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Collaborative and Peer Learning: Evaluation of an Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Program

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Evaluation of an Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Program

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Certification of Successful Doctoral Project

We, the undersigned, certify that

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has successfully completed the clinical doctoral project titled

Collaborative and Peer Learning:
Evaluation of an Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Program

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Certification for Approval for Final Copy of Doctoral Project

I, the undersigned, approve the final copy of the doctoral project by

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Dedication and Acknowledgement

This project is dedicated to my husband, Thomas James Broersma, whose patience, love, and unwavering dedication to my happiness helped me complete a seemingly impossible task. With his unequivocal support, I was able to complete this project.

Thank you for making sure we had dinner ready if I had a paper due. For tending to the Frances and Edith late at night while I typed away on assignments. Thank you for being my anchor, captain, and support. God could not have given me a better companion to traverse this life with. This doctoral degree belongs to you as much as it does to me.

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AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM

Executive Summary

Level I Fieldwork experiences provide occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant students with an understanding of client populations and treatment settings and facilitates development of clinical reasoning skills. Level I Fieldwork requirements and settings vary among programs but all experiences are designed to enhance the learning outcomes of students. Recent changes in practice have made some aspects of Level I Fieldwork challenging and have resulted in fewer sites. The St. Catherine University occupational therapy assistant program has created an innovative Level I Fieldwork program that utilizes the collaborative model in non-traditional community-based sites for all Level I Fieldwork placements, alleviating the problem of inadequate student placements. The purpose of this project was to evaluate the Level I Fieldwork program and develop recommendations based on input from students, fieldwork educators, and site administrators.

The Level I Fieldwork program evaluation included surveys and interviews of students, fieldwork educators, and site administrators. The overall feedback from students was positive. Some affirmative responses from the students included having first-hand experiences and developing a better understanding of the populations. Students along with fieldwork educators described the need for more organization and structure for the program. Although students were made aware of the fieldwork program, some students reported they did not know what to expect at the site or the type of activities they would do. Fieldwork educators gave positive feedback regarding the students' professionalism and uniqueness in being placed in a non-traditional setting. However, fieldwork educators wanted more clarification on what the students were learning and the activities that would be appropriate at the site. Site administrators who were interviewed described the potential contributions from having students at the sites and expressed

their gratitude in the recommendations students made concerning clients. Based on the findings of this program evaluation, the following items were recommended to strengthen the Level I Fieldwork program:

- Develop a structured schedule for students prior to the fieldwork start date.
- Have fieldwork coordinators visit the site at least one month prior to the fieldwork start date to understand the needs of the site and organize the schedule for students and site administrators.
- Provide fieldwork educators with syllabi or a detailed outline of what has been covered in the academic classes. This will give background information to the fieldwork educators on what the students already know.
- Use survey and interview questions annually as part of program evaluation. Make survey completion a part of required documents prior to submitting grades.
- Embed client profiles and/or site profiles as fieldwork assignments to monitor future recommendations for the site.
- Allow time for group processing at the end of the fieldwork experience to support learning.

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Introduction

Many health profession programs rely on clinical education to enhance didactic coursework and provide practical training. Occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant education rely on fieldwork to bridge coursework and practice and is a core component and foundation of the educational program. The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) defines fieldwork practicum as a hands-on experience that exposes students to various settings and client populations (1999). Fieldwork education has two stages, Level I Fieldwork and Level II Fieldwork. Level I Fieldwork is designed to supplement coursework through observation and participation in various components of the occupational therapy process (AOTA, 1999). The AOTA Commission of Education (COE) describes Level II Fieldwork as an experience that allows the student "to apply theoretical and scientific principles learned in the didactic portion of the academic program to address actual client needs and develop a professional identity as an occupational therapy practitioners within an interdisciplinary context" (2013, p. 1). Fieldwork is essential for both occupational therapy students and occupational therapy assistant students as it provides the foundation for the development of clinical reasoning and professionalism. However, in recent years placing students at fieldwork sites has become increasingly difficult for a number of reasons. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that between the years of 2014-2024, the need for occupational therapy practitioners is expected to rise 27% while the need for occupational therapy assistants is expected to increase 40% (BLS, 2015). This workforce projection has led to growing interest in and numbers of both occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant programs. The increase of students has resulted in sites being unable to meet fieldwork requests by programs (Rindflesch et al., 2009).

In addition, practitioners' hesitancy to take students due to time constraints, productivity demands, and reimbursement rates has contributed to a fieldwork dilemma (Casares, Bradley, Jaffe, & Lee, 2003). Fieldwork sites that do take students may not be able to accommodate all the requests due to changes in staff and site regulations (Casares et al., 2003; Thomas et al., 2007).

AOTA provides both occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant supervision guidelines for Level I and Level II Fieldwork (2013). According to AOTA, any qualified practitioner who is aware and knowledgeable about occupational therapy may currently supervise Level I Fieldwork students (1999). Supervisors may include social workers, nurses, or any discipline that is familiar with the client population. Placing students at sites without an occupational therapist present may help the occupational therapy student understand where the profession can grow and the need for occupational therapists in emerging community-based sites. Many programs, however, choose to have only occupational therapists supervise their students for Level I and II Fieldwork placements. Although there may be a good reason for this decision, it may exacerbate the difficulties in finding fieldwork placements. As a result, occupational therapy educational programs have created innovative ways to address the limited number of fieldwork site placements. The alternative clinical models used by other allied health professions have provided solutions for some programs. Programs across the country have turned to community-based occupational therapists and collaborative education models to meet the need for new fieldwork sites. The use of community-based sites has relieved the stress placed on programs, but an examination of the effectiveness of collaborative education is needed. For the purpose of this project, the term, collaborative learning, will be used to describe the collaborative group model of clinical education.

Though recent literature has addressed the strengths and difficulties of collaborative learning, most of the evaluation approaches were qualitative. A systematic review of collaborative learning in speech-language pathology found that much of the current research is inadequate (Briffa & Porter, 2013). There also was a paucity of literature regarding the use of the collaborative learning in the occupational therapy profession. Further, there was a lack of research that included all stakeholders involved in the fieldwork placement.

St. Catherine University has created a novel way to address the fieldwork dilemma for the online occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program by placing groups of students with one fieldwork educator. The fieldwork site itself is a community-based site that does not typically have an occupational therapist on staff. The students meet for three consecutive days with the fieldwork educator to familiarize themselves with the site and types of clients. This doctoral project evaluated collaborative learning in the St. Catherine University OTA Level I Fieldwork program by obtaining the perceptions of fieldwork educators, students, and site administrators.

Literature Review

Fieldwork education is an essential component of the didactic portion of occupational therapy education as it allows for practice and a solid understanding of coursework. However, fieldwork has challenges that can potentially affect student learning and outcomes. In an extensive literature review of group supervision in fieldwork education, collaborative learning was found to be the most useful for fieldwork educators and students. Collaborative learning addresses the challenges many programs face due to the lack of sites and allows for peer-based learning in the clinical setting. This review of the literature examines the practicality and importance of the model in addressing fieldwork issues, peer and collaborative learning, the influence of cooperative learning in the collaborative learning model, student outcomes and clinical reasoning, and challenges and strategies in implementing the collaborative learning process in fieldwork programs.

Various types of fieldwork models have been used to address the placement shortage for Level I and II Fieldwork. Occupational therapy primarily uses an apprenticeship model which matches one clinician to one student, or 1:1 (AOTA, 2013). Other models are employed by some allied health professions to provide clinical experiences. In the dyad model, also known as the peer learning model, students are placed in a 1:2 model with one supervising therapist to two students at one time (Claessen, 2004). Students placed together with one fieldwork educator have a greater opportunity to talk through clinical scenarios together and provide support to each other (Martin, Morris, Moore, Sadlo, & Crouch, 2004). Collaborative learning is similar to the dyad learning model, with two or more students assigned to one fieldwork educator but there is an intentional goal of learning together (Bartholomai & Fitzgerald, 2007; Flood, Haslam, &

Hocking, 2010). Students in the collaborative learning model work with each other, discuss experiences and accept greater responsibility for their learning and supervision (Rindflesch et al., 2009). Collaborative learning is a shift from traditional fieldwork education where students may be passive learners; instead, the expert challenges the students to problem solve with peers (Cohn, Dooley, & Simmons, 2002). Collaborative learning provides an excellent opportunity for students to understand clinical scenarios better and strengthen clinical reasoning in an efficient manner (Tolsgaard, Kulasegaram, & Ringsted, 2016).

Collaborative Learning

In this project, collaborative learning will be used as the umbrella term to describe group clinical models. In collaborative learning, students are placed with other students and through this experience, acquire information and provide feedback to each other (Hanson & DeIuliis, 2015). Various terminology for collaborative learning has been used in the literature to describe the learning that occurs in groups of two or more. While terms such as collaborative learning, collaborative model, cooperative learning, dyad training, and peer-assisted learning highlight the learning that occurs as a result of interacting with others, terms such as, multiple-placement model, make no emphasis on the learning that occurs among placed students (see Table 1 below). Thus, a student placed with other students in a group model does not guarantee that the development of learning among peers occurs, as compared to purposeful placement and careful facilitation that is planned in collaborative and peer learning. For further clarification of terms used to describe collaborative learning models, please see Table 1 below.

Table 1

Terms that Relate to Collaborative or Group Clinical Models

Term	Definition
Collaborative Learning	"…individuals involved capitalize on one another's resources and skills which might include asking one another for information, and evaluating one another's ideas or monitoring one another's work" (Hanson & DeIuliis, 2015, p. 224).
Group Model	"This group model is based on the principles of collaborative and self-directed learning" (Farrow, Gaiptman, & Rudman, 2000, p. 241).
Collaborative Model	"…a reciprocal process where two or more people work together toward a common goal" (Flood et al., 2010, p. 22).
Cooperative Learning	"…exists when students' goal attainments are positively correlated…" (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).
Dyad Training	"…training in pairs…" (Tolsgaard, Bjork, Rasmussen, Gustafsson, & Ringsted, 2013, p. 1072).
Multiple-placement Model	"…where one educator supervised two or more students." (Lekkas et al., 2007, p. 24)
Peer Assisted Learning	"…an umbrella term that encapsulates cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and peer coaching" (Ladyshewsky, 2002, p. 17).

Peer learning may be a great benefit of the collaborative learning. A randomized trial found that among medical students without prior clinical experience, students placed with peers scored significantly higher in learning clinical skills and confidence than those in a traditional supervision model (Tolsgaard et al., 2013). Peer learning allowed for students to discuss and share ideas and provides support not found in the typical 1:1 model. Dyad training was considered to result in efficient and high-quality clinical training among medical students

(Tolsgaard et al., 2013). In other studies, the support garnered from peers was also found to increase students' empathy, communication, and understanding of experiences (Blakely, Rigg, Joynson, & Oldfield, 2009; Holmlund, Lindgren, &Athlin, 2010). Learning in dyad placements was supported not only with the fieldwork educator but also among the student pairs (Rindflesch et al., 2009).

Cooperative learning (see Table 1) has been described as a foundation for collaborative learning and is widely considered to be a form of social learning (Hanson & DeIuliis, 2015). Five key elements are important in cooperative learning: (a) positive interdependence, (b) face-to-face promotive interaction, (c) individual accountability and personal responsibility, (d) interpersonal and small group skills, and (e) group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1991, pp. 55-59). These key components are of great value to the overall process of collaborative learning. In *positive interdependence,* group members seek to combine efforts on a common goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). In this type of fieldwork setting, it would be important to take into account the combined efforts of the fieldwork group in the overall experience as part of the evaluation. *Face-to-face positive interaction* includes promoting positive exchanges for each member such as reassuring behaviors and providing support (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). Fieldwork students providing encouragement for each other and other positive behaviors and interactions fuel the benefits of being placed with other students. *Individual accountability and personal responsibility* require each member to be held liable for their work to ensure that no member is overly dependent on any other member (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). In evaluating the collaborative learning impact in fieldwork, it is essential that students not fully rely on other students, but work independently as well. *Interpersonal and small group skills* are basic social skills for effective collaboration (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). Students placed in the collaborative

learning model must communicate effectively and be willing to resolve conflicts properly to obtain the benefits of group learning. The final component is *group processing*, which includes a final reflection of the team to discuss the benefits or challenges to the group learning and the changes that are needed (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). This final component of cooperative learning needs to be discussed as part of the overall evaluation if the fieldwork model is based on the cooperative model of fieldwork education.

Collaborative learning and peer interaction positively influence student learning and outcomes. One qualitative research study found that students placed in a collaborative learning setting were more dependent on each other for information, thereby allowing the fieldwork educator to focus on responding to student learning needs rather than spending time answering questions (Martin et al., 2004). Students were given ample opportunity to discuss ideas with each other before going to the fieldwork educator (Martin et al., 2004). In a quasi-experimental study, social work students placed in a collaborative learning experience did not significantly differ in the assessment of model of supervision compared with students receiving traditional 1:1 supervision (Zeira & Schiff, 2010). Assessment focused on four domains of fieldwork learning, including evaluation of interventions, internalization of values, evaluation of fieldwork educators, and overall satisfaction of site and fieldwork educators (Zeira & Schiff, 2010). Collaborative learning has allowed the fieldwork educator to focus on knowledge sharing rather than explaining and answering questions (Bartholomai & Fitzgerald, 2007). Systematic reviews have found that collaborative clinical training is cost effective and economically sound in clinical education (Lekkas et al., 2007; Secomb, 2008). Instead of sites pooling therapists for availability to take a student, resources and time are focused on one expert sharing with a group of students (DeClute & Ladyshewsky, 1993). The initial drop in productivity often experienced by therapists

supervising students is mitigated by this learning model (Ozelie, Janow, Kreutz, Mulry, & Penkala, 2015).

Increased student confidence may also be a byproduct of collaborative learning. From the fieldwork educators' perspective, students placed with other students were more competent in their skills and better able to withstand challenging clinical scenarios (Copley & Nelson, 2012). In a quasi-experimental study comparing students placed in pairs and students in individual placements, students placed in pairs were found to score higher in communication skills believed to be a result of the support and confidence gained from peers (Ladyshewsky, 2002). Students in collaborative learning experiences displayed improved confidence from supportive peers, began to trust their decisions; assisted each other and provided robust and positive feedback (Baldry-Currens & Bithel, 2003; Cohn et al., 2001). A qualitative study examining the perceived impact of various placement models on students and fieldwork educators revealed that the support of peers led to feelings of safety and self-esteem (Martin et al., 2004). Further, Bartholomai and Fitzgerald (2007), contended that students were more independent in their learning and able discuss theories and their experiences. Improved confidence from peer learning encouraged students to question their practices and uphold themselves to higher standards (Martin et al., 2004). The more confident students were, the more certain they were in their learning.

Students in collaborative learning also display improved clinical reasoning. In a quasi-experimental study, students placed with peers scored higher in clinical reasoning assessments as compared to those placed in individual placements (Ladyshewsky, 2002). Tolsgaard et al. (2013), conducted an experimental, randomized, and observer-blinded study comparing dyad training versus individual placement and found that students placed with peers reported higher confidence levels in managing clinical encounters than students placed individually. The ability

to discuss shared experiences with peers allowed students to have a broader view which in turn may have strengthened their clinical reasoning. In a nonrandomized control trial, there was no significant difference in clinical skill development among students in the group model versus students in a traditional supervision model suggesting that the two models are equally effective (Farrow et al., 2000). A systematic review found that there was no significant difference in clinical education among the various supervision models though, students in collaborative learning placements displayed increased clinical competence (Lekkas et al., 2007). These findings are important to note as they highlight that clinical learning can be as effective and more efficient in collaborative groups as compared with traditional supervision models.

Another positive factor of collaborative clinical learning is the development of professional behaviors. Peer support, communication, and clinical skills may positively influence students' development into entry-level practitioners (Rindflesch et al., 2009). Open communication, teamwork and feedback facilitate refinement of professional behaviors (Baldry-Currens & Bithel, 2003). In a quasi-experimental study, fieldwork students and educators placed in a collaborative learning experience developed more professional skills as compared to those placed in the traditional model (Farrow et al., 2000). Further, a systematic review revealed that students in collaborative clinical placements displayed improved and mature communication skills (Secomb, 2008). Students placed with peers may feel more comfortable sharing their clinical experiences before approaching the fieldwork educators (Hanson & Deluliis, 2015).

Challenges of the Collaborative Learning

A major concern of fieldwork educators and students in collaborative learning placements is the potential impact of difficult group relationships on learning. Conflict can occur between students, potentially affecting the overall feelings toward the group (Cohn et al., 2001). Baldry-Currens and Bithel (2003) interviewed students following supervision in a dyad model and found that some students believed clinical educators favored one student over another. This feeling was also common among students in a collaborative learning placement who feared that fieldwork educators would not be able to properly assess them due to the number of students (Martin et al., 2004). In a systematic review, it was discovered that although collaborative learning has many benefits, it may inadvertently cause competitiveness among students (Lekkas et al., 2007).

Proper planning was found to be the biggest challenge in collaborative learning, as well as its greatest potential asset (Baldry-Currens & Bithel, 2003; Martin et al., 2004; Rindflesch et al., 2009). Therapists may be hesitant to supervise groups of students as if they assume that traditional supervision is easier to plan and implement than a peer-based model (O'Connor, Cahill, & McKay, 2012). However, a quasi-experimental study (Farrow et al., 2000) and an implementation evaluation (Bartholomai & Fitzgerald, 2007) revealed that efficient and fruitful collaborative clinical implementation is possible with careful planning that includes set schedules, timetables, and delineated roles among staff. Sharing expectations with students and staff in collaborative learning placements is needed to properly implement collaborative learning (Bartholomai & Fitzgerald, 2007). Planning the compatibility of students, including pre-screening students, should be considered (Baldry-Currens & Bithel, 2003; Yonge, Krahn, Trojan,

Reid, & Haase, 2002). In a qualitative study of the different models of fieldwork supervision, it was recommended that physical space and number of clients available for treatment should also be taken into account as this was shown to also affect the overall group experience (Martin et al., 2004).

Strategies for Developing Strong Collaborative Learning Fieldwork Programs

The relationships among peers is an important consideration for student learning. Allowing students to choose their peers allows for autonomy and fosters responsibility for learning (Cohn et al., 2001) and may be important for group dynamics and the success of fieldwork (O'Connor et al., 2012). One study reported students had enhanced involvement and participation, feelings of support, and task orientation and organization skills when working alongside peers in a collaborative learning placement (Henderson, Heel, Twentymen, & Lloyd, 2006). If peer selection process is not an option in fieldwork planning, fieldwork educators may prepare students for the placement by using strategies to build relationships. Emphasizing the principles and benefits of collaborative may help students understand the importance of teamwork (Flood et al., 2013; Martin et al., 2004). Student participation in regular group meetings before the collaborative fieldwork placement may enhance the overall experience (Cohn et al., 2001). Proper planning before the placement has been recommended to ease tension between incompatible students and avoid conflict (Lekkas et al., 2007; Secomb, 2008). Fieldwork educators should encourage student groups to discuss conflicts and feedback that supports in collaborative learning (Crohn et al., 2001). These strategies may prove beneficial in the formation of group cohesion.

Continued support from the university also supports success of collaborative learning experiences. Involvement of the university, prior and during the experience was vital to the refinement and success of the fieldwork (Bartholomai & Fitzgerald, 2007; Lekkas et al., 2007). Academic fieldwork coordinators from the university may provide necessary resources to sites on collaborative learning (Cohn et al., 2001; Flood et al., 2013).

Proper preparation and education is key to a successful experience for both fieldwork educators and students. Clinicians need to be informed and prepared for collaborative supervision (Briffa & Porter, 2013). Educating clinicians on the collaborative model is essential for successful application. In the preceptor model used by the nursing profession, the difficulty of multiple student supervision may be alleviated by thorough preparation. In fact, the clinical learning environment and the partnership and planning between the university and the site has been described as a critical aspect of the development of students and success of the clinical education program (Papp, Markkanen, & von Bonsdoff, 2003). Preparing supervising therapists with tools and allowing for open communication throughout the clinical were valuable to nursing preceptors (Yonge et al., 2002).

The evidence for the use of collaborative learning and group models for clinical education is robust, and the practicality is understandable. The primary purpose of this doctoral project was to evaluate the Level I Fieldwork collaborative learning group model in the Level I Fieldwork occupational therapy assistant program used at St. Catherine University (SCU). Thus, the overall aims of this project were threefold:

(1) Develop and implement an evaluation plan to explore perceptions of collaborative learning in Level I Fieldwork by different stakeholder groups.

(2) Develop and share recommendations for Level I Fieldwork experiences based on evaluation outcomes.

(3) Create a comprehensive evaluation plan of collaborative learning in Level I Fieldwork for the St. Catherine University occupational therapy assistant (OTA) program

Methods

Description of the OTA Level I Fieldwork Program

The St. Catherine University OTA program utilizes collaborative learning in a group model format. Students are placed in groups of no more than six students to one fieldwork educator in a community-based site. Students are expected to collaborate and provide support and feedback to each other during the Level I Fieldwork experience. The client population for these sites is varied, allowing for a diverse range of learning experiences for the student. The placements are atypical as the community settings do not normally have full time occupational therapists on their staff. However, since the SCU OTA program requires occupational therapists to supervise fieldwork students, creativity in planning and staffing fieldwork experiences is encouraged. Further, students are introduced to potential roles of occupational therapy the community.

Program Evaluation

The program evaluation used a descriptive survey and interviews to examine the experiences of OTA Level I Fieldwork students and fieldwork educators at St. Catherine University (SCU). Interviews were conducted with administrators of the Level I Fieldwork sites; two site administrators were from California, and two were from Virginia. The purpose of this project was to inform the SCU occupational therapy assistant program and fieldwork team on the perspectives of students, educators, and site administrators regarding the fieldwork experiences and create an evaluation framework for future program assessments. This evaluation framework would allow the OTA program to identify the benefits and areas that need to be strengthened in the Level I Fieldwork program. Two surveys used in this project (one for students and one for fieldwork educators) were adapted from a study of a group model of supervision for occupational

therapy students (Farrow et al., 2000). Both surveys included additional demographic and open-ended questions. The director of clinic development reviewed surveys for students and fieldwork educators. Interview questions also provided key information on the reported experiences of all stakeholders.

Participants

Nonprobability sampling was used to recruit participants for this study. The online OTA students at SCU who had completed a Level I Fieldwork session were eligible and recruited for both the surveys and interviews. Enrolled students from either the Virginia or California programs were 18 years of age and older. Fieldwork educators who most recently supervised the students were also invited to participate in the study. All fieldwork educators who supervised the OTA students were licensed occupational therapy practitioners in their states (D. Orchanian, personal communication April 8, 2017). The director of clinic development of the OTA program at SCU was the main contact for the students. Fieldwork educators and site administrators provided information regarding fieldwork dates and contact information. The director of clinic development recruited site administrators for the study via email. An agreed upon time for each of the interviews was scheduled once each student, fieldwork educator, and site administrator consented to participate.

Instruments

Survey. The researcher developed surveys and interview questions (see Appendix A.1 and A.2) for the purpose of this project. Surveys and interview questions for the fieldwork students and fieldwork educators were adapted from a study completed by Farrow et al. (2000). The author of the survey gave permission to utilize and adapt items on the survey (S. Farrow, personal communication, February 21, 2017). The survey for students consisted of seventeen

forced choice questions on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree, five questions about demographics, and four open-ended questions. The survey for fieldwork educators consisted of twenty-three forced choice questions on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree, ten questions on demographics, and four open-ended questions. Items from the Farrow et al. study that focused on student satisfaction used in this project included: relationship with supervisor, approachability of supervisor, learning objectives identified, learning objectives met, learning opportunities, use of time, learning climate, availability of clients, quantity of feedback, quality of feedback, evaluation of performance, and degree of challenge (2000). The following items regarding skill development used for the student survey included: communication, problem-solving, conducting assessments, working collaboratively, charting, observation, provide feedback, and receive feedback (Farrow et al., 2000). Items from the study were also used for the fieldwork educator survey and included the following regarding satisfaction and student skill development: learning objectives of students, learning objectives met, students use of time, overall learning experience for students, quantity of contact with student, opportunities to observe student, responsibility for learning experience, responsibility for evaluation, ability to use time for clinical purposes, communication, problem solving, program planning, working collaboratively, charting, time management, and providing feedback (Farrow et al., 2000). Additional questions to both surveys included: age, client population at a site, the number of students at a site, the number of fieldwork educators at a site, and practice setting information. Finally, the following open-ended questions were also included on the student and fieldwork educator surveys: what were the most positive aspects of this Level I Fieldwork experience, what aspects of this Level I Fieldwork experience need improvement, what other comments or questions do you have regarding this

Level I Fieldwork experience, and finally, whether there are any questions or comments. Questions were reviewed and sent by the director of clinic development through email. Students and fieldwork educators received a link to the survey site with the consent form. Distribution of the surveys using an online platform was economic and convenient to reduce time spent on transcription (Best, Krueger, Hubbard, & Smith, 2001; Creswell, 2013; Couper, Traugott, & Lamias, 2001). Further, students and educators were already adept at utilizing technology as the OTA program curriculum is offered in an online format.

Interview. The topics selected for the semi-structured interviews of students and fieldwork educators were based on research by Farrow et al. of group models in fieldwork (2000) and cooperative learning concepts of Johnson and Johnson (1991). The fieldwork topics included: relationships, evaluation, students' exposure, learning opportunities for students, expectations regarding roles and responsibilities, collaboration/competition, and organization (Farrow et al., 2000). The five tenets of collaborative learning in the interviews included: positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability and personal responsibility, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). One OTA student and two fieldwork educators responded to the invitation to participate in an interview. Interview questions for stakeholders were broad in scope and covered the topics of student impact and perception of occupational therapists at sites. The director of clinic development and the academic fieldwork coordinator of the OTA program reviewed all interview questions. Their input ensured clarity in the final version of the questions.

Procedures and Consent

The Institutional Review Board of St. Catherine University approved the doctoral project. The director of clinic development and the academic fieldwork coordinator emailed the

participants letters describing the study and requested their involvement. Those agreeing to participate in the survey were instructed to follow the link to the survey and agree to the posted consent form. Volunteers who did not accept the consent form were unable to continue with completing surveys. Students and fieldwork educators completed all surveys anonymously. Survey links were available for approximately four weeks. Following the Level I Fieldwork placement in late March 2017, students, fieldwork educators, and site administrators were requested to participate in interviews regarding their most recent placements. Before the interview, consent forms were distributed, signed, and returned. The researcher assured the participants of their anonymity. The researcher also informed participants that they would be recorded during the interview. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes, and students who participated in interviews received a small monetary gift card to a coffee shop. All interviews were completed over the phone due to the distance of many participants, which was an acceptable data source given the circumstance (Creswell, 2013). Some interviews were completed via an online non-video conferencing platform, which allowed for recording. Interviews were conducted using the outlined piloted questions, recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed for themes (Creswell, 2013). All survey and interview findings were electronically protected with a password. Any hard copies were sealed in a locked file cabinet and scheduled to be destroyed six months after the completion of the study.

Data Analysis

Survey findings and descriptive data for students and fieldwork educators were recorded, tabulated by frequency, and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 24. Frequencies and percentages were used for descriptive data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey findings for both fieldwork educators and students. Interviews

with the student, fieldwork educators, and site administrators were recorded and coded. In vivo coding was employed for the purpose of analyzing interview texts. In vivo coding, as described by Creswell (2013), involves organizing the text into themes using exact phrases of the participants. These codes were then further summarized into themes (Creswell, 2013), to illustrate mutual thoughts among participants. Data were then summarized and compared among the three groups of participants.

Results

Findings from the Level I Fieldwork Evaluation

The results of the survey and interview gave an in-depth descriptive analysis of perspectives on the current Level I Fieldwork program at St. Catherine University. Level I Fieldwork students, fieldwork educators, and site administrators participated in the study. The fieldwork students and fieldwork educators were surveyed on their perceptions of the Level I Fieldwork model. Site administrators were interviewed regarding their thoughts having the occupational therapy assistant students at their sites.

Student perspectives. Of the 35 eligible students, 13 (37.1%) students completed the online survey. The reported ages of the students were 20-30 years old (*n* =9, 69.2%) 31-40 years old (*n* = 2, 15.4%), and 41+ years of age (*n* = 2, 15.4%) (see Appendix B). Students reported to be placed with the following client populations: pediatrics (*n*=5, 38.5%), adults (*n*=4, 30.8%), or geriatrics/older adults (*n*=4, 30.8%). The size of student groups varied among respondents. According to respondents, most students were placed with 6 or more students (*n*=6, 46.1%), five students (*n*=3, 23.1%), and three students (*n*=1, 7.7%). The largest group size in this evaluation was found to be a student group size of 7 (*n*=1, 7.7%). Two students failed to respond to this prompt.

For the Likert items on the survey, student perspectives of their Level I Fieldwork were analyzed using frequencies and percentages (See Table 1). The strongest areas of student satisfaction with the Level I Fieldwork experience (≥ 60% strongly agree) included: communication, peer support, comfort to approach supervisor, quantity of feedback, quality of feedback, evaluation of performance, relationship with supervisor, collaboration with peers,

charting, and feedback to and from peers. The weakest areas of student satisfaction with the Level I Fieldwork experience (≤ 50% strongly agree or agree) included: learning objectives identified, learning objectives met, conducting assessments, and charting.

Table 2

Perception of Student Learning in Fieldwork by Students (N=13)

Item*	1 Strongly Disagree *n* (%)	2 *n* (%)	3 *n* (%)	4 *n* (%)	5 Strongly Agree *n* (%)
1. Communication	1 (7.7)	2 (15.4)	1 (7.7)	1 (7.7)	8 (61.5)
2. Learning objectives identified	1 (7.7)	4 (30.8)	2 (15.4)	4 (30.8)	2 (15.4)
3. The learning objectives met	2 (15.4)	2 (15.4)	3 (23.1)	5 (38.5)	1 (7.7)
4. Learning climate	3 (23.1)	1 (7.7)	1 (7.7)	4 (30.8)	4 (30.8)
5. Use of time	1 (7.7)	3 (23.1)	1 (7.7)	3 (23.1)	5 (38.5)
6. Peer support	1 (7.7)	2 (15.3)	1 (7.7)	2 (15.4)	7 (53.8)
7. Comfort to approach supervisor	2 (15.4)	-	1 (7.7)	1 (7.7)	9 (69.2)
8. Availability of clients	2 (15.4)	3 (23.1)	-	1 (7.7)	7 (53.8)
9. Quantity of feedback	3 (23.1)	-	1 (7.7)	-	9 (69.2)
10. Quality of feedback	2 (15.4)	1 (7.7)	1 (7.7)	1 (7.7)	8 (61.5)
11. Evaluation of performance	2 (15.4)	2 (15.4)	-	-	9 (69.2)
12. Problem solving	3 (23.1)	1 (7.7)	2 (15.4)	1 (7.1)	6 (46.2)
13. Relationship with supervisor	1 (7.7)	1 (7.7)	2 (15.4)	1 (7.7)	8 (61.5)
14. Collaboration with peers	2 (15.4)	1 (7.7)	1 (7.7)	3 (23.1)	6 (46.2)
15. Conducting assessments	4 (30.8)	2 (15.4)	3 (23.1)	2 (15.4)	2 (15.4)

16. Charting	2 (15.4)	1 (7.7)	4 (30.8)	2 (15.4)	4 (30.8)
17. Feedback with peers	3 (23.1)	-	1 (7.7)	3 (23.1)	6 (46.2)

Note. *Items are adapted from the survey used to study group models of supervision (Farrow et al., 2000) and reflect the degree of satisfaction with the Level I Fieldwork and collaborative learning experience. Used and adapted by permission.

Student responses to four open-ended questions were examined to identify student perceptions of the overall fieldwork program. The majority of the replies from the students were positive, noting how beneficial the placements were for understanding the client populations and inter-professional collaboration.

Respondents to the open-ended questions on the student survey also pointed to the need for more direction before entering the site. A respondent wrote: “Make the objectives clearer, more communication with the school, fieldwork educator, and us so that we know what is expected of us and so we can maximize our time there.” Another student responded, “Going into Level 1, I felt that we were not given much information. None of my peers and I knew what to expect or what days would look like which was really intimidating considering it was our first opportunity to interact with clients.” In the same sentiment, a survey respondent wrote. “…need to educate both students and fieldwork educators about requirements of documentation before placing a student at a site.” One interview participant shared the same perspective and stated, “We had a printout- it listed day 1…go over what we would be doing, we’d be going over SOAP notes, this that or whatever. Find a resident to work with. It was very structured, but I didn't get to see that at first *until* I got to the site.”

Working alongside other peers at fieldwork was highlighted as a positive experience by the student who was interviewed. The student described strengths of collaborative learning

stating, “I was with them the whole time. We got along very well. We bounced ideas off each other, so overall I really enjoyed my peers and got along very well.” The collaborative learning experience allowed for a richer fieldwork learning from the perspective of this student. By sharing ideas and feedback with each other, the students’ experiences supported collaborative learning.

Fieldwork educator perspectives. Of the ten eligible respondents, all fieldwork educators responded to the survey (*n*=10, 100%). The reported age of respondents was 31-40 years old (*n*=5, 50%) and older than 41 years old (*n*=5, 50%). The experience of being a fieldwork educator varied among the respondents with 0-5 years of experience (*n*=4, 40%), 6-10 years of experience (*n*=3, 30%), 11-15 years of experience (*n*=1, 10%), and 16 years of experience or more (*n*=2, 20%). Of the ten respondents, six (60%) had experience of supervising student groups while four (40%) had no experience supervising student groups. Only two (20%) of the participants had attended the Fieldwork Educator Certificate Workshop from AOTA and did find the information on collaborative learning useful.

Survey results from the fieldwork educators are found in Table 2. For the Likert items on the survey, fieldwork educators’ perspectives of their Level I Fieldwork were also analyzed using frequencies and percentages. Overall, fieldwork educators were more likely than students to rate most items strongly agree or agree. The strongest areas of fieldwork educator satisfaction with the Level I Fieldwork experience (≥ 80% strongly agree) noted included: relationship with the student, learning objectives met by student, the quantity of contact with the student, responsibility for the learning experience, communication, professional behaviors, provide feedback, and collaborative model. The weakest areas of fieldwork educator satisfaction with the

Level I Fieldwork experience (≤ 60% strongly agree or agree) were noted in conduct and analyze assessments, and charting.

Table 3

Perception of Student Learning in Fieldwork by Fieldwork Educators (N=10)

Item*	1 Strongly Disagree *n* (%)	2 *n* (%)	3 *n* (%)	4 *n* (%)	5 Strongly Agree *n* (%)
*1. Relationship with student	-	-	-	2 (20)	8 (80)
2. Preparation	-	-	-	5 (50)	5 (50)
3. Orientation	-	-	-	4 (40)	6 (60)
4. Collaborative Learning	-	-	-	3 (30)	7 (70)
*5. Learning objectives of student(s)	-	-	-	3 (30)	7 (70)
*6. Learning objectives met by student(s)	-	-	-	2 (20)	8 (80)
*7. Student's use of time	-	-	1 (10)	2 (20)	7 (70)
*8. Working collaboratively	-	-	-	4 (40)	6 (60)
*9. Quantity of contact with student	-	-	1 (10)	1 (10)	8 (80)
*10. Opportunities to observe student	-	-	1 (10)	3 (30)	6 (60)
*11. Responsibility for learning experience	-	-	-	-	10 (100)
*12. Communication.	-	-	-	-	10 (100)
*13. Problem-solving	-	-	-	4 (40)	6 (60)
*14. Conduct and analyze assessments	2 (20)	1 (10)	1 (10)	2 (20)	4 (40)
*15. Charting	-	2 (20)	2 (20)	1 (10)	5 (50)
16. Professional behaviors	-	-	-	2 (20)	8 (80)

*17. Time management	-	-	-	4 (40)	6 (60)
*18. Self-evaluation	-	1 (10)	2 (20)	3 (30)	4 (40)
*19. Provide feedback	-	-	1 (10)	1 (10)	8 (80)
20. Receive feedback	2 (20)	-	-	1 (10)	7 (70)
21. Collaborative model	-	-	-	-	10 (100)
*22. Overall learning experience.	-	-	-	4 (40)	6 (60)
23. Support	-	-	-	3 (30)	7 (70)

Note. *Items are adapted from the survey used to study group models of supervision (Farrow et al., 2000) and reflect the degree of satisfaction with the Level I Fieldwork experience. Used by permission.

The survey also included four open-ended questions regarding positive aspects of the fieldwork experience and areas for potential growth. The most common theme found among fieldwork educators was in regards to the amount of growth and professionalism exhibited by the students. One fieldwork educator response to the survey stated a positive outcome was, "Seeing the students interact professionally and create positive relationships with clients" and "Having the students see how OT could impact the clients in this non-traditional setting." Other respondents reported, "The energy and level of professionalism of each student as well as their knowledge base was above average." "The fieldwork is only three full days and seemingly abbreviated; however, it is evident that the students can undertake the challenge becoming well-acquainted with the site and client population."

The use of collaborative learning in the fieldwork setting was found to be an important aspect of the Level I Fieldwork program for occupational therapy assistant students. One fieldwork educator interviewed was well aware of the importance of collaborative learning to student learning and noted:

> I think that the particular advantage that I see is that the students are supporting each other and learning from one another in a team fashion and with a team leader, being the fieldwork educator. I think a lot of problem-solving and critical thinking can take place with the students…with the guidance of the fieldwork educator.

It appears that understanding the potential of the collaborative learning process in fieldwork can positively influence the experience for students. Preparing fieldwork educators to allow the group milieu to form may be key in establishing collaborative learning among students.

The need for structured schedules and organization seemed to be a common recommendation among fieldwork educator respondents. Some fieldwork educators noted the need for more orientation to the site and others requested a more structured schedule. One participant noted: “Become more familiar with the site's expectations of our student … Management of student expectations going to these placements and what was expected of them.” In a similar vein, a fieldwork educator indicated a need for a “more structured schedule developed with fieldwork educator and site.” One of the interviewees shared the same sentiment and stated: "It was a little bit confusing...after the first morning I was like, ‘you guys get any of this stuff?' We were able to roll with it and came up with a schedule for the next two days." The interviewee continued, "I don’t have access to what they’re looking at so I have no idea what these students have been taught so they’re coming to me and I had to say to them, ‘what classes have you had’?” The fieldwork educators understand the importance of fieldwork and the nature of the three-day immersion, but, it appears that they feel a need for more structure and information. The three full days can be intense with such a saturated amount of content, so providing more background information to follow for the fieldwork educator, student, and site is recommended.

Site administrator perspectives. Interviews with site administrators provided in-depth and rich information that was transcribed and analyzed for themes. Four site administrators were interviewed, two from California and two from Virginia. Interviews lasted approximately twenty minutes and followed the interview questions summarized in Appendix A.3. A theme that emerged across all site administrator interviews was the general sense that the occupational therapy assistant students exceeded expectations. Site administrators found that with each new cohort the structure and quality of the fieldwork program improved. Planning with the fieldwork educator was described as instrumental in the overall success of the fieldwork. Identification of the fieldwork educator (or preceptor) before the students arrived at the site allowed for an establishment of familiarity as one participant noted:

> The preceptor has always contacted me at least a month in advance, and we've come up with a plan of action… we were able to have another group …it would be ideal, if the preceptors that came during that time, were preceptors that had already come to the site as a previous experience only because they know exactly what to expect and can only better plan to support the students during that time…the preceptors have really been amazing in that they have taken the time to you know, plan everything out for us, and we know exactly where the students are going to be on which days and so I think it would just reinforce the organization of the whole process to have some repeating preceptors and they've all been so wonderful we'd love to see them again…

Although the site administrators thought the program was successful, they reported more consistency would be helpful, especially related to changes in fieldwork educators.

Site administrators stated they enjoyed having the occupational therapy assistant students on site as students were able to bring a fresh perspective to the organization. The students were

able to view the needs through the occupational therapy lens and provide recommendations that many site administrators and staff appreciated. One site administrator stated the students brought "…a new perspective…of someone who has different information and has the OT information and education that provides a new insight and perspective that we're doing every day that we're not able to see otherwise." Obtaining new services and outlook have been reported benefits to the site administrators and staff and added value to the fieldwork program. Another site administrator commented about the usefulness of the new perspective saying: "[The students] have been able to give some suggestions about strategies that they know about or strategies that they've seen working." The students were able to provide client-centered recommendations based on their coursework and past experiences. Site administrators, though aware of the benefits of occupational therapy, were unable to fund such services due to budgeting in non-profit corporations. Developing fieldwork sites in community-based sites such as these not only benefit the students in developing an understanding of client populations but increases the awareness of the impact and importance of the occupational therapy profession.

Discussion

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the perceptions of occupational therapy assistant students, fieldwork educators, and site administrators of the Level I Fieldwork program. This project evaluated the OTA Level I Fieldwork program through descriptive surveys and interviews which provided valuable insights into the strengths and areas for growth.

Collaborative Learning in a Level I Fieldwork Program

The program evaluation presented was unique as it encompassed all stakeholders of the Level I Fieldwork program. Site administrators have not typically been interviewed in past evaluations, so their perspectives provided important feedback on the fieldwork program. Surveying and interviewing students and fieldwork educators on collaborative learning resulted in recommendations for further development and refinement of the existing program.

The project provided input from the perspective of occupational therapy assistant students after their first Level I Fieldwork rotation. Even in students' first experiences in the collaborative learning model, the fieldworks were successful. In addition, the results of the surveys and interviews supported the findings of Farrow et al. (2000). Students in both surveys rated their skill development in problem-solving lower than other items. Items for student survey (Farrow et al., 2000) are found in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Variables for Student Satisfaction and Skill Development

Satisfaction	Skill Development
Relationship with supervisor	Communication
Comfort to approach supervisor(s)	Problem-solving
Learning objectives identified	Conducting assessments
Learning objectives met	Analyzing assessments
Learning opportunities	Program planning
Use of time	Working collaboratively
Learning climate	Charting
Availability of clients	Technical
Quantity of feedback	Observation
Quality of feedback	Time management
Evaluation of performance	Self-evaluation
Degree of challenge	Provide feedback
	Receive feedback

Note. All Satisfaction and Skill Development items were developed from Farrow et al., (2000).

Fieldwork educators in both surveys reported slightly lower rankings of student skill development, specifically: analyzing and conducting assessments, charting, self-evaluation, as well as providing feedback. Interestingly, fieldwork educators in this survey rated the following items higher than those found in the survey conducted by Farrow et al. (2000): quantity of contact with the student, responsibility for the learning experience, and the student skill development of communication. A listing of the items used in the survey by Farrow et al. (2000) is displayed in Table 5.

Table 5

Variables for Fieldwork Educators Ratings of Personal Satisfaction and Student Skills

Satisfaction	Student Skill Development
Relationship with student(s)	Communication
Learning objectives of student(s)	Problem-solving
Learning objectives met by student(s)	Conducting assessments
Students' use of time	Analyzing assessments
*Use of time	*Program planning
Overall learning experience for student(s)	Working collaboratively
Quality of contact with student	*Charting
Quantity of contact with student	*Technical
Opportunities to observe student	Observation
Responsibility for evaluation	Time management
Ability to use time for clinical purposes	Self-evaluation
*Ability to use time for other purposes	Provide feedback
	*Receive feedback

Notes. *These items were not included in the student survey. Variables were developed from Farrow et al. (2000).

In this program, fieldwork educators were recruited specifically to supervise students and had no other obligation at the site to treat clients; this structure may have allowed for increased time with the students and greater ability to respond to student questions or concerns without difficulty. Further, since the original study conducted by Farrow et al. (2000) was performed nearly 17 years ago, new knowledge regarding collaborative learning may have been incorporated into the Level I Fieldwork program.

As the literature illustrated, students placed with peers displayed increased confidence in their skills. Similarly, the student survey results along with the student interview revealed an

increase in confidence as a result of working in groups. For most students, peer support made them feel comfortable in a new setting (69.2% strongly agree or agree). The group dynamic and collaborative efforts of students were reported to be a strength of the learning experience. Working collaboratively with peers and supporting one another allowed the students to experience a team approach that will complement their work as practitioners. Past studies have also found that students in collaborative learning models demonstrated increased clinical reasoning skills (Ladyshewsky, 2002; Lekkas et al., 2007). Students who responded to this survey strongly agreed or agreed that the experience enhanced the development of problem-solving skills (53.3%) as well as ability to receive and give feedback to peers (69.2%). Fieldwork educators also rated students' clinical reasoning and ability to problems solve high. Although some students were less likely to agree that the experience promoted their learning of assessments and charting, this finding was perhaps an artifact of the type of setting.

While students ranked meeting learning objectives lower than other items (46.2%), all fieldwork educators strongly agreed or agreed that site learning objectives were indeed met. This difference in perceptions may be due to students not fully understanding expectations or appropriate learning experiences for Level I Fieldwork. Many students had difficulty understanding why Level I Fieldwork occurred in community-based sites where an occupational therapy practitioner was not typically a part of the staff. Providing some site-specific learning objectives that pertain to community-based sites may be helpful to students. Explaining the potential and roles of occupational therapy in community settings and demonstrating interventions using an occupational therapy lens can positively impact the students understanding and perspective of occupational therapy with specific populations. Thus, it is

recommended that the expectations of the Level I Fieldwork be fully explained to prepare students for non-clinical areas of practice.

Development of professional behaviors was cited in the literature to be key strengths of collaborative learning (Baldry-Currens & Bithel, 2003; Rindflesch et al., 2009). Student and fieldwork educator perceptions on items related to professional behaviors were very positive, including the use of time, opportunities to observe, responsibility for the learning experience, professional behaviors, and time management. Students' professional behaviors and professionalism were also identified by site administrators as areas of strength of the Level I Fieldwork program

According to the literature, planning and structure were important aspects to take into consideration (Farrow et al., 2000; Papp et al., 2003). Less than half of the students strongly agreed or agreed that the learning objectives for Level I Fieldwork had been defined. It is unknown why many students were uncertain about the goals for Level I Fieldwork before the start of the experience, as this perception is different from fieldwork educators. Communication was raised as a possible area of concern in the fieldwork educator interview as it was unclear what the students would be learning and had already learned. Providing both the fieldwork educator and student with additional background and detail may strengthen the experience. Also, although fieldwork educators noted the positive influence of collaborative learning, only sixty percent (60%) had previous experience working with groups of students. Perhaps, the occupational therapy assistant academic program could provide introductory information on collaborative learning to all fieldwork educators.

Level I Fieldwork Evaluation Plan for Collaborative Learning

The Level I Fieldwork program evaluation highlighted key areas of strength as well as potential areas for growth. The approaches used in this evaluation may help the occupational therapy assistant academic program to monitor the experiences of students, fieldwork educators, and site administrators. Ongoing evaluations of the Level I Fieldwork program may assist in identifying strengths and weaknesses and areas needing improvement. The academic fieldwork coordinator may use the surveys and interview questions as part of an overall evaluation plan to ensure a quality Level I Fieldwork experience.

The Level I Fieldwork evaluation process used in this project included all primary stakeholders at the fieldwork site: students, fieldwork educators, site administrators, and academic fieldwork coordinators. Figure 2 illustrates the interaction between primary stakeholder groups, cogs were used to identify the individuals involved and some of their responsibilities in the Level I Fieldwork evaluation program process.

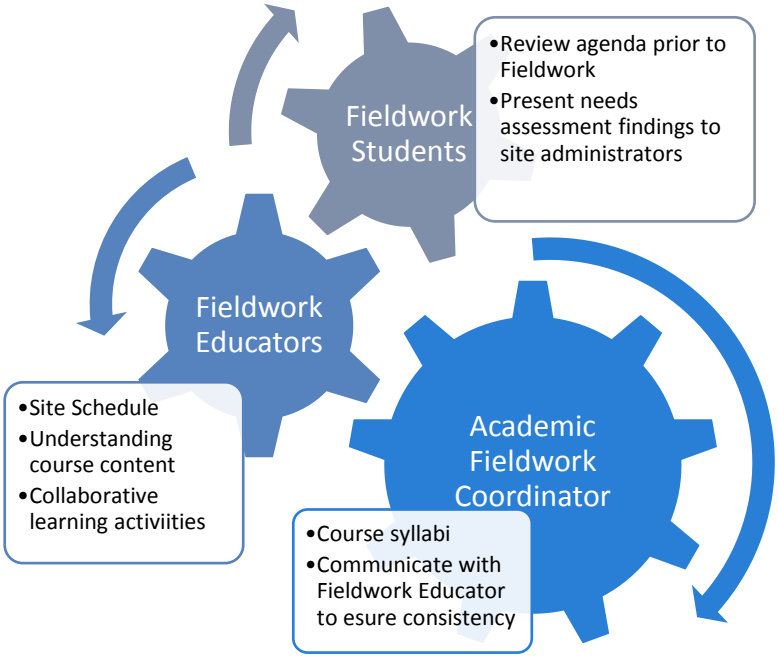

Figure 2. Proposed Level I Fieldwork Evaluation Process for Primary Stakeholders. This figure displays the dynamic relationship of stakeholders in the Level I Fieldwork.

Fieldwork students would benefit by clear instructions related to the agenda of the fieldwork before their start date. Clear instructions and expectations will help ensure that students are aware of the program expectations and given ample time to review the materials. Though site administrators are not regarded as primary stakeholders and thus are not included as a cog in the above figure, their role continues to be important in this Level I Fieldwork program. From the interviews, it became apparent that the site administrators enjoyed receiving recommendations from students. As such, it is recommended that students present needs assessment findings as part of their fieldwork program. In doing so, students can provide beneficial information to site administrators in hopes to enhance site goals and objectives. Fieldwork educators play a major role in the Level I Fieldwork process as well. To the extent possible, it is recommended that fieldwork educators provide the students with a schedule and information regarding the expectations and activities for a specific setting. The fieldwork educator may also benefit by reviewing the course content students are receiving before designing learning experiences for the site. In addition, fieldwork educators may want to draw upon the attributes of collaborative learning to strengthen specific components of the Level I Fieldwork program. Some fieldwork educators may need more background on the collaborative learning model or want to attend the Fieldwork Educator Certificate Workshop provided by AOTA. Although the academic fieldwork coordinator was not regarded as a key stakeholder at the beginning of the project, it became apparent that their role is vital to the success of this Level I Fieldwork program. As such, another recommendation is for the academic fieldwork coordinator to seek ways to provide consistency and understanding between the fieldwork educator and student. The academic fieldwork coordinator may achieve this by providing clear and transparent communication between all

program partners and by providing resources regarding collaborative learning as well as the syllabi of current courses to the fieldwork educator and students. Regular communication with the fieldwork educator may also help ensure uniformity between what students are learning and seeing on the field.

An established timeline of activities for Level I Fieldwork experience and evaluation will contribute in clarifying roles and responsibilities and ensure completion of the evaluation. Figure 3 depicts the key fieldwork learning and evaluation activities before, during, and after Level I Fieldwork.

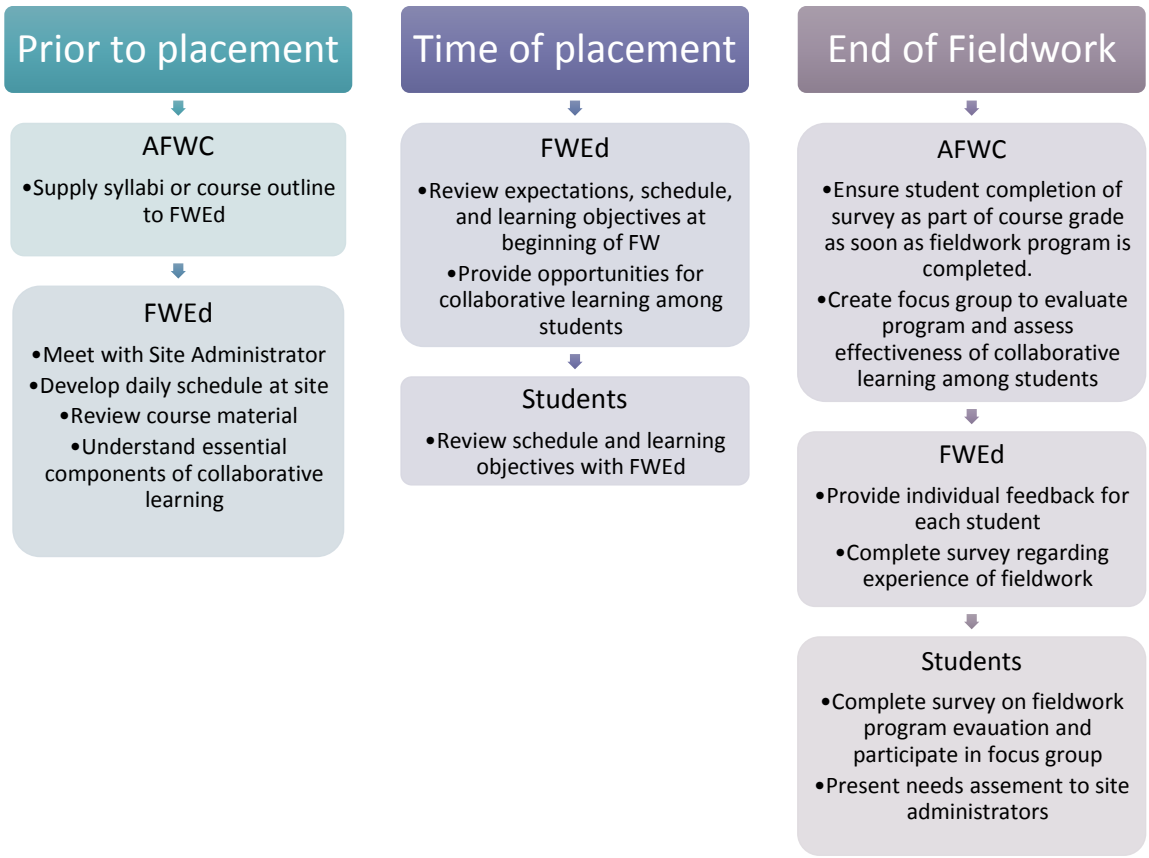

Figure 3. Proposed Level I Fieldwork Evaluation Timeframe. This figure illustrates the timeframe Level I Fieldwork program evaluations should take place and key persons responsible.

Before Level I Fieldwork placement, the academic fieldwork coordinator should supply course outlines to fieldwork educators. The role of the fieldwork educator at this point would be to meet with the site administrator, develop a daily schedule for the site, review course material, and find ways to embed components of collaborative learning in fieldwork. These tasks may vary depending on the fieldwork educator's experience and involvement in this specific Level I Fieldwork program. At the time of placement, the fieldwork educator may review the learning expectations, site-specific objectives, and schedule ensuring seamlessness between course content and fieldwork experience. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the fieldwork educator review principles of collaborative learning to embed collaborative learning activities in the experience. Students at this time are asked to review learning objectives and schedule a meeting with the fieldwork educator so that all involved understand the fieldwork plan. Finally, at the end of the Level I Fieldwork, the academic fieldwork coordinator may ensure that each student completes the survey by making it a part of the course requirement. Focus groups at the end of all Level I Fieldwork experiences and before Level II Fieldwork may be scheduled online or in person to assess the effectiveness of the collaborative learning among occupational therapy assistant students. The fieldwork educator provides feedback for each student at the end of the Level I Fieldwork experience and completes the survey regarding their own experience from that rotation. At the end of the fieldwork, students are asked to complete the questionnaire as part of their coursework grade to ensure a strong response rate.

Careful planning of Level I Fieldwork is necessary because of the number of stakeholders, learning objectives, and variation in different sites. Clear and structured guidelines to all stakeholders will ensure continuity across all fieldwork program sites. Intentional inclusion of collaborative learning principles, site-specific objectives, and requirements for completing fieldwork evaluations may further enhance this already strong Level I Fieldwork program.

Limitations

It is unknown whether the results of this program evaluation are representative of all students in the program due to the lack of participation from some occupational therapy assistant students. Only thirty-four percent (34%) of students participated in the descriptive survey, and only one (1) student agreed to be interviewed. The low response rate to surveys may be due to the hectic schedules of students or lack of incentives for completing the survey. In this evaluation, the Level I Fieldwork placement occurred during spring break, so surveys were not sent until students resumed coursework. Invitations to participate in an interview were sent a week after the request for surveys. The response rate may have increased if surveys were sent earlier in the semester when students were less likely to be busy. Future program evaluations may schedule surveys to be sent out as soon as the student completes the Level I Fieldwork program. In addition, surveys and interviews were completed mid-semester in this evaluation and this timeline may have affected students' desire to participate voluntarily and doubts about whether their input may influence final grades, despite the anonymity of both the survey and interview. Using this survey for future fieldwork program as part of the site evaluation needed for course completion may be helpful. Although the students are online learners, emails can often be overlooked; thus, consideration of the communication methods with students may be necessary. Focus groups following fieldwork may have provided additional feedback; however,

it was unlikely students would have participated after three full days of work given the lower response rate on surveys and interview requests. In addition, time constraints did affect the ability to obtain surveys and interview participants. Online focus groups after completing the Level I Fieldwork program might be more feasible if used as a course activity. Adaptation of the standardized questions was a challenge in the development of the survey. Although items were based on a previous study (Farrow et al., 2000), the actual questions for the survey or interview were unavailable; thus, the questions used in this program evaluation were not standardized. Finally, it is unknown whether fieldwork educators were aware of the principles of collaborative education and how to intentionally incorporate these ideas into the development of the Level I Fieldwork program.

Recommendations for Future Research and Evaluation

The St. Catherine University Level I Fieldwork program for occupational therapy assistant students illustrates a unique, feasible, and successful way to provide foundational fieldwork experiences for specific populations of students. By placing student groups in community-based sites using a collaborative learning model, the program can provide creative fieldwork experience for the students without needing to be concerned about reimbursement regulation (AOTA, 2017). These sites provide learning opportunities for students and improve the recognition of occupational therapy across the community. As the profession continues to evolve in new and innovative directions, fostering ties with community sites such as these will prove fruitful as the profession continues to expand.

Collaborative learning models appear to be an effective approach for developing innovative Level I Fieldwork programs, but it is unknown how widespread these models are in

use in occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant programs. Expansion of the collaborative learning model in community-based sites may need to become a priority for occupational therapy and occupational therapy assistant education to meet the growing shortage of sites. The researcher recommends more in-depth discussion regarding the development of collaborative learning fieldwork experiences in the AOTA Fieldwork Educators Certificate Workshop. Fieldwork educators who have adequate preparation have the potential to harness the strength and benefits of collaborative learning in a variety of clinical and community settings. Further research into collaborative learning among occupational therapy assistant and occupational therapy students is warranted.

Though this program evaluation was narrow in scope, there is potential to expand this program evaluation approach to other occupational therapy programs in associate, baccalaureate, and graduate school levels. The surveys may also be beneficial in studies that compare collaborative learning with the traditional apprenticeship model. For many programs, development of different models of fieldwork experiences may be essential to managing an overall fieldwork program. Lastly, site administrators interviewed expressed satisfaction with the Level I Fieldwork students as they brought new perspectives and sometimes, recommendations. A possible area of growth may be to have the students work collaboratively to complete a needs assessment to formalize recommendations.

Conclusion

The doctoral project explored the experiences and perspectives of Level I Fieldwork among occupational therapy assistant students, fieldwork educators, and site administrators. Through the use of surveys and interviews, the project found benefits of and support for the ongoing use of the current program and the further development the collaborative learning

program for occupational therapy assistant students in community settings. From the findings, recommendations were identified to enhance the overall experience and propose timeframes and activities for future Level I Fieldwork evaluations.

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Appendix A: Survey and Data Collection Tools

Appendix A.1: Survey on Perception of Student Learning in Fieldwork by OTA Students

Online Survey Consent Form for OTA students

You are invited to participate in this research project because of your status as an online OTA student at St. Catherine University. This project is being conducted by Melissa Jazmines-Broersma, MS, OTR/L, doctoral candidate at St. Catherine University. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the fieldwork I program at SCU. The survey includes items about 25 questions and 4 open-ended questions. It will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Your responses to this survey will be anonymous and results will be presented in a way that no one will be identifiable. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the survey technology used, Googleforms. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

Your participation is voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationships with the researchers, your instructors, fieldwork educators, or St. Catherine University. If you decided to stop at any time you may do so. You may also skip any item that you do not want to answer. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Melissa Jazmines-Broersma at majazminesbroersma@stkate.edu or (818) 636-1409 or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu. By responding to items on this survey you are giving us your consent to allow us to use your responses for research and educational purposes.

Please complete the following survey regarding your Level 1 Fieldwork experience.

Read each statement carefully.

Select the response that best reflects your level of agreement to the statement.

1. At this fieldwork I placement, I was able to interact with colleagues and supervisor without difficulty.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. The learning objectives for this site were clearly defined.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. The learning objectives at this site were met in this fieldwork.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. I had the opportunity to develop my learning style in this fieldwork.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. The fieldwork experience had an agenda and followed a schedule.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. My peers provided support throughout the fieldwork.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. The fieldwork educator was open to questions throughout the affiliation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. There was a sufficient number of clients to work with at the site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. The fieldwork educator provided adequate feedback.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

10. The feedback provided by the fieldwork educator helped increase my professional development.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. The fieldwork educator was able to evaluate my work fairly

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. This fieldwork experience was challenging and provided ample opportunity for problem solving.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. I was able to meet with the fieldwork educator individually as needed.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

14. I was able to collaborate and problem solve with peers during this fieldwork.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5

15. I was able to conduct assessments in this fieldwork.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

16. If charts and documentation were available at the site, I was able to review them and practice.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

17. I was provided ample opportunity to provide and receive feedback from peers.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Age:

1. 20-30 years old
2. 31-40 years old
3. older than 41

Primary client population at site:

1. Pediatrics
2. Adolescents
3. Adults
4. Geriatrics/Older Adults

Number of students at fieldwork site: _____

Number of fieldwork educators at site: _____

Type of setting (may choose more than 1)

- Inpatient Acute
- Inpatient Rehab
- SNF/Sub-Acute/Acute Long-Term Care
- General Rehab Outpatient
- Outpatient Hands
- Pediatric Hospital/Unit
- Pediatric Hospital Outpatient
- Pediatric Community
- Behavioral Health Community
- Older Adult Community Living
- Older Adult Day Program
- Outpatient/hand private practice
- Adult Day Program for DD

- ☐ Home Health
- ☐ Pediatric Outpatient Clinic
- ☐ School-based early intervention
- ☐ School
- ☐ Inpatient Psychiatric
- ☐ Other_____

What were the most positive aspects of this Level I Fieldwork experience?

_____

_____

What aspects of this Level I Fieldwork experience need improvement?

_____

_____

What other comments or questions do you have regarding this Level I Fieldwork Experience?

_____

_____

Do you have any questions or comments regarding this fieldwork I rotation?

_____

_____

Appendix A.2: Survey on Perception of Student Learning in Fieldwork by Fieldwork Educators

Online Survey Consent Form for occupational therapy assistant students

You are invited to participate in this research project because of your status as an online OTA student at St. Catherine University. This project is being conducted by Melissa Jazmines-Broersma, MS, OTR/L, doctoral candidate at St. Catherine University. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the fieldwork I program at SCU. The survey includes items about 25 questions and 4 open-ended questions. It will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Your responses to this survey will be anonymous and results will be presented in a way that no one will be identifiable. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the survey technology used, Googleforms. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties.

Your participation is voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your relationships with the researchers, your instructors, fieldwork educators, or St. Catherine University. If you decided to stop at any time you may do so. You may also skip any item that you do not want to answer. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Melissa Jazmines-Broersma at majazminesbroersma@stkate.edu or (818) 636-1409 or the Institutional Reviewer Board Chair: John Schmitt, PT, PhD, 651.690.7739; jsschmitt@stkate.edu. By responding to items on this survey you are giving us your consent to allow us to use your responses for research and educational purposes.

Please complete the following survey regarding your Level 1 Fieldwork experience.

Read each statement carefully.

Select the response that best reflects your level of agreement to the statement.

1. I was able to evaluate each student I was supervising at the site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

2. I felt well prepared to supervise students at this site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

3. I was adequately oriented to site and type of clients.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

4. I was well prepared for the number of students I would be supervising.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

5. I was able to cover the learning objectives with the students.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

6. The students learning objectives at the site were met.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

7. The agenda and daily schedule for the fieldwork affiliation were followed.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

8. The students were given opportunities to collaborate and problem solve.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

9. I believe that I was able to provide adequate individual time with student.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

10. I was able to observe each student at the site on an individual basis.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

11. I felt responsible for the students overall learning experience at the site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

12. From what I observed, students were able to communicate and collaborate with each other.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

13. Students were given ample opportunities to problem-solve together.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

14. Students were given opportunities to conduct and analyze assessments.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

15. Students were given opportunities to look at documentation and practice charting.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

16. Students were able to observe the fieldwork educator model professional behaviors.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

17. Students were able to manage their time well at the site.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

18. Students were given opportunities to evaluate their own clinical skills

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

19. I was able to provide feedback to each individual student during the fieldwork affiliation.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

20. Following the fieldwork affiliation, I was able to review feedback as a fieldwork educator.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

21. I felt that students benefitted from the collaborative model and peer support during fieldwork.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

22. I am satisfied with the overall experience

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

23. I felt supported during this fieldwork rotation

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Age:

1. 20-30 years old
2. 31-40 years old
3. older than 41

Years of experience as a Fieldwork Educator:

1. 0-5 years

2. 6-10 years
3. 11.15 years
4. 16 years or more

Primary client population at site:

4. Pediatrics
5. Adolescents
6. Adults
7. Geriatrics/Older Adults

Profession: _____

Number of students at fieldwork site: _____

Number of Fieldwork Educators at site: _____

Have you had experience supervising students in a group context?

1. Yes
2. No

Have you attended the AOTA Fieldwork Educator Course?

1. Yes
2. No

If yes, did the information on collaborative learning help in this placement?

1. Yes
2. No

Practice setting for this fieldwork (may choose more than 1):

- Inpatient Acute
- Inpatient Rehab
- SNF/Sub-Acute/Acute Long-Term Care
- General Rehab Outpatient
- Outpatient Hands
- Pediatric Hospital/Unit
- Pediatric Hospital Outpatient
- Pediatric Community
- Behavioral Health Community
- Older Adult Community Living
- Older Adult Day Program
- Outpatient/hand private practice
- Adult Day Program for DD
- Home Health
- Pediatric Outpatient Clinic
- School-based early intervention

- School
- Inpatient Psychiatric
- Other_____

What were the most positive aspects of this Level I Fieldwork experience?

_____

_____

What aspects of this Level I Fieldwork experience need improvement?

_____

_____

What other comments or questions do you have regarding this Level I Fieldwork Experience?

_____

_____

Do you have any questions or comments regarding this fieldwork I rotation?

_____

_____

Appendix A.3: Interview Questions for Students, Fieldwork Educators, and Site Administrators

Interview Questions for Students

- What were your perceptions of the relationships you had with your peers in the fieldwork?
- What areas of practice were you exposed to and did being in a group help or limit your understanding of the site?
- What were the learning opportunities at the site? Did being placed with other students help or limit this?
- Tell me about the expectations regarding roles and responsibilities at the site.
- Do you have a better understanding of OT because of your experience at the site?
- Can you describe the collaborative efforts to work with peers at the site?
- Describe the organization of the fieldwork experience.
- Did you feel that the group worked well and learned together?
- Can you share any examples of supporting other members in your group?
- Can you tell me if you felt individually accountable for the learning that occurred in fieldwork?
- Can you tell me how you got to know the other students and were you able to communicate openly with them?
- At the end of the fieldwork, did you process the experience together?

Interview Questions for Fieldwork Educators

- Can you tell of the advantages and disadvantages the collaborative learning model in regards to the fieldwork educator and student relationship?
- Do you feel that the collaborative learning model provided enough learning opportunities for the students?
- Do you feel that the collaborative learning fieldwork model worked in exposing students to practice areas?
- Do you feel that students in the collaborative learning model understand the expectations regarding roles and responsibilities at the fieldwork site?
- As the fieldwork educator at the site, do you feel that the collaborative learning model afforded opportunities for students to work together? Were there any signs of competition?
- Do you feel that the students were able to communicate with you openly despite of/as a result of being a with other students?
- Did you feel that the group worked well and learned together?
- Did you notice if students were supportive of each other?
- Did you make the students accountable for learning activities independently?
- At the end of the fieldwork, did you process the experience together?

Interview Questions for site administrators

- Kindly describe the type of site
- Do you know what occupational therapy is and do you now have a better understanding of the profession as a result of the program being at your site?
- What do you see the occupational therapy assistant student's role is at your site?
- Do you feel the population/clients at this site are benefiting from the occupational therapy assistant students?
- Are there any additional benefits you see by having the students come to your site?
- Can you please describe the organization process of preparing for the fieldwork I program with the fieldwork educator?
- What are your feelings regarding the length of time the students are at your site?
- Do the students have a meeting area while at the site?
- How do you cover orientation with the fieldwork educator?
- Do you have any particular areas you would like to be addressed in this program evaluation?

Appendix B: Results

Appendix B.1 Bar Graph of Student Respondents' Age

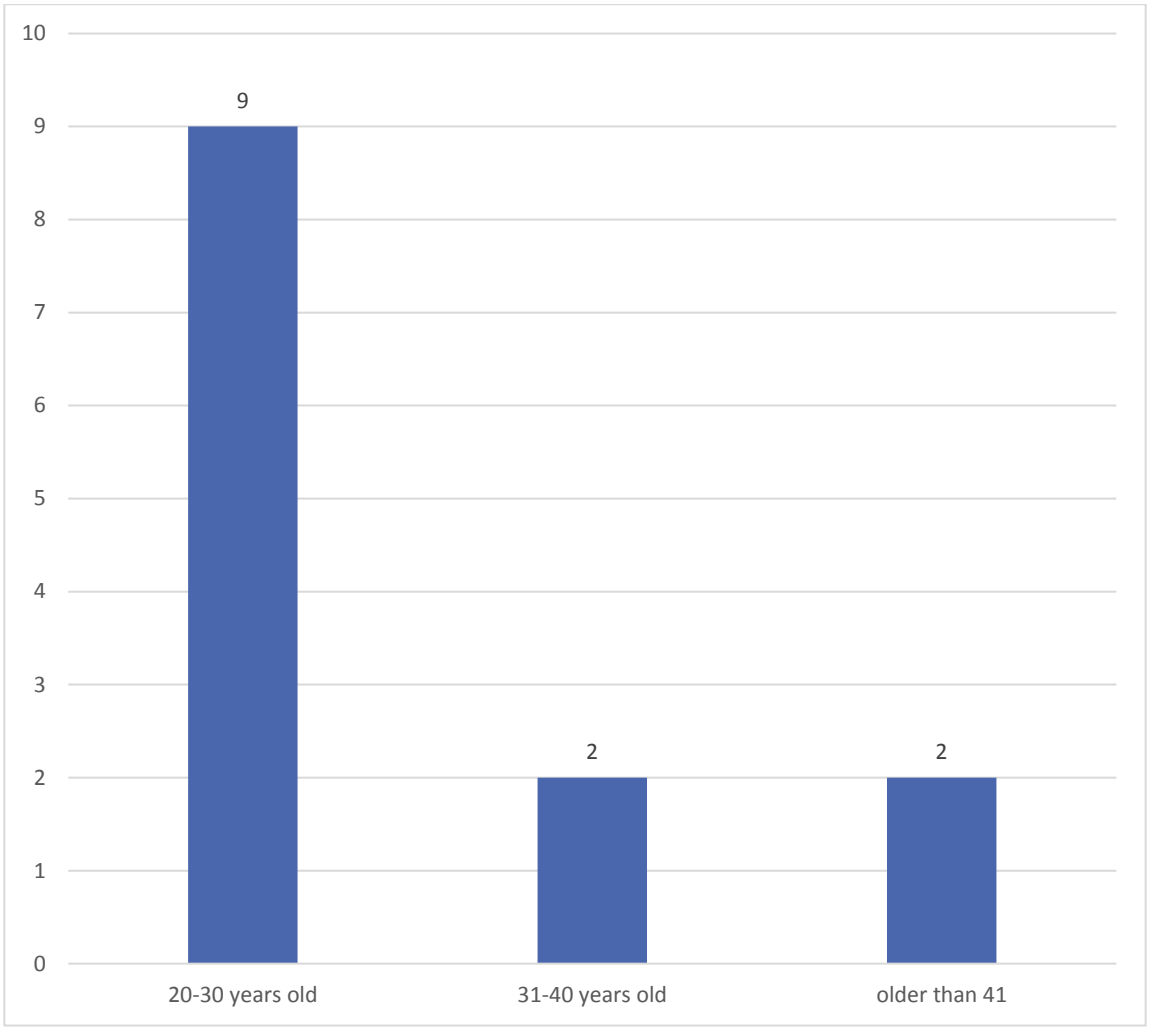

Figure 1. Age of Student Respondents from Survey

Appendix C: IRB Materials

Appendix C.1: IRB Application

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY REQUEST FOR APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH APPLICATION

IRB APPLICATION DOCUMENT CHECKLIST

The items listed below are the application, forms and supporting documents to be uploaded to Mentor IRB for your protocol/application submission. Consent forms and additional supporting documents may be uploaded to separately; see Mentor IRB Directions. For questions, contact the IRB Assistant at 651-690-6204 or irb@stkate.edu.

✓	IRB Application
✓	PI Documentation/CITI Training for Investigator(s)*
	PI Documentation/CITI Training for Faculty Adviser (if applicable) *
✓	Informed consent form
	Child assent form (if applicable)
	Recruiting materials (phone script, fliers, ads, etc.)
✓	Survey/questionnaire(s), focus group or interview questions (if applicable)
	Conflict of interest/financial interest disclosure (if applicable)
✓	Letter(s) of support (if you are conducting research at another agency, school, etc).

*PI Documentation/CITI Training is the completion report received for fulfilling the required Human Subjects Research education requirements in CITI Program. Each person will need to upload their PI Documentation to their individual Mentor IRB account. Directions are located in Mentor IRB.

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY REQUEST FOR APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH APPLICATION

Complete the following application in its entirety. You may excerpt material from your thesis or grant proposal, but your application should be relatively concise. Consent forms and additional supporting documents may be uploaded to separately; see Mentor IRB Directions. For questions, contact the IRB Assistant at 651-690-6204 or irb@stkate.edu.

Date of application: November 12, 2016

Investigator name(s) and credentials (e.g., PhD, RN, etc.): (*List all co-investigators*)

Melissa Jazmines-Broersma, MS, OTR/L

Project Title: Saint Catherine University Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Protocol Evaluation

Department: Occupational Therapy

Level of Review:

In the Mentor IRB system, you must select the Review Type; selecting Exempt and Expedited will prompt additional questions for you to fill out. The default level of review is Full if not selected. For more information on the levels of review, go to the Mentor IRB Info page: Determine the Level of Review.

[✓] **Exempt** [ ] **Expedited** [ ] **Full**

Has this research been reviewed by another IRB?

[ ] **Yes** [✓] **No**

If YES, you may not need to complete a St Kates IRB application and may be able to use your external IRB application instead. Please include a copy of the letter of approval and approved IRB application from the external IRB with your Mentor IRB submission, or indicate the status of your application here. Contact the IRB coordinator at IRB@stkate.edu with any questions. Examples: "See attached" or "Pending approval"

Will this research be reviewed by another IRB?

[ ] **Yes** [✓] **No**

If YES, please indicate your plans for review

Note: *Cooperative Research is when a research protocol requires approval from outside institutions (e.g., a hospital IRB or other college/university) as well as St. Catherine University. Sometimes it is possible for an IRB to accept an external IRB's review to reduce duplication of review effort. Contact the IRB coordinator at IRB@stkate.edu if you have questions about cooperative research and how to determine when only one IRB will need to review your IRB application.*

1. **RESEARCH SUMMARY:** *Complete each section in clear, easy to read language that can be understood by a person unfamiliar with your research and your field.*

a. **Purpose of the research:** *Provide a clear, concise statement of your purpose.*

The aim of this project is three-fold. The purpose of this project will be to create and implement a comprehensive evaluation plan for the Level I FW group supervision model that can be utilized by the Saint Catherine University OTA program. Findings and recommendations of this project will be based on the surveys and interviews completed and will be presented to the OTA faculty at SCU.

b. **Background:** *Provide a concise summary in 1 - 2 brief paragraphs to explain the importance of the research and how it fits with previous research.*

As the need for Occupational Therapists has grown, the number of students enrolled in OT and OTA programs has increased exponentially. In order to become a practitioner, hands-on clinical experience is needed to solidify learning. The recent influx of students coupled with many therapists reluctance to supervise students has created a fieldwork placement dilemma. The typical 1 student to 1 therapist is no longer sustainable. The OTA program at SCU is now utilizing group supervision (6 students to 1 therapist) to alleviate this problem. This project would delve into the efficacy of such placement and will be a comprehensive evaluation. The findings of this project will result in recommendations to the OTA faculty at SCU.

c. **Research Methods and Questions:** *Give a general description of the study design and specific methods you will use in your investigation. Specify all of your research questions and/or hypotheses. Reviewers will consider whether the information you are gathering is necessary to answer your research question(s), so this should be clear in your application.*

There are two parts to this project. First, there will be pilot testing of two surveys utilizing the think aloud protocol. One survey will be for fieldwork educators and another will be for the OTA students. 4 students and 4 fieldwork educators would be involved in the think aloud process. Once the tools have been analyzed and redeveloped, it will be sent to fieldwork educators and students. The project will be cross sectional design and fieldwork educators and students will be asked to complete the online survey. Finally, volunteers from each will be interviewed for in depth information and understanding of the fieldwork program. Ideally, 4 students from Virginia and 4 from California would be interviewed along with 4 fieldwork educators.

d. **Expectations of Participants:** *Give a step by step description of all procedures that you will have participants do. Attach any surveys, tests, instruments, interview questions, data collection forms, etc. that you will use with participants.*

First, 4-5 fieldwork educators and 4-5 students will be asked to provide feedback on pilot instruments. Think aloud protocol will be used to validate the surveys. Pilot surveys will be redeveloped based on feedback. Once surveys are finalized, all students and fieldwork educators involved with the OTA fieldwork I program will be asked to complete the survey. There will also be a request to participate in an interview. The interview will consist of 6-7 questions for fieldwork educators and students. Ideally, 8 students in total (4 form Virginia and 4 from California) and 4 fieldwork educators (2 from Virginia and 2 from California) will participate in the interview. Please see attached for interview questions.

e. Estimated Time Commitment for Participants:

Pilot survey -10 minutes Survey-10 minutes	**Number of sessions for each participant**
Interview- 30 minutes (if desired)	**Time commitment per session for each participant**
10-50 minutes	**Total time commitment for each participant**

f. Access to Existing Data: *If you are analyzing existing data, records, or specimens, explain the source and type, means of access, and permission(s) to use them. If not accessing existing data, indicate "NA"*

NA

2. SUBJECTS: *Provide your best estimates below*.

a. Age Range of Subjects Included:

Adult students: 18-60
Fieldwork Educators: 20-60
Site Administrators: 30-65

***b.* Number:**

(*Indicate a range, or maximum, if exceeded, you will need to submit an amendment)*

4 Male 72 Female 76 Total

c. Target Population: Describe your target population (the group you will be studying; e.g. seniors, children ages 9-12, healthy adults 18 or over, etc.)

Adult learners studying for an associate's degree in Occupational Therapy Assistant and professional OTs supervising students.

d. Specific Exclusions: *If women and/or minorities are to be excluded from the study, a clear rationale should be provided in section "f" below*.

e. Special Populations Included: *Select any special population that will be the focus of your research*. NOTE: *These groups require special consideration by federal regulatory agencies and by the IRB.*

☐	**Minors (under age 18)**	☐	**HIV/AIDS patients**
☑	**St. Catherine Employees**	☐	**Economically disadvantaged**
☑	**Students**	☐	**Educationally disadvantaged**
☐	**Pregnant women**	☐	**Hospital patients or outpatients**
☐	**Elderly/aged persons**	☐	**Prisoners**
☐	**Cognitively impaired persons**		
☐	**Minority group(s) and/or non-English speakers** ***(please specify)*** _____		
☑	**Other Special Characteristics and Special Populations** ***(please specify)*** **Site Administrators**		

f. Provide reasons for targeting or excluding any special populations listed above.

The perception of fieldwork educators supervising groups of OTA students from Saint Catherine University (SCU) are employed by SCU will help formulate survey questions and give feedback on the process. I will also be getting information from adult students enrolled in the OTA program.

g. Do you have any conflict of interest (financial, personal, employment, dual-role) that could affect human subject participation or protection? *Dual-role examples: faculty–student (does not apply to action research projects for education students), medical practitioner-patients, supervisor-direct reports, etc.*

☐ **Yes** ☑ **No**

If Yes, please indicate the steps you will take to minimize any undue influence in your research, recruitment and consent process.

3. RECRUITMENT: LOCATION OF SUBJECTS *(Select all that apply)* **:**

☑	**St. Catherine University students**	
☐	**School setting (PreK – 12)**	
☐	**Hospital or clinic**	
☑	**Other Institution *(Specify)*:**	Site administrators or program directors from community-based services for the special needs population.
☐	**None of the above *(Describe location of subjects)*:**	

NOTE: *If subjects are recruited or research is conducted through an agency or institution other than St. Catherine University, submit either written or electronic documentation of approval and/or cooperation. An electronic version should be sent from the email system of that particular institution. The document should include the name of the PI, Title of the approved study, as well as the name and title of the appropriate administrator sending the approval. You should include an abstract/synopsis of your study when asking for approval from an external institution.*

a. Recruitment Method: *Describe how you will recruit your subjects? Attach a copy of any advertisement, flyer, letter, or statement that you will use for recruitment purposes.*

The process for recruiting subjects will be a divided process. First, David Orchanian, the fieldwork coordinator for SCU OTA program, will review the pilot survey and provide the names of fieldwork educators to whom letters will be sent requesting feedback on pilot survey. A second letter will be sent to students with names, also provided by Mr. Orchanian. The convenience sample of OTA students enrolled at SCU in Virginia and California will be used.

b. Incentives: *Will the subjects be offered inducements for participation? If yes, explain.*

Gift cards will be given to students who complete the final interview.

4. RISKS AND BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

a. Select all that apply. Does the research involve:

	Use of private records (medical or educational records)
✓	**Possible invasion of privacy of the subjects and/or their family**
	Manipulation of psychological or social variables
	Probing for personal or sensitive information in surveys or interviews
	Use of deception
	Presentation of materials which subjects might consider offensive, threatening or degrading
	Risk of physical injury to subjects
	Other risks:

b. Risks: ***Briefly describe the risks of participation in your study, if any. Describe the precautions taken to minimize these risks. Please use "no foreseeable risk" rather than no risks.***

Risks are minimal for those interviewed as I will be asking questions regarding perceptions and feelings. No foreseeable risks with survey as participants will be anonymous.

c. Benefits: *List any anticipated direct benefits to your subjects. If none, state that here and in the consent form.*

1. **Direct Benefits:** *List any anticipated direct benefits to your subjects. If none, state that here <u>and</u> in the consent form.*

No direct benefit

2. **Other Benefits:** *List any potential benefits of this research to society, including your field of Study.*

The use of group supervision among occupational therapy fieldwork educators is not typical. Finding the perception of such supervision among students and fieldwork educators will provide rich information on student learning. Further, due to the lack of fieldwork sites, hesitance of occupational therapists to take fieldwork students, and current climate of paying for sites, the project will provide new light to the fieldwork dilemma.

d. **<u>Risk/Benefit Ratio</u>:** *Justify the statement that the potential benefits (including direct and other benefits) of this research study outweigh any probable risks.*

The project would contribute to the OTA education process is important and participants will not be forced to share information they are not open to share.

e. **<u>Deception</u>:** *The use of deception in research poses particular risks and should only be used if necessary to accomplish the research, and when risks are minimized as much as possible. The researcher should not use deception when it would affect the subject's willingness to participate in the study (e.g, physical risks, unpleasant emotional or physical experiences, etc).*

Will you be using deception in your research?

	Yes	✓	**No**

If yes, justify why the deceptive techniques are necessary in terms of study's scientific, educational or applied value. Explain what other alternatives were considered that do not use deception and why they would not meet the researcher's objective. Attach a copy of a debriefing statement explaining the deception to participants.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

a. **Will your data be anonymous?**

✓	**Yes**		**No**

(*Anonymous data means that the researcher cannot identify subjects from their data, while confidential data means that the researcher can identify a subject's response, but promises not to do so publicly*.)

b. ***How will you maintain anonymity/confidentiality of the information obtained from your subjects*?**

Interview Example: I will assign pseudonyms to each interview participant. I will de-identify the data, and store the key separate from the recordings and transcripts. I will have the transcriptionist sign a confidentiality statement

To maintain anonymity, pseudonyms will be used for all interviewees. Codes will be used in all transcripts. Surveys will not ask for identifying information. The surveys will be completed online anonymously and analyzed in aggregate.

c. Data Storage: *Where will the data be kept, and who will have access to it during that time*? *Examples: I will store audio files and electronic files on a password protected computer or cloud (indicate which; please avoid using flash drives as they are the one of the hardest 'tools' to protect and one of the easiest to exploit or lose, it is suggested to encrypt data on the cloud such as use a file password). I will store all paper files in a secure location (a locked filing cabinet) that is accessible only to myself and my advisor.*

All audio files and documents will be stored in a locked in a file cabinet that will be accessible only to myself and my advisor. Computer documents will be password protected.

d. Data Destruction: *How long will it be kept? What is the date when original data will be destroyed? (All studies must specify a date when original data that could be linked back to a subject's identity will be destroyed. Data that is stripped of all identifiers may be kept indefinitely). Example: I will destroy all records from the study within six months of the conclusion of the study but no later than June 2017.*

All records and documents from the study will be destroyed within six months of the conclusion of the study. All hard copy documents and electronic files will be destroyed no later than November 2017.

e. Availability of Data: *Will data identifying subjects be made available to anyone other than you or your advisor? If yes, please explain who will receive the data, and justify the need. Example: The data will only be available to me and my advisor.*

The data of this research will only be available to me and my advisor.

f. Official Records: *Will the data become a part of the medical or school record? If yes, explain*.

No

6. INFORMED CONSENT

a. How will you gain consent? *State what you will say to the subjects to explain your research*.

The process of consent will be divided into 3 parts. First, participants will be asked if they are interested in providing feedback on survey items regarding their recent fieldwork experience. Second, a letter will be sent to fieldwork educators and students at SCU OTA program asking if they would like to participate in a survey. On that letter, they will be asked if they would like to participate in a 30 minute interview and to call or email if interested.

b. Consent Document: *Attach the consent or assent form or text of oral statement. A template is available in Mentor IRB. Example: "See attached"*

"See attached"

c. **Timing of Consent Process:** *Note: In studies with significant risk or volunteer burden, the IRB may require that subjects be given an interim period of 24 hours or more before agreeing to participate in a study*

If the participants return survey and choose to participate in interview, I will read the consent form and ask that they sign and return it.

d. **Assurance of Participant Understanding:** *How you will assess that the subject understands what they have been asked to do* (Note: *It is not sufficient to simply ask a yes/no question, such as "do you understand what you are being asked to do?")*

Participants who choose to be interviewed will be asked to repeat their consent.

7. CITI TRAINING – Work with your faculty advisor or contact IRB@stkates.edu if you have any questions about whether you should complete additional training modules within CITI

a. Select all the CITI training courses/modules you completed:

REQUIRED COURSE:
Human Subject Research Training Course – only one course is required

- [✓] **Human Subject Research - Social & Behavioral Research Investigators**
- [ ] **Human Subject Research - Education Action Research Program**
- [ ] **Human Subject Research - Biomedical Research Investigators**

OPTIONAL MODULES:

- [ ] **Financial Conflict of Interest Course (suggested if you answered YES to Section 2 part g)**
- [ ] **Avoiding Group Harms - U.S. Research Perspectives (suggested if you checked any special populations in Section 2 part e)**
- [ ] **International Research (suggested for PIs doing research outside of the US that is NOT federally funded)**
- [ ] **International Studies (suggested for PIs doing research outside of the US that IS federally funded)**
- [ ] **Cultural Competence in Research (suggested when participants are from a culturally diverse population)**
- [ ] **Internet Based Research (suggested for PIs using internet resources during their research (outside of recruitment) – Skype, survey tools, internet activity monitoring, etc)**
- [ ] **Other (prisoners, pregnant women, children):**

8. ASSURANCES

By submitting this application, the researcher certifies that:

- **The information furnished concerning the procedures to be taken for the protection of human subjects is correct.**
- **The investigator, to the best of his/her knowledge, is complying with Federal regulations and St. Catherine University IRB Policy governing human subjects in research.**
- **The investigator will seek and obtain prior written approval from the IRB for any substantive modification in the proposal, including, but not limited to changes in cooperating investigators, procedures and subject population.**
- **The investigator will promptly report in writing to the IRB any unexpected or otherwise significant adverse events that occur in the course of the study.**
- **The investigator will promptly report in writing to the IRB and to the subjects any significant findings which develop during the course of the study which may affect the risks and benefits to the subjects who participate in the study.**
- **The research will not be initiated until the IRB provides written approval.**
- **The term of approval will be for one year. To extend the study beyond that term, a new application must be submitted.**
- **The research, once approved, is subject to continuing review and approval by the IRB.**
- **The researcher will comply with all requests from the IRB to report on the status of the study and will maintain records of the research according to IRB guidelines.**
- **If these conditions are not met, approval of this research may be suspended.**

11/13/16

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research study titled Saint Catherine University Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Protocol Evaluation.

I am a graduate student at St. Catherine University under the supervision of Dr. Kathleen Matuska, a faculty member in the Department of Occupational Therapy. I am completing this study as a part of my program in Occupational Therapy Doctorate.

In order to make sure that this research is both ethical and credible, it is important that each participant be fully informed of the risks and benefits of the study, as well as of their rights as a participant. Please read the attached Informed Consent Form for this important information. I will review this information with you at the beginning of our interview and ask you to sign it then.

If you have any questions about the form or the study please do not hesitate to discuss them with me.

Thank you for your support of my study,

Melissa Jazmines-Broersma
1714 Arlington Avenue
Glendale, CA 91208
818-636-1409

ST CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for a Research Study

Study Title: Saint Catherine University Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Protocol Evaluation

Researcher(s): Melissa Jazmines-Broersma, MS, OTR/L

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is called Saint Catherine University Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Protocol Evaluation. The study is being done by Melissa Jazmines-Broersma, a doctoral candidate at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. The faculty advisor for this study is Kathleen Matuska, PhD, OTR/L, Professor and Chair of the Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy Department at St. Catherine University.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the OTA Fieldwork Program at Saint Catherine University. This study is important because group supervision is not typically used in Occupational Therapy. There has been a significant increase of interest in OT and lack of placements. This project would provide a comprehensive evaluation on group supervision among OTA students, interviewing not only students, but fieldwork educators, and site administrators. Approximately 80 people are expected to participate in this research. Below, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been asked to participate in this study because of you are either an OTA student who has just completed a group fieldwork experience, a fieldwork educator from SCU, or a site administrator where this fieldwork took place.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do these things:

- A pilot survey will be distributed to selected participants. This will require you to review the survey for clarity and will take approximately 10 minutes.
- Final surveys will be distributed to OTA students and fieldwork educators regarding their more recent fieldwork group supervision experience. Completion of this survey will take approximately 10 minutes.
- Fieldwork educators and students may choose to participate in interviews regarding their fieldwork experience. Site administrators will also be asked to participate in interviews. This will take approximately 35-40 minutes.

In total, this study will take approximately 10-45 minutes over 1 or 2 sessions if you choose to participate in the interview.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify me and you will be removed immediately. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no negative or positive impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

Risks are minimal for those interviewed as I will be asking questions regarding perceptions and feelings. No foreseeable risks with survey as participants will be anonymous.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?

Participants who complete the final interview will be given $5.00 gift cards to Starbucks. Those who complete initial interviews and surveys will not be compensated for completing this study.

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

The information that you provide in this study will be coded and surveys will be completed anonymously. All recordings will be transcribed with names removed and coded for anonymity, I will keep the research results in locked file cabinet and only I and the research advisor will have access to the records while I work on this project. I will finish analyzing the data by April 2017. I will then destroy all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you. Tape recordings will be available only to me and Dr. Matuska. They will be destroyed 6 months following completion, no later than November 2017.
Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified or identifiable in the any written reports or publications. If it becomes useful to disclose any of your information, I will seek your permission and tell you the persons or agencies to whom the information will be furnished, the nature of the information to be furnished, and the purpose of the disclosure; you will have the right to grant or deny permission for this to happen. If you do not grant permission, the information will remain confidential and will not be released.

Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?

If during course of this research study I learn about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, I will inform you of these findings

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact Melissa Broersma at (818)636-1409 or majazminesbroersma@stkate.edu. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Kathleen Matuska, PhD, OTR/L at kmmatuska@stkate.edu. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I consent to participate in the study and agree to be audiotaped.
My signature indicates that I have read this information and my questions have been answered. I also know that even after signing this form, I may withdraw from the study by informing the researcher(s).

_____

Signature of Participant Date

Signature of Parent, Legal Guardian, or Witness (if applicable, otherwise delete this line)	Date
Signature of Researcher	Date

Saint Catherine University Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Protocol Evaluation
Appendix Surveys Data Collection Protocol
Jazmines-Broersma, Melissa

Draft email letter for David Orchanian to use with Fieldwork Level I students and Fieldwork Educators for Pilot interview

Dear Students and Fieldwork Educators,

Melissa Jazmines-Broersma, an Occupational Therapy Doctoral student at Saint Catherine University, would like to conduct an interview for a pilot survey evaluating the fieldwork I program. She will need 4 students and 4 fieldwork educators to interview. These interviews will be audio recorded and will require your consent. If you are interested and willing to participate please contract Melissa directly at majazminesbroersma@stkate.edu or call (818)636-1409. Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated.

Thank you

David Orchanian, MPA, OTR/L

david.orchanian@ota.stkate.edu

Appendix Surveys Data Collection Protocol
Jazmines-Broersma, Melissa

Draft email letter for David Orchanian to use with Fieldwork Level I students

Dear Students,

Melissa Jazmines-Broersma, an Occupational Therapy Doctoral student at Saint Catherine University, is requesting you to participate in a survey on perception of student learning in our fieldwork level I program. The findings of this survey will be of great benefit for the program and provide insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the fieldwork program. This survey will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Any questions or concerns may be directed to Melissa at majazminesbroersma@stkate.edu or at (818)636-1409. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated.

David Orchanian, MPA, OTR/L

david.orchanian@ota.stkate.edu

Appendix Surveys Data Collection Protocol
Jazmines-Broersma, Melissa

Draft email letter for David Orchanian to use with Fieldwork Level I Educators

Dear Fieldwork Educators,

Melissa Jazmines-Broersma, an Occupational Therapy Doctoral student at Saint Catherine University, is requesting you to participate in a survey on perception of student learning in our fieldwork level I program. The findings of this survey will be of great benefit for the program and provide insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the fieldwork program. This survey has been piloted and validated. This survey will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. Any questions or concerns may be directed to Melissa at majazminesbroersma@stkate.edu or at (818)636-1409. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

David Orchanian, MPA, OTR/L

david.orchanian@ota.stkate.edu

Draft email letter for David Orchanian to use with Fieldwork Level I students and Fieldwork Educators for second phase interview

Dear Students and Fieldwork Educators,

Melissa Jazmines-Broersma, an Occupational Therapy Doctoral student at Saint Catherine University, would like to conduct an interview regarding your perception of the fieldwork level I program experience. She will need 8 students and 4 fieldwork educators to interview. Volunteers for the interview will be given a $5.00 gift card to Starbucks. These interviews will be audio recorded and will require your consent. If you are interested and willing to participate please contract Melissa directly at majazminesbroersma@stkate.edu or call (818)636-1409. Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated.

Thank you

David Orchanian, MPA, OTR/L

david.orchanian@ota.stkate.edu

Saint Catherine University Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Protocol Evaluation
Appendix Surveys Data Collection Protocol
Jazmines-Broersma, Melissa

Survey on Perception of Student Learning in Fieldwork by OTA Students

Directions: Below you will find a series of statements. Please read each statement carefully. Each statement asks you for your honest response to it.

Each statement asks you for your honest response to it. As much as possible, avoid giving uncertain or undecided answers.

This is a survey on the fieldwork I program at a nontraditional community based site. Your general cooperation in this survey will be greatly appreciated.

Please indicate your frank and honest conventions by encircling one of the symbols after each statement. The following are the symbols and what they stand for.

SA- Strongly Agree
A- Agree
UN- Uncertain
D- Disagree
SD- Strongly Disagree

Begin here.

1. At this fieldwork I placement, I was able to interact with colleagues and supervisor without difficulty.

SA A UN D SD

2. My peers provided support throughout the fieldwork affiliation.

SA A UN D SD

3. The fieldwork educator was open to questions throughout the affiliation.

SA A UN D SD

4. The orientation to site and type of clients I was going to be seeing was adequate.

SA A UN D SD

5. I was able to share and communicate with clients, family members, or caregivers in a professional manner.

SA A UN D SD

6. I was able to apply the learning and knowledge of human development to this population and setting.

SA A UN D SD

7. The fieldwork educator displayed to us the proper safety protocols needed for this site.

SA A UN D SD

8. I felt confident in my ability to explain the role of occupational therapy to clients, family members or caregivers at this site.

SA A UN D SD

9. I was able to articulate and use different therapeutic activities with clients.

SA A UN D SD

10. The fieldwork educator provided a good overarching description of the role of OT at the site.

SA A UN D SD

11. Overall, I felt well prepared to enter this site.

SA A UN D SD

Age:_____

Gender:_____

Prior occupation before entering OTA school:_____

Do you have any questions or comments regarding this fieldwork I rotation?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix Surveys Data Collection Protocol
Jazmines-Broersma, Melissa

Survey on Perception of Student Learning in Fieldwork by Fieldwork Educators

Directions: Below you will find a series of statements. Please read each statement carefully. Each statement asks you for your honest response to it.

Each statement asks you for your honest response to it. As much as possible, avoid giving uncertain or undecided answers.

This is a survey on the fieldwork I program at a nontraditional community based site. Your general cooperation in this survey will be greatly appreciated.

Please indicate your frank and honest conventions by encircling one of the symbols after each statement. The following are the symbols and what they stand for.

SA- Strongly Agree
A- Agree
UN- Uncertain
D- Disagree
SD- Strongly Disagree

Begin here.

1. Students were well prepared for this placement

SA A UN D SD

2. I felt well prepared to supervise students at this site.

SA A UN D SD

3. I was adequately oriented to site and type of clients.

SA A UN D SD

4. I was well prepared for the number of students I would be supervising

SA A UN D SD

5. I was able to apply classroom lessons to fieldwork site experience

SA A UN D SD

6. I felt confident to educate students in OTs role at a community based site

SA A UN D SD

7. I felt that students benefitted from the group model and peer support during fieldwork

SA A UN D SD

8. I am satisfied with the overall experience

SA A UN D SD

9. I felt supported during this fieldwork rotation

SA A UN D SD

Age:_____

Gender:_____

Years of experience as an OT:_____

Years of experience as a Fieldwork Educator:_____

Do you have any questions or comments regarding this fieldwork I rotation?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Prompts for Fieldwork Educators and Students during think aloud for pilot survey

- Kindly review the questions and share your thoughts on clarity aloud
- Are there any other questions/ prompts you would like to see

- Do you feel these questions are pertinent to your experience?

Interview Questions for Fieldwork Educators (second phase)

- Tell me about your experience as a fieldwork educator at this site.
- What did you see was the most valuable experience for the student at this site?
- What do you feel were the challenges for the students at this site?
- Can you give examples of how the students were able to apply their classroom learning at the site?
- Can you provide examples of the student better understanding occupational therapy because of this experience?

Interview Questions for students (second phase)

- Tell me about your experience as a student at this site?
- What did you see as the most valuable experience at this site?
- Describe a client you learned from.
- What challenges did you experience at this site?
- Can you provide examples when you used therapeutic use of self during this fieldwork rotation?
- Can you describe how you applied learning about occupational activities during your fieldwork?
- Describe OTs role in community based settings based on your fieldwork experience?

Interview Questions for site administrators

- What do you see the OTA student's role is at your site?
- Do you feel the population/clients at this site are benefiting from the OTA students?
- What benefits do you see by having the students come to your site?
- What are your feelings regarding the length of time the students are at your site?
- Do you have any particular areas you would like to be addressed in this program evaluation?

Appendix C.2: Letter of Institutional Support from St. Catherine University

ST. CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

November 20, 2016

Letter of Support for Melissa Jazmines-Broersma's doctoral project

Melissa has the support of the St. Catherine University OTA program to conduct a program evaluation of our unique level I Fieldwork model. We will give her contact information for students, fieldwork educators, and site managers for her survey. We will assist with recruitment of stakeholders to interview as well. Melissa will evaluate the fieldwork model in all of our regions (California, Virginia, Minnesota).
Her main contact person is: David Orchanian, MPA, OTR/L. at David.Orchanian@ota.stkate.edu

Kathleen Matuska

Dr. Kathleen Matuska
Chair of Occupational Therapy Programs
St. Catherine University

Appendix C.3: IRB Approval Letter

St. Catherine University IRB *Protocol Exemption Notification*

To: Melissa Jazmines-Broersma
From: David Chapman, IRB Co-Chair
Subject: Protocol #768
Date: 01/24/2017

Thank you for submitting your research proposal to the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The primary purpose of the IRB is to safeguard and respect the rights and welfare of human subjects in scientific research. In addition, IRB review serves to promote quality research and to protect the researcher, the advisor, and the university.

On behalf of the IRB, I am responding to your request for Exempt level approval to use human subjects in your research. The application **# 768: Saint Catherine University Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Protocol Evaluation** has been verified by the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board as Exempt according to 45CFR46.101(b)(3): Public Officials on 01/24/2017. The project was approved as submitted. You may begin your research at any time.

Please note that changes to your protocol may affect its exempt status. You must request approval for any changes that will affect the risk to your subjects using the Amendment Request Form. You should not initiate these changes until you receive written IRB approval. Also, you should report any adverse events to the IRB using the Adverse Event Form. These documents are available at the Mentor IRB system homepage, which can be accessed through the St. Catherine University IRB homepage. When the project is complete, please submit a project completion form.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or email via the Mentor messaging system. We appreciate your attention to the appropriate treatment of research subjects. Thank you for working cooperatively with the IRB; best wishes in your research!

Sincerely,

David Chapman, PhD

Co-Chair, Institutional Review Board

ddchapman@stkate.edu

Appendix C.4: IRB Amendment Approval Notification

St. Catherine University IRB *Amendment Approval Notification*

To: Melissa Jazmines-Broersma
From: David Chapman, IRB Co-Chair
Subject: Protocol #768
Date: 03/07/2017

The amendment to protocol **Saint Catherine University Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Protocol Evaluation** has been approved by the IRB Chair on 03/07/2017.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

David Chapman,

IRB Co-Chair

ddchapman@stkate.edu

Appendix C.5: IRB Amendment Approval Notification

St. Catherine University IRB *Amendment Approval Notification*

To: Melissa Jazmines-Broersma
From: David Chapman, IRB Co-Chair
Subject: Protocol #768
Date: 03/12/2017

The amendment to protocol **Saint Catherine University Occupational Therapy Assistant Fieldwork Protocol Evaluation** has been approved by the IRB Chair on 03/12/2017.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

David Chapman,

IRB Co-Chair

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Appendix D: Project in Lay Language

Summary of Project in Lay Language

In order to become an occupational therapist, students need to have on the job training, or clinical experience. This is done during their coursework (Level I Fieldwork) where the goal is for students to have exposure to a variety of clients and to see how OT professionals work with them. It is also done on a full-time basis after coursework where they are expected to eventually perform as an entry level therapist (level II). Placing students has been hard in both of these experiences because places that have taken students in the past are not doing so for a lot of reasons. Some reasons for this is because therapists feel they do not have time to work with a student or are not interested in teaching at the site. Also, there are more occupational therapy schools around the nation as well as more students within programs, increasing the pressure on sites. This project looks at the level I clinical experience for students using group supervision, a model of learning not usually used in OT schools. Usually, the clinical experience is done with 1 therapist and 1 student. This group model can take a lot of work, but if 6 students can be supervised by 1 therapist, it may help solve the placement problems. In this project, I will create a survey for OTA students who just had group learning experiences and a separate survey for their teachers on site. These surveys will be used to see what their learning experience is and to see what is going well and what needs to be changed. In order to create the surveys, I will first have a draft surveys that will be reviewed by the students and clinical educators. I will record and make note of their thoughts and feelings toward survey questions. Once the surveys are finalized, online surveys will be sent to the students and clinical educators and will ask if they would like to be interviewed. The site directors where this group learning will take place will also be interviewed to see what their thoughts are on students being at their site. The results of

the survey and interview will be shared with the OTA program at Saint Catherine University. It is hoped that the final survey will be used by the program for future evaluations.