

Valued Qualities Exhibited by Occupational Therapy Students: An Exploration of Preceptor Perspectives

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Presentation outline

- Background and introduction to the project
- Overview of the study method
- Highlights of the main findings
- Discussion and implications
- Questions

Links to ENOTHE 2014 Objectives

- Educators will learn which student qualities are most valued during fieldwork placements in a rehabilitation setting.
- Understanding the qualities students are expected to demonstrate during fieldwork placements will assist educators to establish appropriate mechanisms for evaluation.
- Fieldwork is integral to the development of student competency. Awareness of valued student qualities will improve educational partnerships and enable professional growth.

Why explore student qualities?

Professional profile

Occupational therapy performance is measured by competencies

ACOTRO

ASSOCIATION OF CANADIAN OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY REGULATORY ORGANIZATIONS



ACORE

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES ORGANISMES
DE RÉGLEMENTATION EN ERGOTHÉRAPIE

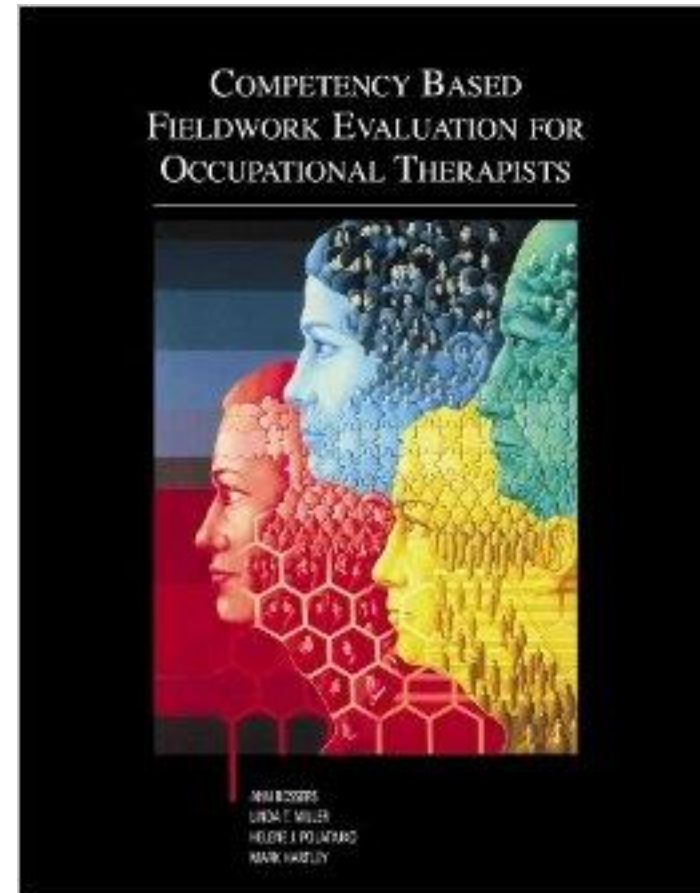


**PROFILE OF
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PRACTICE
IN CANADA (2007)**

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

Student competencies

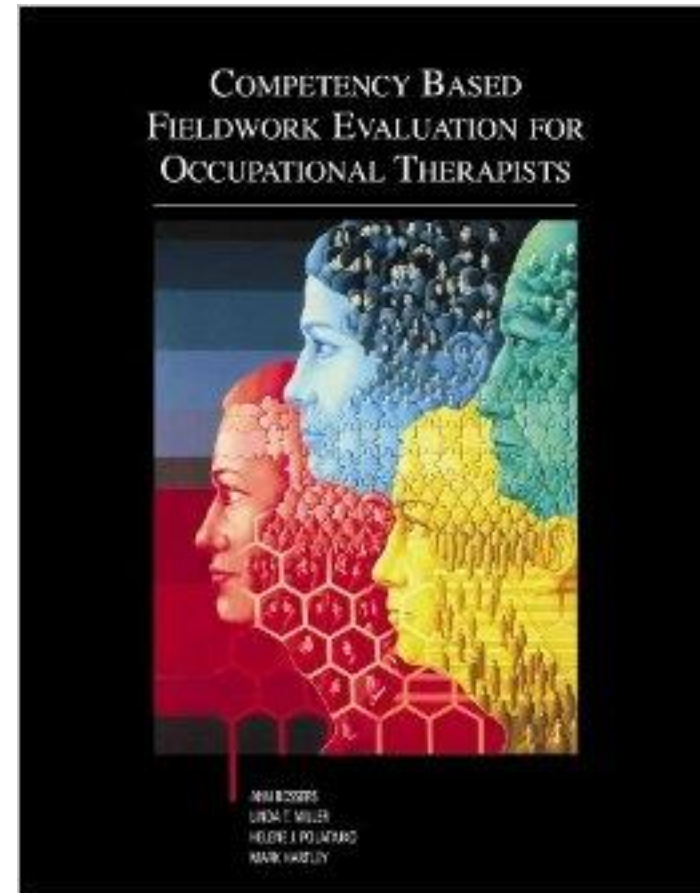
Currently students are evaluated based on their performance in the 7 professional competencies of the Competency Based Fieldwork Evaluation (CBFE)



(Bossler et al., 2008)

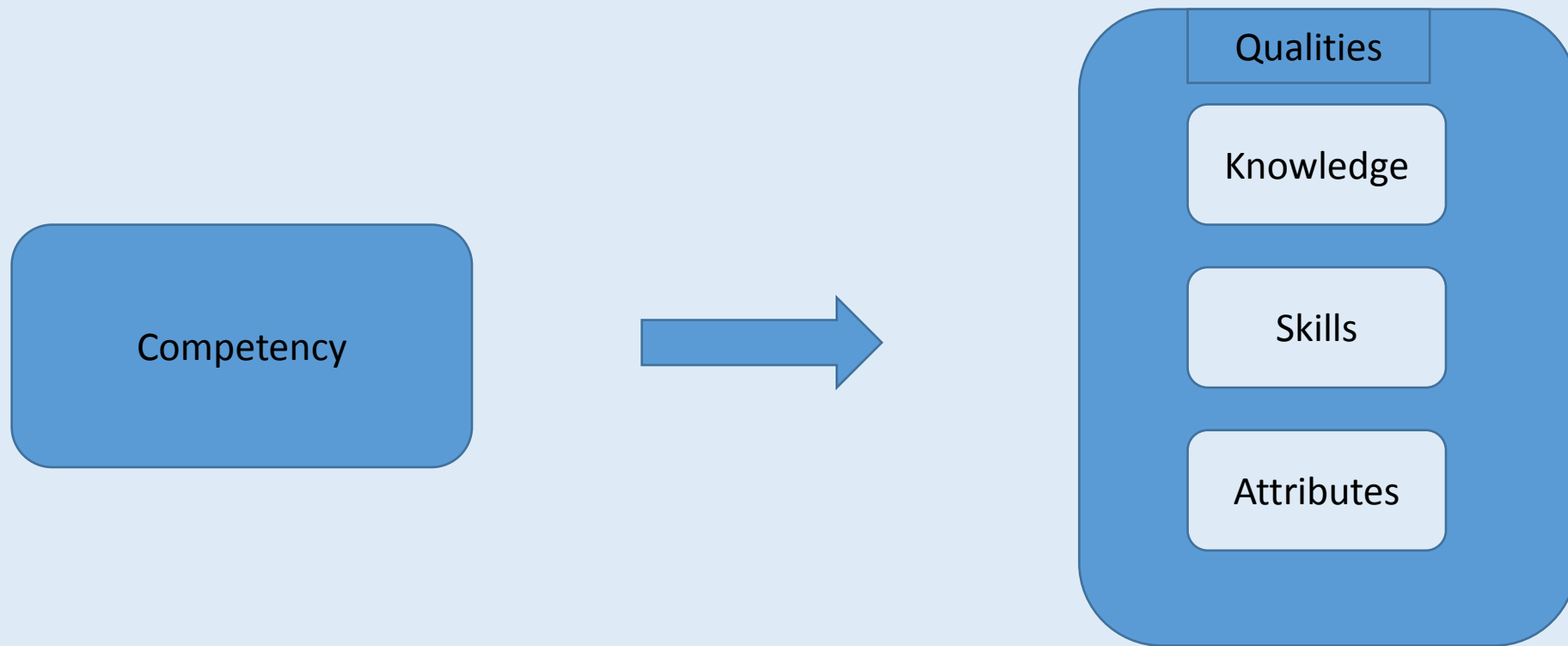
Student competencies

- ✓ Practice knowledge
- ✓ Clinical reasoning
- ✓ Facilitating change
- ✓ Professional interactions
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Professional development
- ✓ Performance management



(Bossler et al., 2008)

Student competencies



Research questions

What qualities do preceptors value?

- ❑ Do these qualities change with practice area?
- ❑ Do these qualities change with level of student placement?

Methodology

- **Design**

 - 2 focus groups

- **Recruitment**

 - occupational therapists from a rehabilitation hospital

- **Inclusion criteria**

 - experience supervising at least 3 students from the University of Alberta within the last 5 years

Participants

- N=11 (1 male and 10 females)
- First focus group consisted of younger participants with less work experience and who had supervised fewer students compared to the second focus group
- Most preceptors had supervised in the 1:1 model or shared students
- One preceptor had experience with supervising 2 students at one time during a placement

Qualities identified

- Total of 55 qualities identified between the 2 focus groups

Qualities identified

soft skills/social skills	basic OT skills/clinical skills	transfer OT findings to goals	creativity	assessment skills
integrate learning	self awareness	prioritizing	therapeutic use of self	modify self
establish boundaries	attitude	professionalism	responsible	client-centred
Accountable/follows thru	willing to make mistakes	drive	asks questions	takes and integrates feedback
humour	organizing skills	time management	takes initiation/self-directed	Build rapport
eager to learn	communication	initiates conversation	body language	presents self
eye contact	confident	self-esteem	observation skills	team player
holistic	reflection	thinks as an OT	common sense	planning
flexible	adaptable	empathy	core value of OT	sound judgement
reads the client	builds relationships	collaborative	facilitates change	safe practice
motivation	takes risks	modifies treatment	problem solving	EBP

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Placing the qualities in the CBFE

- This led to extensive discussions between the preceptors
- Most qualities were placed under multiple competencies of the CBFE
- Most qualities fit the descriptors of the CBFE
- Not all CBFE descriptors were mentioned by the preceptors

- ✓ Practice knowledge
- ✓ Clinical reasoning
- ✓ Facilitating change
- ✓ Professional interactions
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Professional development
- ✓ Performance management

Placing the qualities in the CBFE

5 qualities preceptors indicated were not adequately represented in CBFE:

- Soft skills/social skills
- Confidence
- Self esteem
- Understanding boundaries
- Attitude

Do qualities change?

- Valued qualities remain the same for the different rehabilitation programs
 - i.e. pediatric, stroke, brain injury, geriatric
- Valued qualities may be different for different practice areas
 - i.e. acute care, rehabilitation, community, private practice
- Preceptors indicated that valued qualities do not change for level of student
 - i.e. junior vs senior student

Interpersonal skills (soft skills/social skills)

- Therapeutic use of self, build rapport, initiate conversation, effective communication, body language, presenting self, eye contact, confidence, modifying behavior
- Preceptors identified interpersonal skills as the most important quality during placements
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapy identifies interpersonal skills as fundamental to the profession
 - Part of life long professional competence

Interpersonal skills

- Although preceptors acknowledge that interpersonal skills need to be evaluated during fieldwork placements they feel these were not well represented in CBFE
- Preceptors found interpersonal skills difficult to objectively measure and therefore difficult to evaluate (Duke, 2004)
- Often the reason why a students fails (Koenig, Johnson, Morano & Ducette, 2003)

Discussion

- Preceptors value a high number of student qualities (Steward, 2001)
- Preceptors found rating the qualities regarding level of importance to be a difficult task. (Steward, 2001)
 - Are all qualities equally important or do individual preceptors value different qualities?
 - If there are individual differences does our current evaluation tool account for this? Is the evaluation fair?

Discussion

- Our University of Alberta MScOT Program recognizes the importance of developing interpersonal skills in our students.
 - Student-led seminars focused on the development of therapeutic use of self in Year 1 curriculum
 - Deliberate self reflection & peer evaluation throughout the curriculum
 - Augmented the CBE (Bossers et al, 2008) by adding a *Professional Behaviour Rubric* (© Dalhousie University) to the fieldwork placement evaluation process at every level

Take home message

- Preceptors value interpersonal skills during occupational therapy fieldwork placements
- Valued student qualities do not change for placement area or for the level of student

Acknowledgement

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- Focus group participants

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