclusions from existing literature to identify gaps in the evidence base (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005); this is especially true for topics that have not yet been comprehensively reviewed or are subject to ongoing research (Levac et al., 2010; Mays, Roberts, & Popay, 2001). As previously mentioned, role-emerging fieldwork placements are an evolving concept and student experiences and perspectives have yet to be thoroughly reviewed. Thus, a literature review using scoping methods was deemed the most appropriate approach, as this allowed the authors to explore a range of studies and uncover potential themes related to student experiences and perspectives. Outlined by Arksey and O'Malley, a five-stage methodological framework was used, including identifying the research question; identifying relevant studies; study selection; charting the data; and collating, summarizing, and reporting the results.

Identifying the Research Question

The research question leading this review was, What is the student perspective toward role-emerging fieldwork placements in occupational therapy? with specific focus on the opportunities, challenges, and future directions.

Identifying Relevant Studies

We used electronic database searches; hand-searching of literature sources, including journals, practice magazines, and bulletins; and citation tracking to identify and collect relevant articles in the

literature. Figure 1 lists the selected electronic databases and keywords used in the search strategy, as well as the selected literature sources. Electronic databases that were specific to health research and health professions, related to occupational therapy, and most likely to contain articles on role-emerging fieldwork placements, were targeted for this review. Likewise, hand-searched literature sources that were most likely to generate results relevant to role-emerging fieldwork placements and occupational therapy were selected. This was based on a preliminary literature review that identified key literature sources to target based on their aim and scope.
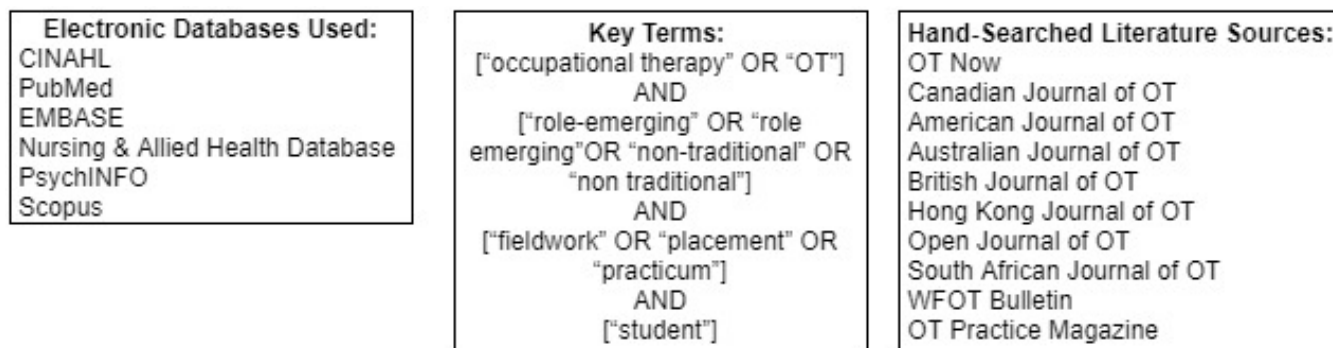
Electronic Databases Used:	Key Terms:	Hand-Searched Literature Sources:
CINAHL PubMed EMBASE Nursing & Allied Health Database PsychINFO Scopus	["occupational therapy" OR "OT"] AND ["role-emerging" OR "role emerging"OR "non-traditional" OR "non traditional"] AND ["fieldwork" OR "placement" OR "practicum"] AND ["student"]	OT Now Canadian Journal of OT American Journal of OT Australian Journal of OT British Journal of OT Hong Kong Journal of OT Open Journal of OT South African Journal of OT WFOT Bulletin OT Practice Magazine

Figure 1. Electronic databases, key terms, and hand-searched literature sources used.

Study Selection

Inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed and applied throughout the literature search process (see Table 1). Because of a language limitation, only articles written in English were included. In addition, articles were required to focus on occupational therapy and role-emerging fieldwork placements, while also having a section that specifically contained student perspective(s) or experience(s) with this type of placement. Articles were excluded if they focused on fieldwork placement projects or traditional fieldwork placements without student experiences on role-emerging fieldwork placements, or if they focused on student experiences with fieldwork placements in general without containing specific experiences related to role-emerging fieldwork placements. Conference abstracts, dissertations, and theses were also excluded to focus the content on published studies in the literature. To achieve breadth with the results obtained from the literature search, articles were not excluded based on their peer-review status. And, since the first Canadian handbook written on role-emerging fieldwork placements was published in 1997 (Bossers, Polatajko, et al., 1997), only articles that were published after 1997 were included in this review.

Table 1
Inclusion-Exclusion Criteria

Included Articles	Excluded Articles
English	Project focus rather than fieldwork placement focus
Related to occupational therapy and role-emerging fieldwork placements	Focus on general or traditional fieldwork placement rather than role-emerging fieldwork placement
Includes student experience / perspective	Conference abstracts
	Unpublished research (i.e., dissertations and theses)

Data Collection

The electronic database search was performed first. All of the articles yielded from the search strategy were imported into Mendeley, a reference management software program available for free (https://www.mendeley.com/). Duplicates from the database searches were then removed and the remaining articles were screened based on their title and abstract using the inclusion and exclusion criteria described. Articles with a relevant title but with a missing abstract were screened based on their full text. The hand searching of key literature sources was conducted next, and articles that fit the inclusion criteria based on their title and abstract were manually imported into Mendeley. Any articles found during the hand search that were already included from the electronic database search were not added a second time and were recorded as duplicates.

Once all duplicates were removed and articles were excluded based on the title and abstract, the resulting articles were screened and excluded once more based on their full text. Citation tracking was then conducted with the remaining articles. This process involved screening the reference list of each article to identify potentially relevant articles that were not captured in the database search or hand search. Any articles from citation tracking that met the inclusion criteria were entered manually into Mendeley and added to the number of included articles.

Charting the Data; Collating, Summarizing, and Reporting Results

Data specific to the purpose of this review were extracted and subjected to descriptive and thematic analyses. A general descriptive analysis was conducted without reference to a specific guiding methodological article. The selected descriptive characteristics had the purpose of providing a contextual overview of the articles to enhance the reader's understanding of the student perspectives and experiences being examined. The descriptive analysis included: year of publication; country; number of student participants and education level of student; time length of the fieldwork placement; whether students completed the fieldwork placement individually, in pairs, or in groups; and method of collection. Moreover, data extraction and coding for the thematic analysis focused on segments in the results section of articles included in this review that portrayed the experiences and perspectives of students toward role-emerging fieldwork placements. It should be noted that some articles did not have a defined results section because of the type of literature, but they still captured student experiences and perspectives regarding role-emerging fieldwork placements. For a more concise presentation of these results, each article in this review was assigned a number based on alphabetical order of author names.

Themes were identified and processed using specific techniques that were outlined in Ryan and Bernard (2003). The initial step involved extracting segments of student discussion and categorizing them under (a) opportunities, (b) challenges, or (c) future directions based on general relevance to each of the three foci. Once this was completed, the possible range of themes in each of the three foci were identified. Identifying themes consisted of methods, such as analyzing metaphors and analogies used to describe experiences and linguistic connectors, such as "since," "as a result," and "because" that may indicate causal or conditional relations. It was also important to keep track of topics that were infrequently discussed, as this gave insight into the scope of the literature and indicated potential areas that may require further research. Word lists were generated by identifying key words or phrases, tracking the number of times they appear in each article, and analyzing and comparing the meaning of each key word or phrase in its original context. Word lists were used in conjunction with the cutting and sorting technique discussed by Ryan and Bernard (2003), where segments that seemed to be relevant and related to each other were grouped together. It was important to combine the use of word lists with

cutting and sorting as segments were often found to be meaningful and relevant to a certain theme but did not include identified key words or phrases. Once a wide range of themes were developed in each of the three foci, the themes that appeared most frequently were selected to be further analyzed and developed. Table 2 and Table 3 provide examples of how Ryan and Bernard's (2003) techniques were used to help generate themes in this review.

Table 2
Observational Techniques: Things to Search for in Texts

Metaphors and analogies	Extracted text	Interpretation of text
	"I really am out there on my own, that would be the only thing I would say, I felt a little bit out there on my own and thrown in, you know." (Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, & de-Visser, 2015, p. 34)	This is a direct quote from a student. Their use of "thrown in" in this context indicates she felt a level of unpreparedness and a potential lack of guidance during the role-emerging fieldwork placement.
	"Not only did it allow me to figure out how occupational therapy fits in an out-of-the-box setting, but I grew so much as a person and clinician in this setting." (Mattila & Dolhi, 2016, p. 27)	This is a direct quote from a student. Their use of "out-of-the-box setting" in this context seemingly refers to how the role-emerging fieldwork placement has helped them become more aware that occupational therapy can be used in unique care settings.
Linguistic connectors	**Extracted text**	**Interpretation of text**
	"Since there was no OT on staff at this site, it was a great opportunity for us to become the face of OT and to use our previous educational and clinical experience to guide this process." (Mattila & Dolhi, 2016, p. 27)	This is a direct quote from a student. The opportunity to represent the face of occupational therapy and use their experience appears to be a result of not having an occupational therapist at the site.
	"The role-emerging placement did give me the confidence to work. Because you are so independent in a role-emerging placement, and it really forces you to use your critical thinking skills and draw upon the knowledge that you have learned over two years in the OT programme." (Sharmin et al., 2016, p. 576)	This is a direct quote from a student. It appears that the independence required for a role-emerging fieldwork placement pressures them to apply their learned skills and knowledge, resulting in gained confidence to work.

Note: Not all extracted text segments are direct quotes from students; these were simply the examples that were chosen for Table 2. For example, some segments were the voice of preceptors or researchers who were paraphrasing the words of students during interviews or interpreting journals and workbooks that were filled in by students during their fieldwork placements.

Table 3
Manipulative Techniques: Ways of Processing Texts

Cutting and sorting	Sorted texts with similar meaning		Potential theme
	She had moved from a more passive role on previous placements (being directed by the supervisor) to a more active role where she now had to take control of her own learning (Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015, p. 36)		Independence and autonomy
	"The role-emerging placement did give me the confidence to work. Because you are so independent in a role-emerging placement, and it really forces you to use your critical thinking skills and draw upon the knowledge that you have learned over two years in the occupational therapy programme." (Sharmin et al., 2016, p. 576)		
	"Over the course of the placement, there was an abundance of opportunities to build on professional development and performance management skills. This was strongly influenced by the self-directed nature of the experience." (Thompson & Thompson, 2013, p. 18)		
Word lists	**Key word or phrase**	**Total appearances relevant to student perspectives and experiences**	**Total articles containing key word or phrase**
	Autonomy; autonomous; autonomously	n = 14	n = 10
	Independence; independent; independently	n = 27	n = 15
	Self-directed; self-perceived; self-taught; self-discovery	n = 14	n = 11

Results

A summary of the literature search process is shown in Figure 2. One hundred and fifty articles matched the search strategy during the electronic database search, while 21 articles were found to be relevant during the hand-searching process. After duplicates were removed and articles were screened based on their title and abstract, 57 articles remained. This was followed by a full-text screen, which resulted in 28 articles, and two more articles were included from citation tracking, resulting in 30 articles that met the inclusion criteria.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptions of each article are presented in Table 4. Nearly two-thirds of occupational therapy students included in the studies were from Canada and the United Kingdom; the remaining students attended schools in the United States, Australia, the Republic of Ireland, and Hong Kong. It is important to note that some articles contained separate groups of participants that attended schools in different countries, such as the studies from Jung, Solomon, and Cole (2005) and Thew, Edwards, Baptiste, and Molineux (2011). The sample sizes varied greatly, as roughly half of the studies included five or fewer students, and numbers ranged from one to 47 student participants. The time length of the fieldwork placements also varied in each article, as numbers ranged from 1 week to 22 weeks in length. Some articles did not state the time length of the fieldwork placements, while authors of two articles only specified the time length for a portion of the students included in their studies, as seen in Jung et al. and Thew et al.
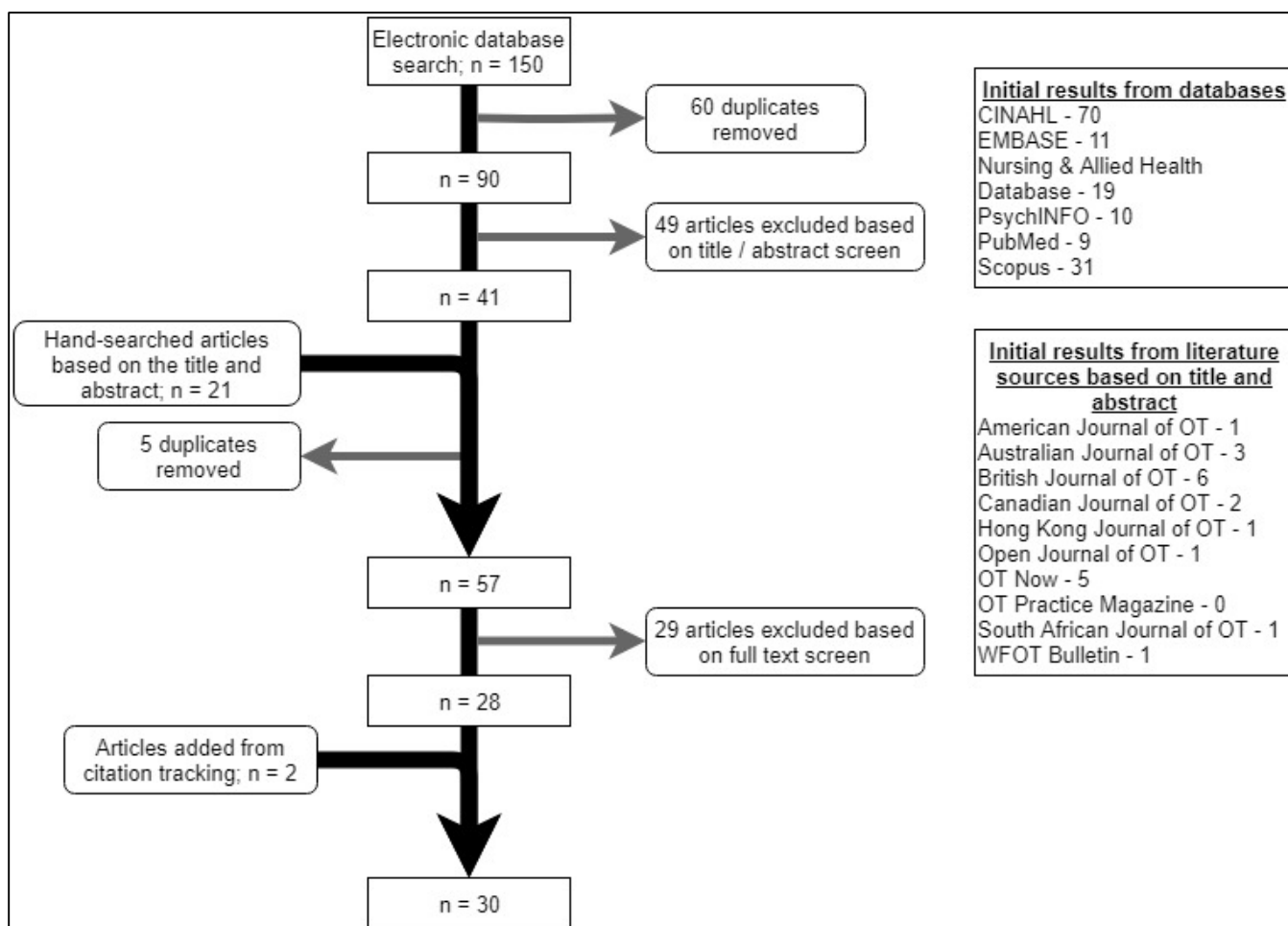
Figure 2. Literature search process and results.

In addition, there were multiple descriptions used to define the level of education among students because of the unique program structures of each school, which further varied depending on the country and year of publication. This discrepancy was dealt with by grouping students into three categories based on their year of study in their occupational therapy program and fieldwork experience prior to their role-emerging fieldwork placement: (a) "junior" students in their first year or first two semesters with no previous fieldwork placement experience; (b) "intermediate" students in any year other than their first and last year, and the role-emerging fieldwork placement is neither their first nor their final fieldwork placement; (c) "senior" students in their last year or last two semesters with the role-emerging fieldwork placement as their final fieldwork placement.

An overwhelming majority of student groups were senior students, and only two articles included junior students that undertook a role-emerging fieldwork placement. Studies by Linnane and Warren (2017); Provident and Colmer (2013); Provident and Joyce-Gaguzis (2005); Rodger et al. (2009); Smith, Cornella, and Williams (2014); and Warren, O'Leary, Mooney, O'Grady, and Costello (2010) did not state the year of study or prior fieldwork placement experience of students. The students in these studies were categorized as unspecified in Table 4.

It was found that students completed their role-emerging fieldwork placements individually, in pairs, in groups, or it was unspecified. Thirteen articles included at least one cluster of students who completed their placement(s) in pairs or groups, while 12 articles did not state the students' placement

scenarios. Three articles identified two placement scenarios where some students completed their placements in pairs, while other students completed their placements individually (Friedland, Polatajko, & Gage, 2001; Jung et al., 2005; Sharmin, Jung, Shimmell, & Solomon, 2016). In their article, Bossers, Cook, Polatajko, and Laine (1997) indicated that two students worked in pairs, but the authors did not specify the placement scenarios for the remaining students.

It was also important to keep track of the primary purpose of each article to further analyze the available literature on role-emerging fieldwork placements. Twenty-one of the 30 articles focused on exploring student experiences on role-emerging fieldwork placements. The remaining articles had alternative purposes but included input from students. For instance, Rodger et al. (2009) focused on the evaluation of pilot trial placement models and administered questionnaires to collect data, while Friedland et al. (2001) described a project designed to educate community agencies on a development project.

As shown in Table 4, various data collection methods were used to capture student experiences and perspectives in the reviewed articles, including discussion groups, participant observation, personal reflection, questionnaires and surveys, reflective journal keeping, and semi-structured interviews. The methods of data collection were defined and categorized based on information found directly in the articles. It should be mentioned that participant observation refers to active data collection during the fieldwork placement to capture student experiences as they occur in their natural contexts. It is also important to note that personal reflection refers to circumstances where the student is an author of the article and appears to reflect on his or her experiences in the absence of structured questions. Personal reflection differs from reflective journal keeping in that the journals students completed during the fieldwork placement were collected and used by others to interpret the student's experiences and perspectives.

Table 4
Descriptive Analysis

Article	Country	Level of students	Time length of fieldwork placement	Individually, pairs, or groups	Method(s) of collection
1. Boniface et al., 2012	UK	Senior (n = 4)	12 weeks	Pairs	RJK, SI
2. Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997	CAN	Intermediate (n = 4) Senior (n = 7)	4 or 8 weeks	Pairs or unspecified	SI
3. Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014	UK	Senior (n = 5)	Unspecified	Unspecified	SI
4. Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015	UK	Senior (n = 5)	Unspecified	Individually	SI
6. Clarke, Martin, de-Visser, et al., 2015	UK	Senior (n = 5)	Unspecified	Unspecified	SI
7. Dancza et al., 2013	UK	Senior (n = 10)	8 or 10 weeks	Pairs	SI
8. Doherty et al., 2009	AUS	Senior (n = 18)	8 weeks	Unspecified	Q/S
9. Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009	UK	Senior (n = 2)	7 weeks	Pairs	DG, PO
10. Fitzgerald et al., 2017	UK	Senior (n = 8)	9 weeks	Unspecified	Unspecified
11. Friedland et al., 2001	CAN	Junior, Intermediate, Senior (n = 47)	6 weeks	Individually or pairs	SI
12. Hartman et al., 2015	CAN	Senior (n = 2)	Unspecified	Unspecified	PR
13. James & Prigg, 2004	AUS	Intermediate (n = 18)	3 weeks	Pairs	SI
14. Jung et al., 2005	CAN	Senior (n = 4)	5 weeks or unspecified	Individually or pairs	Unspecified
15. Knightbridge, 2014	UK	Intermediate, Senior (n = 14)	22 weeks	Pairs	RJK

16. Linnane & Warren, 2017	IRE	Unspecified (n = 45)	Unspecified	Unspecified	Q/S
17. Li-Tsang et al., 2009	HK	Intermediate (n = 4) Senior (n = 4)	8 weeks	Groups	Q/S, SI
18. Mattila & Dolhi, 2016	US	Senior (n = 5)	8 or 10 weeks	Unspecified	RJK, SI
19. Mechefske & Carey, 2016	CAN	Junior (n = 2)	8 weeks	Unspecified	PR
20. Provident & Colmer, 2013	US	Unspecified (n = 37)	1 week	Groups	PR
21. Provident & Joyce-Gaguzis, 2005	US	Unspecified (n = 2)	12 weeks	Unspecified	PR
22. Rodger et al., 2009	AUS	Unspecified (n = 6)	10 or 14 weeks	Unspecified	Q/S
23. Sharmin et al., 2016	CAN	Senior (n = 5)	8 weeks	Individually or pairs	SI
24. Smith et al., 2014	AUS	Unspecified (n = 14)	12 weeks	Unspecified	SI
25. Thew et al., 2011	UK, CAN	Senior (n = 1) Unspecified (n = 2)	8 or 10 weeks, or unspecified	Individually	PR
26. Thew et al., 2008	UK	Senior (n = 17)	5 weeks	Pairs	DG, Q/S
27. Thompson & Thompson, 2013	CAN	Senior (n = 1)	Unspecified	Groups	PR
28. Totten & Pratt, 2001	UK	Senior (n = 1)	6 weeks	Individually	PR
29. Truong & Berg, 2017	CAN	Senior (n = 1)	7 weeks	Individually	PR
30. Vaisberg et al., 2014	CAN	Senior (n = 1)	8 weeks	Individually	PR
31. Warren et al., 2010	IRE	Unspecified (n = 2)	8 weeks	Unspecified	Unspecified

Note: AUS = Australia, CAN = Canada, HK = Hong Kong, ROI = Republic of Ireland, UK = United Kingdom, US = United States.
Note: DG = discussion groups, PO = participant observation, PR = personal reflection, Q/S = questionnaire/survey, RJK = reflective journal keeping, SI = semi-structured interviews.
Note: Articles 12, 13, 18, 24, 26, 28, and 29 are the only non-peer-reviewed articles.

Thematic Analysis

As the objective of this paper was to identify the opportunities, challenges, and future directions of role-emerging fieldwork placements from the student perspective, nine themes were identified relating to each of these foci using methods from Ryan and Bernard (2003). See Table 5 for a summary of the themes and refer to Table 4 for the corresponding article assigned to each number. In the studies, students most commonly discussed topics related to opportunities, with a moderate amount of discussion on topics related to challenges, and the least amount of discussion related to future directions.

Table 5
Emerging Themes

Focus	Themes identified	Articles that themes appeared in
Opportunities	Professional and personal development	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 26, 27, 30
	Independence and autonomy	2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 30
	Client-centeredness	2, 4, 6, 9, 13, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24
	New occupational therapy perspective	1, 4, 6, 10, 11, 17, 22, 23, 24, 27
Challenges	Defining a professional role	2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28
	Lack of structure and support	2, 3, 5, 13, 15, 16, 21, 22, 24, 25
	High level of responsibility	3, 4, 5, 7, 23, 30
Future Directions	Recommendations for future students	2, 15, 24, 26, 28, 29
	Establishing roles within sites	2, 7, 10, 14, 15, 17, 22, 27, 28

Opportunities. When exploring the opportunities and benefits related to role-emerging fieldwork placements in the reviewed literature, four themes were identified, which are presented and elaborated on below.

Professional and personal skill development. The development of professional and personal skills appeared in 22 of the 30 articles and was the most frequently discussed among student responses. Students often expressed the development of a professional identity. For example, students in Clarke, Martin, de-Visser, and Sadlo (2015) reflected on the importance of this during the fieldwork placement and how it has enabled them to begin professional work with a sense of "purpose, direction, and clarity" (p. 46). Many students also emphasized personal growth and strengthening of generalizable skills, stating that "I have learnt to take a leadership role. I find myself now stepping outside my comfort zone, pushing myself to be better" (Knightbridge, 2014, p. 442) and "Not only did it allow me to figure out how occupational therapy fits in an 'out of the box setting,' but I grew so much as a person and clinician in this setting. I became a better listener" (Mattila & Dolhi, 2016, p. 27). Increased self-confidence was frequently mentioned by students, as seen here:

> I grew in my confidence of what I was doing, what actually occupational therapy is, how you could sort of implement interventions, how you can assess people. I grew practically like that but also. . . just with my self-belief as well about my own abilities. (Clarke, Martin, Sadlo & de-Visser, 2014, p. 225)

> And now, I feel more confident. If I was to step in there, I wouldn't feel so much like an entry-level therapist. I probably wouldn't have known [the settings] if we didn't do something like this. I think that everybody was more excited. I think everybody put their all into it. (Mattila & Dolhi, 2016, p. 26)

Independence and Autonomy. Student discussion relating to independence and autonomy was found in 20 articles. The structure and nature of role-emerging fieldwork placements allowed students not only to act autonomously but also to develop independence as a valuable trait. The autonomous nature of role-emerging settings was often tied to the idea that there was no pressure for students to model their educator or adhere to an established occupational therapy structure, which was contrasted with traditional fieldwork placements (Dancza et al., 2013; Li-Tsang, Choi, Sinclair, & Wong, 2009; Rodger et al., 2009). Instead, students had to personally develop a new role in their assigned placement, as some were quoted saying, "It gives you great confidence to go into an organisation and identify a need for occupational therapy and to work independently to develop a solution to that need" (Fitzgerald et al., 2017, p. 4), and "I was challenged to clearly define and then confidently articulate the occupational therapy role in a practice environment where therapy services do not typically exist" (Thompson & Thompson, 2013, p. 18). This theme is closely tied to the previous theme as studies, such as those by Bossers, Cook, et al. (1997); Friedland et al. (2001); and Sharmin et al. (2016) reported the need to apply certain skills when working in a fieldwork placement that offers such independence and autonomy. This is apparent in one student's comments:

> The role-emerging placement did give me the confidence to work. Because you are so independent in a role-emerging placement, and it really forces you to use your critical thinking skills and draw upon the knowledge that you have learned over two years in the OT programme. (Sharmin et al., 2016, p. 576)

Furthermore, relevant to this theme was the impact of completing role-emerging fieldwork placements in pairs or groups or individually. Students who did their fieldwork placement in pairs or groups discussed feelings of mutual support (Dancza et al., 2013; Friedland et al., 2001; James & Prigg, 2004). Such scenarios enabled students to work together, challenge each other, and lessen the difficulties that came from the absence of an on-site supervisor (Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997; Dancza et al., 2013; Friedland et al., 2001; Jung et al., 2005; Thompson & Thompson, 2013). This was emphasized by James and Prigg (2004), who found that "students reported that working with another student was both a favourable experience and a necessary one, given the self-directed learning aspect of the placement" (p. 65). It is important to note that the consequences of working in pairs or groups should not be interpreted as a benefit of role-emerging fieldwork placements. Rather, this finding should be understood as a supporting element that may enhance the role-emerging fieldwork placement experience, as discussed by students.

Client-centeredness. The opportunity to practice and observe client-centeredness in role-emerging fieldwork placements was expressed by students in 10 articles. Bossers, Cook, et al. (1997) and Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, and de-Visser (2014) reported that students recognized the importance of viewing clients in a holistic manner, as they could view the client as a person rather than as a disability, which led to the absence of stereotypes. This is discussed in a similar way by a student in Sharmin et al. (2016):

> Being client-centered is so important. A lot of clients have so many things going on in their life, whether it is addictions, multiple appointments, struggling with housing, food, and transportation too. Asking them about their experiences and making them feel like an equal part of the relationship is very important. (p. 577)

The priority of client values and goals was seen as an important part of occupational therapy in various fieldwork placement experiences, as a student in Smith et al. (2014) said:

> I felt like with this fieldwork experience I was able to really hit the core of occupational therapy. That is, helping people do the occupations they want or need to do. It was some of the most occupation- based, client-centered occupational therapy that I have seen yet. (p. 23)

This was often mentioned in comparison to traditional fieldwork placements (Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997; Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009), by which students expressed feeling constrained due to the structured system of such settings. A student in Clarke, Martin, et al. (2014) described a previous traditional fieldwork placement as "some kind of process and you fit it around the individual rather than having an individual and then fitting the process around them" (p. 225).

New occupational therapy perspective. Students in 10 articles expressed having gained a deeper understanding and new perspective toward the profession of occupational therapy and their own futures. For example, students reported experiencing a drastic change as their opinions of the profession prior to the fieldwork placement were "challenged and re-constructed in light of apparently new ways of knowing, understanding, and being" (Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014, p. 226). In turn, their changed definitions and integration of occupational therapy resulted in a completely new perspective (Boniface, Seymour, Polglase, Lawrie, & Clarke, 2012; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016), as highlighted by a student:

> I have learnt so much . . . the most on this placement, although it's been the hardest and most challenging, I have learnt a lot about how I want to be as a therapist and it's really made me question everything. (Boniface et al., 2012, p. 200)

The students' changed perspectives on their futures in the profession are indicated by those who expressed the strong influence that their fieldwork placement has had on their career choices, as some of them felt more inclined to work in a role-emerging setting as professionals (Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997; Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014; Clarke, Martin, de-Visser, & Sadlo, 2015; Fitzgerald et al, 2017; Totten & Pratt, 2001; Vaisberg et al., 2014). Students in Totten and Pratt (2001) and Fitzgerald, Smith, Rehman, and Taylor (2017) sought employment in a role-emerging setting as a direct result of their role-emerging fieldwork placement, while students in Clarke, Martin, de-Visser, et al. (2015) expressed the desire to return to a role-emerging setting to work in the future. The perspectives of postgraduate students were also captured in the literature. A former student in Thompson and Thompson (2013) reflected on the core competencies that were fostered during a role-emerging fieldwork placement and the positive impact of this on current professional practice. Former students in Clarke, Martin, de-Visser, et al. discussed how they felt better equipped for professional practice, had more confidence and success over other graduates during job interviews, and maintained an occupational therapy identity and perspective in their post-graduate careers. These skills were attributed directly to the influence of their role-emerging fieldwork placements, although a few of them also found their fieldwork placement to be noticeably easier with fewer responsibilities than actual practice. This is contrary to the findings of Friedland et al. (2001), where some senior students preferred traditional institution settings, as they believed these settings gave them more opportunity to develop and practice clinical skills.

Challenges. When exploring the challenges that students encountered during their role-emerging fieldwork placements, three themes were identified in the reviewed literature.

Defining a professional role. In 15 of the articles, students discussed multiple challenges that were associated with having to establish, and subsequently fulfill, an occupational therapy role during their fieldwork placement. Conflict with on-site staff was most frequently discussed, as students either had trouble managing both their own expectations and the team's expectations (Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Dancza et al., 2013), or the on-site staff were unfamiliar with the profession and did not understand their role as an occupational therapy student (Friedland et al., 2001; James & Prigg, 2004). This was portrayed by Sharmin et al. (2016) as one student commented:

> The biggest challenge was getting staff to understand our role and what we could do. Also, it was a very protective factor from the HIV service organisation staff for clients and wanting to make sure of our skills and competency before they would let us go and interact with clients. (p. 578)

Some students thought that the time spent defining their role took away from available time for direct client interaction (Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997; Thew et al., 2011; Totten & Pratt, 2001). In addition, a few students also doubted their own ability to establish a role successfully (Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997; Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Linnane & Warren, 2017) and questioned the extent to which their tasks were truly related to occupational therapy (Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997). The former was demonstrated in the study by Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, and de-Visser (2015):

> I started, actually didn't like it at first I must say, the first few weeks I'd say, not just the first week, the first three weeks, I was really doubting whether I could do it or not, whether I actually liked it, whether I was good enough to do it, whether I was going to get through it. It was all quite negative. (p. 37)

Lack of structure and support. Students viewed this theme as a challenge in 10 different articles, primarily defined by the absence of an on-site supervisor and an overall lack of structure. Students from Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al. (2015); Linnane and Warren (2017); and Rodger et al. (2009) exemplified

these findings as they reflected on not being able to ask fundamental questions or receive guidance when they were unsure of how to approach difficult situations. This is supported by a student's comment in Sharmin et al. (2016):

> This is challenging, not having an occupational therapist on-site review, as in any other placement you have occupational therapist and see what they are doing [and] learn from that. The lack of on-site preceptor and the lack of students to consult with . . . that added challenges. (p. 578)

Some students were also presented with the challenge of having limited resources during the fieldwork placement (Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Jung et al., 2005), as students from a Hong Kong study noted:

> The occupational therapy department was just developing, and we needed to plan and consider such issues as how to set up the furniture and the environmental design of the treatment rooms. No formal record forms were available, and thus, we had to develop our own record forms, and we also needed to create our own treatment tools. (Li-Tsang et al., 2009, p. 47)

High level of responsibility. Six studies contained reflections on responsibilities as a few students reported feeling unqualified for various tasks and pressured from the large workload assigned to them. This was supported by students in Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al. (2015), who acknowledged that the level of responsibility was considered too high at times but came with being an autonomous student, and by students in James and Prigg (2004), who felt that the workload was higher in comparison to their previous fieldwork placements.

Future directions. When exploring the future directions related to role-emerging fieldwork placements in the reviewed literature, two themes were identified: Student recommendations to future students interested in completing a role-emerging fieldwork placement, and student comments discussing the importance of these fieldwork placements toward the profession and wider community.

Recommendations for future students. Six of the articles included prerequisites that students recommended and felt were necessary to thrive successfully in a role-emerging fieldwork placement, such as the presence of certain personality traits and prior placement experience (Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997; Linnane & Warren, 2017; Thew et al., 2011; Totten & Pratt, 2001; Truong & Berg, 2017). This was agreed among a number of students in Bossers, Cook, et al. (1997), who identified "initiative, independence, confidence, motivation, and comfort with one's skill level" (p. 78) as essential traits prior to the fieldwork placement. The concern that certain experience is essential before taking on a role-emerging fieldwork placement was also supported in Thew et al. (2011) from an occupational therapist reflecting on her experience as a student:

> Exposure to an array of clinical settings and level of student experience must be considered when matching students with roles in which there is no formally established service or programme, as I would not have possessed the basic repertoire of skills on which such a placement is premised on a novice student. (p. 63)

However, contrasting views were found, as a small number of students from Friedland et al. (2001) and Bossers, Cook, et al. (1997) argued that certain students may only develop certain skills by being put in a challenging environment, such as a role-emerging fieldwork placement.

Establishing roles in sites. Student opinions regarding the importance of role-emerging fieldwork placements for the profession and the wider community were found in nine articles. A few students commented on this matter and reflected on the successful establishment of an occupational

therapy role in the non-traditional setting where their placement was held (Dancza et al., 2013; Fitzgerald et al., 2017). This idea resonated in the study from Bossers, Cook, et al. (1997), as students felt that role-emerging fieldwork placements can help create positions in the community and raise awareness for the profession of occupational therapy. A student in Truong and Berg (2017) also supported this, stating:

> Non-traditional placements are not only beneficial to the student but also to the placement environment. Our hope is that similar placement experiences start conversations and open doors for occupational therapy in non-traditional roles to mentor students. Our placement experience provides an example of how students can view occupational therapy at a systems level and incorporate this larger view into future clinical practice. (p. 22)

Furthermore, students recognized how role-emerging fieldwork placements affected the wider community and the profession through the work they accomplished with the clients in their fieldwork placements (Dancza et al., 2013; Fitzgerald et al., 2017; Knightbridge, 2014; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016). This was expressed alongside the hopes of having developed a service that can be sustainable for the future and leaving a lasting impact at the placement setting (Fitzgerald et al., 2017; Knightbridge, 2014; Sharmin et al., 2016). This was seen in a student's comments:

> I think it's the lasting path that we had with the staff at the HIV service organisations and increasing the awareness of the staff for occupational therapy, and hopefully leaving behind something for them to be able to better serve their clients from the services that we were providing to them. (Sharmin et al., 2016, p. 578)

Discussion

While previous articles have included student opinions in their review of role-emerging fieldwork placements to a certain extent (Clarke, de-Visser, Martin, & Sadlo, 2014; Cooper & Raine, 2009; Overton, Clark, & Thomas, 2009), this review adds to the literature a synthesis that provides an in-depth analysis of student experiences and perspectives. Thirty articles were reviewed using scoping review methods to explore and summarize student perspectives on the opportunities, challenges, and future directions of role-emerging fieldwork placements in occupational therapy schools around the world. Key findings consisted of themes that emerged as (a) opportunities, including professional and personal development, independence and autonomy, client-centeredness, and a new occupational therapy perspective; (b) themes that emerged as challenges, including defining a professional role, a lack of structure and support, and a high level of responsibility; and (c) themes that emerged as future directions, including recommendations for future students and establishing roles at the sites.

Opportunities

Like the findings in the reviews by Clarke, de-Visser, et al. (2014) and Overton et al. (2009), students experienced professional and personal development in numerous ways that contributed to the emergence of an occupational therapist identity. The pressure to make professional judgements and carry out decisions without the immediate validation of an on-site supervisor or established occupational therapy guidelines resulted in the positive growth perceived by students. Clarke, de-Visser, et al. and Overton et al. reported additional aspects of development that were not frequently emphasized in student discussions of articles included in this review, such as clinical reasoning, problem-solving, multidisciplinary team work, and time management. This discrepancy could be a result of differences in methodology or research questions used in the previous studies that were reviewed by Clarke, de-Visser, et al. and Overton et al.

The positive impact of completing role-emerging fieldwork placements in pairs or groups, rather than individually, appeared to be a unique finding of this literature review. It was not discussed by Cooper and Raine (2009) or Overton et al. (2009), while Clarke, de-Visser, et al. (2014) encouraged future research to consider the benefits and limitations of peer learning models. Supported by the findings, it is suggested that working collaboratively alongside peers can improve the quality of experience by easing the overall demands of a role-emerging fieldwork placement and allowing students to challenge each other in a productive way (Boniface et al., 2012; Jung et al., 2005).

Students highly valued the opportunity to witness and practice client-centeredness in their fieldwork placements. Viewing the client as more than a disability, understanding their experiences, prioritizing client goals, building a quality relationship, and treating them in a holistic manner were rewarding experiences that students believed represented occupational therapy at its core (Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997; Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014; Sharmin et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2014). This was well documented in Overton et al. (2009), who found that being able to view the client as a person was a key benefit for students, and in Clarke, de-Visser, et al. (2014), who identified the importance of client-centeredness as one of the six dimensions of learning.

Unique to this review is the inclusion of student perspectives regarding the influence of their role-emerging fieldwork placements on career choices and post-graduate success. The previous reviews notably spoke on the absence of research in these areas, to which Clarke, de-Visser, et al. (2014) also contended that there was no evidence to support an authors' claim that such placements give students a competitive edge at graduation. This was contrary to this review's findings, as some students believed their role-emerging fieldwork placement had given them an advantage over other occupational therapists during job interviews (Clarke, Martin, de-Visser, et al., 2015). It also appeared that students who took on a role-emerging fieldwork placement felt more inclined to work in role-emerging settings after graduation, while also feeling more confidence in the skills that carried on to impact their professional practice (Clarke, Martin, de-Visser, et al., 2015; Doherty, Stagnitti, & Schoo, 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 2017; Jung et al., 2005; Thompson & Thompson, 2013; Totten & Pratt, 2001; Vaisberg et al., 2014).

Challenges

The review by Overton et al. (2009) found that a lack of client interaction was the most common limitation cited. In comparison, this review found that students most frequently discussed the conflict associated with on-site, non-occupational therapy staff in terms of managing their expectations or the ambiguity in defining their own role as a result of the staff not being familiar with what occupational therapy services encompass (Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Dancza et al., 2013; Friedland et al., 2001; James & Prigg, 2004; Sharmin et al., 2016). This appeared to be a unique finding, as previous reviews (Clarke, de-Visser, et al., 2014; Overton et al., 2009) only briefly discussed this without capturing student perspectives.

Multiple challenges were replicated in the findings by Clarke, de-Visser, et al. (2014) and Overton et al. (2009), including the time-consuming process of establishing an occupational therapy role, which took away from direct client interaction and feelings of self-doubt in terms of the students' ability to carry out decisions. Limited resources and the absence of an on-site supervisor were also commonly discussed by students as contributing to the overall lack of structure in a role-emerging environment (Linnane & Warren, 2017; Rodger et al., 2009; Sharmin et al., 2016). This was emphasized by Overton et al., suggesting that students typically struggled with the transition from a traditional setting to a more difficult role-emerging setting. Clarke, de-Visser, et al. (2014) identified a noteworthy

limitation, stating that the difficult process of professional identity development is potentially exacerbated in the absence of an occupational therapist role model that students can observe during role-emerging fieldwork placements. This was supported by Cooper and Raine (2009), who thought "to expect a student to carry this responsibility without the supervision of an occupational therapist could be argued to present a risk to the future of the profession" (p. 418). However, as mentioned in the previous focus of opportunities, identity development appeared to be one of the most significant benefits, according to student experiences found in this review.

Future Directions

The focus on student experiences and perspectives toward the future directions of role-emerging fieldwork placements has not been adequately captured in previous reviews, and student comments found in the 30 articles included in this review were limited as well. It is important to note that the lack of reflection is likely because students are simply not asked to reflect on this matter, as most of the studies focused on highlighting student experiences related to the benefits and limitations of role-emerging fieldwork placements.

Mixed opinions were found in terms of the recommendations for future students. Some students strongly suggested that future students should have prior fieldwork experience and an acquired skill set before taking on a role-emerging fieldwork placement, such as the ability to adapt to a new environment (Truong & Berg, 2017) and willingness to take risks (Totten & Pratt, 2001). This was briefly discussed by Clarke, de-Visser, et al. (2014), who found that multiple authors suggested role-emerging fieldwork placements may put weaker students at a disadvantage, and by Overton et al. (2009), who identified literature that recommended students have a strong sense of core skills before applying. However, some students believed that the necessary skills can develop during a role-emerging fieldwork placement and that restricting these placements for experienced students would "eliminate students most in need of skill development in these areas" (Friedland et al., 2001, p. 306). This was also supported by certain students in Bossers, Cook, et al. (1997), who expressed that this may "limit growth opportunities for students who may develop within the climate of the placement" (p. 78).

This review captured student reflections on the success of role-emerging fieldwork placements and how they can be used in the future to benefit the profession as well as the communities in which they take place. Clarke, de-Visser, et al. (2014) and Overton et al. (2009) spoke of this in their reviews, but student perspectives were not addressed. It is apparent that students perceived the emergence of a legitimate occupational therapy role as a direct result of their role-emerging fieldwork placement (Clarke, Martin, et al., 2014; Dancza et al., 2013; Fitzgerald et al., 2017; Knightbridge, 2014; Linnane & Warren, 2017; Sharmin et al., 2016). In more recent studies, students also advocated for the use of role-emerging fieldwork placements to create new opportunities in the field and to encourage student involvement. These findings are in contrast with Friedland et al. (2001) and Jung et al. (2005), who previously found that many students preferred hospital and other institutional settings over role-emerging settings for their fieldwork placements.

Implications for Students, Educators, and the Profession

The findings in this review have implications for students, educators, and the profession of occupational therapy. It appears that many of the struggles reported by students, such as not having an on-site supervisor, working with limited resources, or having to compromise with on-site staff, are also the same factors that force students to step out of their comfort level, pressure them to make independent judgements, and help them grow as professionals. This claim is strengthened by the finding that an

overwhelming majority of the reviewed studies reported positive learning experiences by students and that role-emerging fieldwork placements were perceived to reflect the core of the profession, despite an unfamiliar and difficult learning environment. Only one article included comments where students questioned the relevance of their fieldwork placement duties to occupational therapy (Bossers, Cook, et al., 1997). These findings suggest that the development of important qualities, such as self-confidence, independence, leadership, and a deepened understanding of the occupational therapy role reported by students, cannot be isolated from the challenging nature of role-emerging fieldwork placements. An implication of this is that role-emerging fieldwork challenges should not be seen as limitations that hinder the value of role-emerging fieldwork placements. Rather, these challenges should viewed as fundamental components of the role-emerging concepts that facilitate a necessary experience for professional development and identity formation for students.

In addition, the inconsistent findings in whether role-emerging fieldwork placements are appropriate for certain levels of students have implications for students and placement coordinators. The unique learning styles of each student should be highly considered by both the students themselves and the placement coordinators, as a student who may seem novice should not be immediately rejected or discouraged from taking on a role-emerging fieldwork placement. It is reasonable for two students with different fieldwork placement experiences and skill levels to thrive equally in such an environment, depending on their learning styles (Boniface et al., 2012). As a consequence, all students should be encouraged to complete a role-emerging fieldwork placement before they graduate. When also considering the challenging nature of role-emerging fieldwork placements, students may even be more likely to maximize their potential as an evolving occupational therapist by being placed in a role-emerging setting. Similar to a point made by Bossers, Cook, et al. (1997), perhaps certain aspects of their professional and personal skill development are only possible when they are put in such a unique environment.

Student perspectives found in this review were critically analyzed to evaluate the potential future of role-emerging fieldwork placements in the profession. Students recognized a need for occupational therapy services in the wider community after being exposed to nontraditional settings, such as homeless shelters (Mattila & Dolhi, 2016), HIV service organizations (Sharmin et al., 2016), mental health organizations (Mechefske & Carey, 2016), and even toy companies (Vaisberg et al., 2014). Students sought employment at the settings where they completed their role-emerging fieldwork placements (Fitzgerald et al., 2017; Totten & Pratt, 2001; Vaisberg et al., 2014) or expressed the desire to work in a role-emerging setting as a result of their fieldwork placement (Clarke, Martin, de-Visser, et al., 2015; Knightbridge, 2014). These findings suggest that students perceived the importance of creating sustainable services to address the needs of the wider community in which their fieldwork placements took place and believed that role-emerging settings can offer legitimate opportunities for future careers. This is important because role-emerging fieldwork placements may only have the capacity to expand the scope of the profession if they are supported by the very students who will become the future generations of occupational therapists. Otherwise, these fieldwork placements may serve to enhance student development but fail to be perceived by students as real occupational therapy careers.

Future Research

Further research is encouraged to focus on documenting student perspectives and experiences with pair or group models in role-emerging fieldwork placements to strengthen the results found in this review. Potentially relevant factors, such as the specific context of the role-emerging setting and the

comfort level of the students, will likely determine the degree to which pair or group models are perceived as beneficial. For example, working in pairs or groups may be especially helpful for students who are perceived as academically weaker or who have less placement experience. Additional research can also focus on determining ideal models of pair and group structured fieldwork placements, as well as any potential limitations of working alongside peers in role-emerging settings.

Findings from this review, discussed in relation to the absence of a constrained structure that is often seen in traditional fieldwork placements, suggested that students have more opportunities to observe and engage in client-centered practice in role-emerging fieldwork placements. Further research is encouraged to compare post-graduate students who did not complete role-emerging fieldwork placements to those who did, and how they differ in their practices and understanding of client centeredness. Likewise, role-emerging settings encompass a wide range of possible settings, and client-centered practice may not be consistent with each type. Thus, additional research should also focus on how student experiences with client-centeredness differ with specific types of role-emerging settings.

While students positively appraised the influence of role-emerging fieldwork placements toward post-graduate success, this was limited to a few studies and can benefit from further research. Concurrent with Clarke, de-Visser, et al. (2014), additional longitudinal studies are required to thoroughly understand graduate experiences with professional practice, having completed role-emerging fieldwork placements and traditional fieldwork placements. This may include comparing the professional identities and sustainability of acquired skills of post-graduates who have completed role-emerging fieldwork placements to those who have completed traditional fieldwork placements. Follow-up studies should also be conducted to explore the experiences and progress of graduate students who become employed at the setting where they completed their role-emerging fieldwork placement.

Students from two articles discussed the opportunity to identify and design a fieldwork placement framework in a setting of their choosing (Hartman, Lamontagne, Kalef, Beck, & Duncan, 2015; Vaisberg et al., 2014). More research is required to investigate the potential of student-initiated role-emerging fieldwork placements, as it can be inferred that such arrangements will require even more proficiency from students, such as the ability to be business oriented or to have an exceptional vision of where occupational therapy services can be applied.

Limitations

This review has limitations because requirements for a full scoping review were not adopted. This review focused exclusively on scoping published literature. Therefore, studies that included content relevant to student perspectives and experiences on role-emerging fieldwork placements would not have been captured if they were found in grey literature, such as conference abstracts, dissertations, and theses. Based on the inclusion-exclusion criteria, relevant studies may have also been missed if they were not written in English, published before 1997, or not included in the selected electronic databases or hand-searched literature sources. In addition, this review was only conducted by the first author. As a consequence, the review of abstracts and full articles for inclusion, data extraction, descriptive and thematic analysis of the data, reporting the results, and the discussion of findings were performed by one author. The second author provided topic supervision and guidance related to methods and interpretation of the literature.

The keywords used for the electronic database search may not have included all possible alternative terms for each phrase. For example, when reviewing some of the initial literature found after the database search, words such as alternative and community were sometimes used when discussing

role-emerging fieldwork placements across the world. The reason for this is that Bossers, Polatajko, et al.'s (1997) Canadian viewpoint of role-emerging fieldwork placements shaped the keywords used. Using just one world viewpoint might, therefore, have limited literature from other countries that may have started with describing these types of fieldwork placements as community or alternative, before potentially aligning with the now commonly used role-emerging. Any potential bias in each article would also prove to be a limit of this study, including interpretation bias from the researcher, bias from student comments, and bias based on the methods used to extract student experiences and perspectives. For example, structures of the semi-structured interviews were not made explicit and could be reflective of the educator's desired themes rather than the student's complete experience.

Conclusion

This literature review has provided an overview of student experiences with role-emerging placements by exploring their perspectives on challenges, opportunities, and future directions. Students benefited from the self-directed nature of role-emerging fieldwork placements, as they experienced professional and personal growth that contributed to their development of work-readiness skills and an occupational therapist identity. Students positively appraised being able to work alongside peers in a collaborative manner. Students were also able to observe and practice client-centeredness in such fieldwork placements, which was often contrasted with traditional fieldwork placements. This suggests that role-emerging fieldwork placements may be more likely to adopt a client-centered approach in the absence of a confined structure. Students in recent studies also spoke of the strong influence that their fieldwork placement has had on their career choices, and they felt more inclined to work in role-emerging settings. Although post-graduates reflected on feeling more prepared for interviews and feeling confidence that resulted from their role-emerging fieldwork placement, further research is required to make a more confident claim.

Students identified various challenges during their fieldwork placement that presented a high degree of uncertainty, conflict with on-site staff, and a high volume of responsibilities. However, challenges that arose from their role-emerging fieldwork placements helped facilitate a necessary experience, as the difficulties of an unfamiliar and self-directed learning environment simultaneously contributed to their growth and development as professionals. As a consequence, students should be encouraged to take on role-emerging fieldwork placements as certain aspects of the professional and personal development may only be forged through this unique learning experience.

While the future directions of role-emerging fieldwork placements in occupational therapy were frequently discussed in existing literature, there was little emphasis on the inclusion of student perspectives. Contributions in this review indicated that role-emerging fieldwork placements can be appropriate for students with different levels of experience and maturity, as even more novice students may excel, depending on their style of learning and the specific demands of the chosen role-emerging setting. Many students believed role-emerging fieldwork placements would be beneficial for novice students who are most in need of development and require a challenging learning environment to facilitate such growth. Through completing role-emerging fieldwork placements, students identified a need for occupational therapy services in the wider community and believed that legitimate career opportunities can be found in role-emerging settings. As such, role-emerging fieldwork placements can help occupational therapy expand into new areas of practice and broaden its range of clients.

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