

**+Wright College  
Occupational Therapy Assistant Program**

**Departmental Assessment Executive Summary  
Academic Year 2006-07**

**Focus of Assessment: OTA Students' abilities to initiate and utilize effective communication and interaction strategies in fieldwork supervisory relationships**

Data Sources:

- Documented verbal feedback from fieldwork supervisors obtained during Level II fieldwork site visits made by the program fieldwork coordinator (May 2006 – November 2006)
- Analysis of specific items from the American Occupational Therapy Association *Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Assistant Student*© (FWPE) (May 2005 – November 2006)
- Students' ratings on the American Occupational Therapy Association *Student Evaluation of Fieldwork Experience*© (SEFE) (May 2006 – November 2006)
- Supervisor ratings of 2<sup>nd</sup> year students attending Level I Fieldwork placements fall and spring semesters (Fall & Spring semesters, 2006/07)

Summary of Findings:

Overall, Level II fieldwork supervisors from a variety of practice settings considered the students' communication and interaction as effective. Positively highlighted were students' interactive abilities with patients/clients, family members, colleagues and other service providers. All students were reported as well-prepared and sensitive to diversity factors influencing their work roles as well as those related specifically to clients. The majority of supervisors thought students responded to feedback constructively in most circumstances. A few supervisors expressed concerns about students' time management strategies and ability to initiate and follow through with recommendations following supervision. All supervisors with the exception of one felt that these students positively modified their professional behaviors in these areas, although improvement was still needed.

Item analysis (Items 18 & 20-25) from the first of two FWPEs completed was completed for the twelve students attending capstone Level II fieldworks and resulted in the following information by comparing midterm (end of 4<sup>th</sup> week) and final (end of 8<sup>th</sup> week) scores. Results are expressed by comparing percentage of students achieving scores that meet or exceed expectations.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Midterm %</u>	<u>Final %</u>
Verbal/Non-verbal Communication	.83	.91
Self-responsibility	.83	1.00
Response to Feedback	.58	.91
Work Behaviors	.75	.91
Time Management	.50	.83
Interpersonal Skills	.75	.91
Cultural Competence	.58	1.00

Scores support anecdotal feedback and indicate that eleven of twelve students performed by meeting or exceeding expected standards of professional behavior. No more than one student in each item category scored as *needing improvement but making progress* as a final score. Time management remained the most challenging area for a few students, but all were able to successfully modify their behavior in this area.

An analysis of supervisor evaluations for senior students attending Level I fieldwork experiences during the fall 2006 and spring 2007 indicated that scored every student “agree” or “strongly agree on items addressing interaction with clients and others at the site, ability to express their needs or concerns and ask appropriate questions. Students were described as “professional and compassionate with clients”, “demonstrating good observation skills”, and “effective in interacting with others.”

On the SEFE students rate and describe a variety of aspects of the capstone fieldwork education experience. Assessment focused on students’ self perceptions around the degree of competence they thought they had achieved by the end of an eight-week clinical. For assessment purposes, items addressing professional communication and interaction with supervisory personnel were examined. Overall, all students agreed (4) or strongly agreed (5) (Scale = 1 – 5) that supervisors created comfortable learning environments, provided meaningful guidance for their professional development and were approachable. Students were asked to rate their opportunities to engage in a variety of professional relationships during the fieldwork experience. The following percentages indicate those students who felt capable or very capable.

Collaboration between the OT and the OTA	.63
Networking with other site personnel	.95
Participate in team models of service delivery	.86
Able to effectively role model therapeutic interventions	.91

Areas most frequently cited for concern:

- Desire for more direct supervision, particularly in fast paced environments
- Opportunity for more co-treatment sessions, i.e., professional role-modeling
- Increased knowledge of medical terminology

Professional behaviors and performance skills that students identified as need for a successful fieldwork experience included perseverance, a high degree of flexibility and adaptability, ability to accept and utilize feedback, time management skills, being open to changes, accepting responsibility, being assertive, emotional stability, and being an effective communicator.

As a means of assessing students’ preparation for the demands of capstone fieldwork, the program analyzed supervisory feedback provided to students during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and students’ assessment of supervision during the 4<sup>th</sup> semester Level I fieldwork experiences.

*Third Semester/Occupations of Middle Adulthood:* One hundred percent (100%) of supervisors agreed or strongly agreed that all students met the professional behavior expectations of the fieldwork experience. Noted were the students’ strong observation skills and communication and interaction with others. Several students were acknowledged for their abilities to express their needs and ask appropriate questions.

*Fourth Semester/Occupations of Later Adulthood:* One hundred percent of students agreed or strongly agreed that supervision was provided in ways that supported positive learning and development of their professional behaviors and skills. Students felt able to present questions that enhanced their learning. They left the experience able to identify both strengths and areas to further develop prior to capstone fieldwork. They were able to describe supervisory strategies that were used to increase their skills and expected to experience these strategies during capstone fieldwork. All students expressed a desire for further “hands-on” learning during the didactic portions of the program.

**Outcomes:** All of the data sources indicate that students are learning the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies needed to effectively communicate and interact in supervisory relationships in the occupational therapy practice setting. During the final didactic semester in the program, all supervisory personnel documented that students possessed these competencies when participating in Level I fieldwork education. The students also were able to successfully identify both positive supervisor methods as well as skills they would need for capstone fieldwork experiences. During the capstone fieldwork, all students made substantial progress in the seven designated areas from the point of their midterm evaluations to final evaluations. The one skill area that presented the most challenge was time management, although final data were still above an 80% threshold.

**Plan:** The program faculty will, during planning for the upcoming academic year, identify curricular content and learning strategies that may be modified to require a more formal application of time management principles that mirror what must be applied in practice settings.