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### Exploring Clinical Fieldwork Educators' Perceptions and Expectations of Occupational Therapy Student Professional and Technical Skills At the Beginning of Level II Fieldwork

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Capstone Project Report: Section One, Two, and Three

Jessica Mason

Eastern Kentucky University

### **Section One: Nature of Project and Problem Identification**

A student pursuing a degree in occupational therapy has a choice regarding the universities to which he or she chooses to apply; however, the educational offerings in each educational setting will differ. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) currently mandates a minimum of a master's degree as the entry-level degree into the profession (AOTA, 2015). ACOTE provides standards and policies that universities must meet to become an accredited institution of an occupational therapy program for doctoral, masters, and associate degree programs. The standards and objectives that must be met are clear at each point of entry. How the standards are met, however, are up to interpretation by educators within each occupational therapy program.

Educational programs must ensure students are prepared for clinical practice prior to initiating the mandated fieldwork experiences defined by ACOTE. This is done through a multitude of educational learning strategies including lectures, service learning opportunities, and skill competence. Occupational therapy professionals serving as fieldwork educators can offer unique insight to occupational therapy educators in how to best prepare students for clinical practice.

Educational programs for occupational therapy students are continually being developed, which impacts the fieldwork experiences for students, including the identification of site locations and fieldwork educator experience and knowledge. Fieldwork educators have reported a need for more support from educational institutions (Evenson, Roberts, Kaldenberg, Barnes, & Ozelie, 2015). Fieldwork educators serve as valuable instructors to students and are essential personnel to the development of student growth within the profession. These clinical educators can provide valuable insight to academic faculty of the skills the students are lacking and the

skills they consider most important for students to excel in the clinical realm of practice. As students graduate and enter clinical practice, many will become fieldwork educators following their first year of practice. Expectations of students in academic programs do not always match what the educators believe are most important. Educational program evaluations are necessary for program improvement. There is limited research about level of satisfaction of occupational therapy students and the graduate's perceived level of satisfaction and preparedness for the clinical setting (Hodgetts et al., 2007).

A study conducted by Thomas, Saroyan, and Snider (2012) revealed the need to develop curriculum design to support students learning competencies for skill development, specifically evidence-based practice, while in an academic setting. Occupational therapy programs can influence a student's utilization or lack of skills in the clinical setting. Therefore, occupational therapy programs should be cognizant of clinical expectations of clinicians and support these as appropriate. Ensuring students are prepared to enter the world of professional practice is a vital role of an educator in the academic setting whether the student is completing fieldwork or practicing as a novice therapist. Evaluating program design from multiple perspectives and implementing appropriate changes as a result will help better prepare students for the profession (Benevides, Vause-Earland, & Walsh, 2015; Hodgetts et al., 2007). The aim of this capstone project is to obtain insight from clinical fieldwork educators of their expectations of student skills at the beginning of Level II Fieldwork. This information could be then used to make appropriate changes in the academic program. This will aid in better preparing students for clinical experiences within the profession.

**Problem Statement**

Occupational therapy students are exposed to certain standards and learning objectives within their respective academic programs set forth by ACOTE. Accredited occupational therapy programs must ensure students are being taught these identified standards if they are to maintain accreditation. Students completing required Level II Fieldwork as part of an accredited program are entering clinical sites with the education taught to them governed by ACOTE. As students begin these fieldwork experiences, they are expected to bring a certain set of skills, both technical and professional, with them from classroom training. Healthcare is evolving quickly and is ever influencing the occupational therapy profession in clinical practice. A disconnect can exist between the realities of clinical practice and student experiences in academia. In order to ensure students are best prepared to enter into Level II Fieldwork experiences, the expectations of clinical fieldwork educators supervising students must be further explored. The feedback provided from clinical educators can be used to further enrich the learning experiences of occupational therapy students in academic programs.

**Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this capstone project is to explore perceptions held by fieldwork educators of occupational therapy students' professional and technical skills deemed most relevant at the beginning of Level II Fieldwork. By identifying the most important technical and professional skills perceived by clinical fieldwork educators, academic occupational therapy educators can concentrate on developing these skills while students are in the classroom. The goal of occupational therapy educational programs is to prepare students to be knowledgeable in a multitude of areas and be poised to complete the required fieldwork experiences set by ACOTE.

## **Project Objectives**

The objectives of this capstone project are to (1) determine if fieldwork educators perceive students as adequately prepared to initiate Level II Fieldwork experiences currently, (2) identify the technical and professional skills of occupational therapy students expected by fieldwork educators at the beginning of Level II Fieldwork experiences, (3) identify technical and professional skills that students might be lacking at the beginning of fieldwork experiences, and (4) better understand the needs of a community of fieldwork educators' expectations of students. These objectives are important so that appropriate changes can be made within an academic program to further enhance student skills within the profession of occupational therapy. The results of this capstone will allow academic educators to be informed about what fieldwork educators consider the most crucial qualities and skills students should demonstrate prior to entering the occupational therapy clinical practice setting.

## **Guiding Theoretical Framework**

The guiding theoretical framework for this capstone project is pragmatism. Pragmatism utilizes mixed method research resulting in both quantitative and qualitative data. As the research is conducted, the researcher is able to choose techniques and processes, which best meet his or her desires and drives using the pragmatic worldview (Creswell, 2014). Patton (as cited in Creswell, 2014) referred to the pragmatic worldview as it “arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions...” (p.10). Utilizing this theoretical base will allow for the exploration and identification of clinical instructor perceptions of the qualities and potential skills for students desired at the beginning of Level II Fieldwork experiences. “The pragmatist researchers look to the *what* and *how* to research based on the intended consequences – where they want to go with it” (Creswell, 2014, p. 11). Using this theory as a guide within this

capstone project will allow the outcomes of the project to shape educational offerings to better prepare students for success in clinical practice. The pragmatic worldview allows a mixed method approach to data and possible explanations and understanding to potential complications that may arise within the research process (Creswell, 2014).

### **Study Significance**

All students wishing to practice within the occupational therapy profession must complete a degree program in an academic setting. Addressing the development of identified behaviors and skills necessary for practice in clinical settings will lead to student growth and better preparation for real-world expectations. Fieldwork educators within the profession of occupational therapy offer unique insight into the academia by providing expert opinion to better occupational therapy practice (Brown, Crabtree, Mu, & Wells, 2015; Kielhofner, 2005). As a profession, we must consider that what and how we teach students within occupational therapy programs will ultimately impact their future practice within the profession. This begins from a student's first day in class to the moment he or she steps into a clinical setting, which for many will be level II fieldwork.

In order to improve practice within the profession of occupational therapy, we must be willing to accept necessary changes. Educators in occupational therapy programs realize the world of healthcare is constantly changing and evolving which requires the world of academia to change as well. There are many resources available to academic educators to help design and shape curriculum. Obtaining feedback from individuals practicing within the occupational therapy profession has the power to evolve how we present educational offerings to students. Educational programs need to ensure students are prepared to enter the occupational therapy clinical setting to the best of their abilities, starting with the fieldwork experience.

## Summary

This capstone project is being developed to better understand the expectations clinical fieldwork educators have for students at the start of the Level II Fieldwork experiences. We need to not only understand clinician perspective to shape education, but also ensure clinicians are aware of what is occurring in the academic classroom with occupational therapy students. Developing an appreciation of what is perceived necessary by clinicians practicing in fast-changing healthcare systems will provide academic educators the opportunity to focus on specific technical and professional skills embedded within the mandated standards. The clinical and educational worlds are interdependent, with both fulfilling the need for preparing students for clinical practice. To ensure the profession of occupational therapy continues to grow and thrive, we must be willing to seek ways to improve and strengthen this relationship. Professional behaviors and technical skills are shaped from day one in the classroom making it imperative to offer the best educational opportunities for a student from the beginning of any occupational therapy program. This capstone project can help bridge the gap between clinical educators' expectations of students and academic faculty preparation of student's professional and technical skills.

## Section Two: Detailed Review of the Literature

The American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) *Centennial Vision* (2007) states "We envision that occupational therapy is a powerful, widely recognized, science-driven, and evidence-based profession with a globally connected and diverse workforce meeting society's occupational needs" (p. 613). AOTA recognizes the profession not only as empowering an individual's ability to change his or her physical and mental health, but also having a key-role in prevention of disease and wellness for that individual as well (American Occupational



Therapy Association, 2007). As we are envisioning our profession, academic and fieldwork educators, must be ready to prepare future occupational therapy clinicians to become highly skilled in multiple areas. Emerging areas of practice within occupational therapy and a changing healthcare system requires occupational therapy programs to educate students for complex future roles within the profession (American Occupational Therapy Association, 2007). Providing students with preparation for evidence-based practice and meeting the needs for society for occupational therapy services begins on day one and extends through fieldwork clinical practice.

### **The Significance of Education**

Occupational therapy programs are not identical in regards to the content offered to students within these programs. The profession allows for both a masters and doctorate entry level degree into the profession. A study by Case-Smith, Page, Darragh, Rybski, and Clearly (2014) focused on the entry-level doctorate in occupational therapy offering the recipients of this degree increased knowledge of community-based care services, health and wellness promotion, in-depth clinical experiences, and expansion of application of evidence-based practice in the intervention process. As the environment of healthcare is changing, academic occupational therapy educators need to be ready to meet these changes and better prepare students. The leadership experiences embedded in occupational therapy entry-level doctorate programs prepare clinicians to be leaders in the profession, specifically among healthcare teams (Case-Smith et al., 2014).

Pierce and Peyton (1999) looked at the development of doctorate programs in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, nursing, and physical therapy. The ever evolving healthcare system requires clinicians, regardless of the profession, to be well educated, client advocates, and responders to change within this system. The curriculum of occupational therapy programs need to be

examined to see if the needs of the present and future healthcare system are being and will be met with the current required Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) standards. By developing an understanding of the educational background process of other professions in healthcare, the occupational therapy profession can assess our own current mode of entry into practice and determine if we are achieving the health needs of communities. Further understanding of the expectations of clinical fieldwork educators of occupational therapy student performance has the potential to inform academic settings of necessary and appropriate changes to be made to better prepare students for clinical practice.

### **Significance of Identifying Necessary Skills**

A high level of professionalism is required of those within the occupational therapy profession. Professional behaviors become more expected and essential as one's career progresses. A standard model of teaching professional behaviors does not exist for the occupational therapy profession, even though these behaviors are identified as essential (Kasar & Muscari, 2000). An increased need has been identified to address occupational therapy behaviors of occupational therapy students and practitioners. These behaviors include demeanor, team work, organizational skills, empathy, initiative, and dependability (Kasar & Muscari, 2000).

Educational programs must begin to address such identified behaviors early within a student's academic career. Kenyon and Ilot, (1997) completed a study exploring whether standards of defining a competent practitioner had been met for past students. Retention of employees and accountability was information sought from sponsoring authorities. Individuals with practice experience offer valuable feedback to programs seeking such information. This is especially true regarding graduate performance upon entry into the profession. Educational

programs can utilize this information to design and shape future curriculum appropriately. A model or framework of teaching these identified skills would be beneficial to the occupational therapy profession.

Therapists need to be able to communicate with different entities and respond appropriately. Therapists must be knowledgeable, display professional behaviors, and demonstrate clinical skills. Strong, Baptiste, and Salvatori (2003) performed a study finding that therapy services are consumer-oriented and client driven. Each organization of practice has their own expectations and one must respond accordingly. Fortune, Ryan, & Adamson (2013) proposed collaboration between educators, practitioners, and managers to further enhance academic settings and curricula. This collaboration would allow students to be more prepared to enter the professional world where occupational therapy is practiced. These studies support the need for educational programs to be revised as needed to display the relationship between real life practice and the educational setting.

OBrein and McNeil (2013) examined student performance in relation to clinical performance for level II fieldwork utilizing two different types of assessment methods. Clinical reasoning and problem solving development was encouraged through the use of a case-based learning format. Another format, the Short Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), provided an indication for performance-based skills for student performance in the classroom. Utilizing this method, students were allowed the opportunity to practice performance skills on a weekly basis in order to demonstrate clinical achievements. These skills were not specific to a client or case study. OBrein and McNeil (2013) concluded that assessing student performance while in the academic setting may help in preparing for clinical practice. Further evaluation of

both teaching methods and assessment measures is needed to determine the best way to prepare students for the clinical setting.

Wallingford, Knecht-Sabres, Lee, and St. Amand (2016) investigated student and practitioner perception of the significance of specific occupational therapy skills and knowledge related to entry-level competence within the profession. Occupational therapy students indicated increased importance for communication, intervention, goal development, utilization of theoretical concepts and evidence, and time management compared to practitioners. These results may indicate the particular emphasis of the occupational therapy educational program for these students. Wallingford et al. (2016) state it is essential that students and practitioners be aware of differences in perceptions of what skills are deemed important for entry-level competency. The best way to address these differences is through effective communication and education. Due to the variety of settings in which clinicians are practicing occupational therapy services and serving as clinical fieldwork educators, it is essential to have collaboration and communication between academic educators and clinical practice settings.

### **Conclusion**

Through the literature review and research for this capstone project, several research areas emerged as potentially affecting this study. These include educational development and design, the advancement process from student to clinician, and a need for understanding the link between education and clinical practice. Many of the research articles focused on improvement to the educational curriculum for occupational therapy students utilizing both student and practitioner responses (Evenson et al., 2015; Hodgetts et al., 2007; Kenyon & Ilot, 1997; Strong, Baptiste, & Salvatori, 2003; Thomas, Saroyan, & Snider, 2012). Ensuring students are prepared to enter the world of professional practice is a vital role of an educator in the academic setting.

Evaluating program design and implementing appropriate changes to the educational setting will help to bridge the transition from student to clinician (Benevides, Vause-Earland, & Walsh, 2015; Hodgetts et al., 2007). Skills to be evaluated of our students include both technical and professional skills.

Professional behaviors within the occupational therapy profession have been identified as just as important as skill development (Kasar & Muscari, 2000; Strong et al., 2003; Tryssenaar & Perkins, 2001). Addressing the development of these identified behaviors will lead to student growth and better prepare him or her for real-world expectations and practice. Fieldwork educators within the profession of occupational therapy offer unique insight into academia by providing expert opinion of current clinical occupational therapy practice (Brown, Crabtree, Mu, & Wells, 2015; Kielhofner, 2005). We must acknowledge the impact of how and what we teach students within occupational therapy programs will ultimately impact their future practice within the profession.

### **Section Three: Methods**

#### **Project Design**

This capstone project will use a convergent parallel mixed-method design to identify fieldwork educators' perceptions of students' technical and professional skills when starting Level II Fieldwork. A convergent parallel mixed method design allows for the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously (Creswell, 2014). Data will be obtained through a survey available both online and mailed to identified fieldwork educators. Information obtained from the study participants will allow for specific skills to be identified which can be used to further develop course content within an academic program.

At the university level, educators are forced to make thoughtful and careful decisions about content to present students in the time given in the classroom. The student's abilities that are present, both at the start of clinical fieldwork and upon graduating into practice, reflect the academic standards being taught within the occupational therapy program he or she has completed. The perceptions of the community of fieldwork educators can influence what is occurring at the academic level of study.

### **Setting**

This capstone project was designed and implemented on the campus of a public university in the central Northern United States. The college typically enrolls approximately 10,000 students into its courses each fall and spring semester. The college offers dual credit, undergraduate, and graduate coursework to students. The college also offers 81 majors to the degree seeking students, including nursing, radiography, health services, and occupational therapy. The college awards associate, bachelor, master, and doctorate degrees. This setting will be utilized for the purpose of convenience as the researcher is employed full time at the setting in the occupational therapy program. The current OT program is an accredited master's entry program that accepts 30 students into the program annually. Second year occupational therapy students within this program complete Level II Fieldwork two times a year, each for twelve weeks.

### **Participants**

The participants of this capstone project will be selected using purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is the intentional selection of individuals to participate in a research study based on specific criteria (Dickerson, 2006). Research participants will be select fieldwork educators from the college database who supervised Level II Fieldwork students in the past two

or who will supervise students in 2017. Fieldwork educators who have not supervised a Level II Fieldwork student during this specified time frame will be excluded from the study. Once all necessary IRB approval has been obtained, fieldwork educators meeting the stated criteria will be identified through departmental records within the occupational therapy department. The approximate number of expected participants to receive the survey is projected between 50 and 75 participants. These identified fieldwork educators work in a variety of clinical settings including hospitals, home health, outpatient, and school-systems with varying levels of experience as a therapist and fieldwork educator ranging from two to twenty-five years.

### **Project Methods**

For the purposes of this capstone project a survey approach will be used as the data collection method. “A survey design provides quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population” (Creswell, 2014, p. 155). The overall aim of the survey is to uncover clinical fieldwork educators specific perceptions and expectations associated with student technical and professional skills. The survey to be utilized (see Appendix A) was developed by this author. Information obtained from the literature review on student development and attainment of occupational therapy skills was used as a guide (Kasar & Muscari, 2000; Strong et al., 2003; Tryssenaar & Perkins, 2001; OBrein & McNeil, 2013; Wallingford, Knecht-Sabres, Lee, & St. Amand, 2016). An online survey on qualtrics will be used to obtain data for convenience. A mailed survey, along with an email, will be sent to the participants with a detailed explanation of the overall intent of the survey. Instructions for survey completion are provided whether the survey is online or on paper. The sequence of survey questions was taken into consideration with introductory basic questions (Forsyth & Kviz, 2006) followed by the main survey questions. The survey includes both twelve

closed and three open-ended questions. “Open-ended questions...are useful for eliciting a more detailed narrative response” (Forsyth & Kviz, 2006, p. 97).

After information from the survey is obtained, responses will be analyzed by both quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative data. Descriptive statistics will be performed such as mean, median, mode, and standard deviations. The researcher will then analyze the qualitative data utilizing coding. As new ideas emerge from the surveys during data analysis, new codes will be formulated along with a working definition for such codes. There will be inclusion and exclusion criteria formulated for each code which will allow for more accuracy when determining how to code information (Peacock & Paul-Ward, 2006). All coding will be performed by the researcher of the study and reviewed by the capstone faculty mentor and committee members as appropriate. After coding is completed, categories will be developed, then appropriate themes and their interrelationships identified.

### **Outcome Measures**

At the conclusion of data collection, all information will be thoroughly reviewed by the researcher to answer the specific objectives of the capstone project. The survey will be reviewed by the capstone faculty mentor and capstone committee members. The survey will be prior approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Eastern Kentucky University and the research setting. Information obtained during the survey will allow for identification of desired technical and professional skills of occupational therapy students beginning Level II Fieldwork. The question of whether fieldwork educators perceive students as adequately prepared to initiate Level II Fieldwork experiences currently will also be answered by the participants. The survey information will identify any technical and professional skills students might be lacking at the beginning of fieldwork experiences. This information will aid in program development for future



occupational therapy students. Furthermore, the results will allow for better understanding of what fieldwork educator expectations of students are in order to make appropriate changes within an academic program to further enhance student skills prior to Level II Fieldwork.

There are many advantages to completing a survey, including quick access to a large number of people, low associated cost rates, and the survey responses provide a written record to the researcher (KU Work Group for Community Health and Development, 2016). Advantages of completing a survey also include anonymity for participants and opportunity for limited bias from researcher perspective. Disadvantages are low return rate and incomplete surveys (Kielhofner, 2006). Disadvantages also include the limited expression when interpreting results, results being dependent upon the sample responding, and results not representing the group as a whole (KU Work Group for Community Health and Development, 2016).

Strengthening the quality of data within any study is imperative to ensure that outcomes are valid. One of these methods is reflexivity as described by Lysack, Luborsky, and Dillaway (2006). "Reflexivity refers to a deliberate and systematic process of self-examination" (Lysack et al., 2006, p. 353). It is important to reflect on all information and responses obtained during data gathering and the possible impact it may have on the overall results of the survey when interpreting information. A journal could be kept of the researchers' observations and reflections during the coding and qualitative data analysis process.

### **Ethical Considerations**

There are many ethical considerations to contemplate when conducting any type of research study. First, approval to conduct the research study will be obtained by the IRB at both Eastern Kentucky University and the research setting by submitting the research proposal for analysis. There will be minimal risk to the participants of the capstone project. At the beginning

of the survey, it will be essential to provide the participants of the study with the overall purpose of the research so they know what they are agreeing to do (Creswell, 2014). It is also important for the researcher to maintain professional boundaries with the participants of the research study at all times (Taylor & Kielhofner, 2006). By maintaining a professional boundary, the participants will be less likely to be influenced by their response while answering open-ended questions reporting information they think the researcher wants to hear. While collecting data using open-ended questions, the researcher will avoid using leading questions that may influence the participant. The researcher will report the outcomes of the research study with accuracy and provide multiple perspectives into the final outcomes of the study. All participants of the study will remain confidential and privacy will always be respected by the researcher (Creswell, 2014).

### Capstone Timeline

Table 1

#### *Time Frame of Capstone Project*

Time Frame	Expected Results
October 2016	Finalized capstone idea
January 2017	Submit IRB to Eastern Kentucky University and University of Southern Indiana
February 2017 – July 2017	Distribute surveys following IRB approval from both Eastern Kentucky University and University of Southern Indiana
August 2017	Begin data analysis
December 2017	Present completed capstone

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## Appendix A

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study****Exploring Clinical Fieldwork Educators Perceptions and Expectations of Student Skills****Why am I being asked to participate in this research?**

You are being invited to take part in a research study about technical and professional skills of level II fieldwork students. You are being invited to participate in this study because you have served or will serve as a fieldwork educator for the University of Southern Indiana. If you take part in this study, you will be one of about 50 people to do so.

**Who is doing the study?**

The person in charge of this study is Jessica Mason, MSOTR/L who is an instructor at the University of Southern Indiana. She also practices occupational therapy at an inpatient rehabilitation hospital. This study is part of her Occupational Therapy Doctoral Program at Eastern Kentucky University. She is being guided in this research by Cindy Hayden, DHEd, OTR/L, CHT. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study as part of the research team providing feedback to Jessica on the research process.

**What is the purpose of the study?**

The results of this study will allow academic educators to learn what clinical educators consider the most crucial professional and technical skills students should possess prior to the start of level II fieldwork along with the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education standards.

By doing this study, we hope to:

1. Identify technical and professional occupational therapy skills most valued by fieldwork educators of students at the beginning of level II fieldwork experiences.
2. Determine if fieldwork educators currently perceive students as adequately prepared to begin level II fieldwork experiences.
3. Identify the technical and professional skills fieldwork educators perceive students to be lacking at the beginning of level II fieldwork experiences.
4. Better understand fieldwork educator expectations of students in order to make appropriate changes within an academic program to further enhance student skills within the profession of occupational therapy.

**Where is the study going to take place and how long will it last?**

This research will be conducted online or by mail, whichever method you prefer beginning February 2017 through December 2017. The total amount of time you will be asked to volunteer for this study is 10-15 minutes.

**What will I be asked to do?**

As a participant of this research study you will be asked to complete a short survey. This survey will occur one time during the duration of the study. The survey consists of ranking of skills and short responses. These skills are specific to occupational therapy student performance on level II fieldwork.

**Are there reasons why I should not take part in this study?**

You should not participate in this study if you have not served or will not serve as a level two clinical fieldwork educator.

**What are the possible risks and discomforts?**

The survey will pose no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life or if you do not complete the survey.

**Will I benefit from taking part in this study?**

The benefit from participating in this research is the knowledge that you are contributing to the scholarship of teaching and learning for the occupational therapy profession.

**Do I have to take part in this study?**

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer.

**If I don't take part in this study, are there other choices?**

If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except to not take part in the study.

**What will it cost me to participate?**

There are no costs associated with taking part in this study.

**Will I receive any payment or rewards for taking part in the study?**

You will not receive any payment or reward for taking part in this study.

**Who will see the information I give?**

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When the study is written all information will be deidentified.

This study is anonymous. That means that no one, not even members of the research team, will know that the information you give came from you.

However, there are some circumstances in which we may have to show information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court. Also, we may be required to show information that identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these people would be the chair of the doctoral committee and necessary members at the Eastern Kentucky University or the University of Southern Indiana.



**What if I have questions?**

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Jessica Mason at 812-461-5420. If you have any questions about your rights as a research volunteer, contact the staff in the Division of Sponsored Programs at Eastern Kentucky University at 859-622-3636. A copy of this consent will be provided for you.

**What else do I need to know?**

Consent to complete this research study was also obtained at the University of Southern Indiana where Jessica Mason is employed in their Occupational Therapy Program.

*I have thoroughly read this document, understand its contents, have been given an opportunity to have my questions answered, and by completing this survey I agree to participate in this research study.*

Dear Fieldwork Educator,

You are invited to take part in a short survey to obtain feedback from occupational therapy clinical fieldwork educators serving the University of Southern Indiana regarding student professional and technical skills.

Your opinions and views are highly valued and appreciated. The results of this survey will help determine if educational modifications need to be made in the academic setting to better prepare the students in our profession. Enclosed you will find a further detailed explanation of the purpose of this survey along with the survey with a return stamped envelope. The survey may also be completed online at (insert link once survey has been finalized). The survey should take no more than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. All replies will be deidentified and confidential. If you desire more information regarding this survey, please contact me at 812-461-5420 or [jessica\\_mason64@mymail.eku.edu](mailto:jessica_mason64@mymail.eku.edu).

Sincerely,  
Jessica Mason, OTR

## Fieldwork Educator Survey

1. What is your primary area of practice within the occupational therapy profession?  
 Acute Care  
 Inpatient Rehabilitation  
 Outpatient  
 Home Health  
 School-based Practice  
 Skilled Nursing Facility  
 Academia  
 Mental Health  
 Other (Please list) \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. How long have you served as a clinical fieldwork educator for the occupational therapy profession?  
 0-1 year  
 >2-5 years  
 >5-10 years  
 More than 10 years
  
3. Since January 2014 through December 2017, how many students have you supervised or will be supervising for level II fieldwork?  
 0 students  
 1-2 students  
 3-4 students  
 5 or more students
  
4. Please identify the top 5 PROFESSIONAL skills you feel are most crucial for an occupational therapy student to possess prior to beginning level II fieldwork. Rank them from 1 to 5 with 5 being the most important and 1 being the least important. For the five options you do not choose, please mark an "X" in the blank.  
 Adheres to ethics  
 Communication skills  
 Creativity  
 Empathy  
 Initiative  
 Manages time effectively  
 Personal responsibility (accountable for self)  
 Problem-solving skills  
 Self-awareness  
 Uses sound judgement and safety

5. Please identify the top 5 TECHNICAL skills you feel are most crucial for an occupational therapy student to possess prior to beginning level II fieldwork. Rank them from 1 to 5 with 5 being the most important and 1 being the least important. For the six options you do not choose, please mark an "X" in the blank.

Acquires information through both standardized and nonstandardized assessments  
 Abides by laws, regulations, accreditation guidelines, and facility policies  
 Clinical reasoning  
 Completes required documentation  
 Identifies factors that influence client performance  
 Integration and implications of theoretical knowledge  
 Plans for discharge and transition  
 Plans, implements, and grades intervention  
 Select interventions for managing a client- centered plan throughout the OT process  
 Use evidence-based services to maintain and enhance competence  
 Utilizes an occupation-based practice approach

6. In your professional opinion, how prepared do you feel occupational therapy students are to perform PROFESSIONAL skills for level II fieldwork in your clinical setting?

Possess all necessary skills  
 Possess most necessary skills  
 Possess some necessary skills  
 Possess little to no necessary skills

7. In your professional opinion, how prepared do you feel occupational therapy students are to perform TECHNICAL skills for level II fieldwork in your clinical setting?

Possess all necessary skills  
 Possess most necessary skills  
 Possess some necessary skills  
 Possess little to no necessary skills

8. Please identify the top 5 PROFESSIONAL skills you feel students are lacking at the beginning of level II fieldwork. Rank them from 1 to 5 with 5 being the most prevalent and 1 being the least prevalent. For the five options you do not choose, please mark an "X" in the blank.

Adheres to ethics  
 Communication skills  
 Creativity  
 Empathy  
 Initiative  
 Manages time effectively  
 Personal responsibility (accountable for self)  
 Problem-solving skills  
 Self-awareness  
 Uses sound judgement and safety

9. Please identify the top 5 **TECHNICAL** skills you feel students are lacking at the beginning of level II fieldwork. Rank them from 1 to 5 with 5 being the most prevalent and 1 being the least prevalent. For the five options you do not choose, please mark an “X” in the blank.

- Acquire information through both standardized and nonstandardized assessments
- Abide by laws, regulations, accreditation guidelines, and facility policies
- Clinical reasoning
- Completes required documentation
- Identify factors that influence client performance
- Integration and implications of theoretical knowledge
- Plans for discharge and transition
- Plans, implements, and grades intervention
- Select interventions for managing a client- centered plan throughout the OT process
- Use evidence-based services to maintain and enhance competence
- Utilizes an occupation-based practice approach

10. As the clinical fieldwork educator, identify the **two areas** you spend the **most time** developing with your students at the beginning of level II fieldwork. Mark **ONLY two responses** with a 1 and 2, with the 2 being the area you spend the most time developing. For the six options you do not choose, please mark an “X” in the blank.

- Basic fundamentals of practice (safety, ethics, judgement)
- Basic tenants of occupational therapy (role of therapist, collaboration with clients)
- Clinical reasoning
- Communication and professional behaviors
- Evaluation and screening process
- Intervention selection and implementation
- Documentation
- Management of occupational therapy services (timeliness, costs, organizational goals)

11. As the clinical fieldwork educator, identify the **two areas** you spend the **least time** developing within your students at the beginning of level II fieldwork. Mark **ONLY two responses** with a 1 and 2, with the 2 being the area you spend the least time developing. For the six options you do not choose, please mark an “X” in the blank.

- Basic fundamentals of practice (safety, ethics, judgement)
- Basic tenants of occupational therapy (role of therapist, collaboration with clients)
- Clinical reasoning
- Communication and professional behaviors
- Evaluation and screening process
- Intervention selection and implementation
- Documentation
- Management of occupational therapy services (timeliness, costs, organizational goals)

12. Healthcare is quickly changing and evolving. Based on student performance, do you perceive a disconnect between the academic setting and the clinical practice setting within the occupational therapy profession?

- No disconnect
- Some disconnect
- A significant disconnect
- A total disconnect

13. Using your knowledge of your clinical setting, please describe what you believe are the strengths of students in the occupational therapy program at the University of Southern Indiana as they start their level II fieldwork.

14. Using your knowledge of your clinical setting, please describe what you believe our occupational therapy program at the University of Southern Indiana could improve to make students more successful in transitioning from the classroom to the clinic.

15. Finally, what clinical practice skills (transfers, manual muscle testing, etc.) do you identify are necessary for a student to be successful on your level II fieldwork in your clinical setting?

**Thank you for completing this survey!**