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SELTEC: Service and Experiential Learning Through Engagement in the Community: A Level I Fieldwork Model: Part 1

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SELTEC: Service and Experiential Learning Through Engagement in the Community: A Level I Fieldwork Model: Part 1

Abstract

Securing effective and quality fieldwork experiences is an area of concern in occupational therapy education. Academic Fieldwork Coordinators and occupational therapy programs are looking for new models and innovative methods of instruction to provide fieldwork experiences to students. A team of occupational therapy faculty developed and implemented an innovative Level I fieldwork model called Service and Experiential Learning Through Engagement in the Community (SELTEC). The model incorporates service and experiential learning while engaging the occupational therapy program and faculty educators in the community. The SELTEC model utilizes the student, educational system, and community to promote a service relationship to provide effective quality fieldwork education. The objective of the paper is to a) introduce the SELTEC model units and principles, and b) provide the application of the model across three practice areas. The model serves as a solution for occupational therapy programs by providing Level I fieldwork experiences within strategic clinical partnerships while utilizing faculty-led instruction to facilitate peer-to-peer, experiential, and service learning opportunities during fieldwork education.

Keywords

Level I fieldwork, experiential learning, service learning, occupational therapy education

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SELTEC: Service and Experiential Learning Through Engagement in the Community: A Level I Fieldwork Model: Part 1

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ABSTRACT

Securing effective and quality fieldwork experiences is an area of concern in occupational therapy education. Academic Fieldwork Coordinators and occupational therapy programs are looking for new models and innovative methods of instruction to provide fieldwork experiences to students. A team of occupational therapy faculty developed and implemented an innovative Level I fieldwork model called Service and Experiential Learning Through Engagement in the Community (SELTEC). The model incorporates service and experiential learning while engaging the occupational therapy program and faculty educators in the community. The SELTEC model utilizes the student, educational system, and community to promote a service relationship to provide effective quality fieldwork education. The objective of the paper is to a) introduce the SELTEC model units and principles, and b) provide the application of the model across three practice areas. The model serves as a solution for occupational therapy programs by providing Level I fieldwork experiences within strategic clinical partnerships while utilizing faculty-led instruction to facilitate peer-to-peer, experiential, and service learning opportunities during fieldwork education.

Level I fieldwork experiences are a critical part of the occupational therapy curriculum because they allow students to begin developing clinical reasoning and entry-level skills. The Level I fieldwork experience is designed to "introduce students to the fieldwork experience, apply knowledge to practice, and develop an understanding of the needs of the clients," and is completed concurrently with coursework (Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education® [ACOTE®], 2018, p. 40). The revised ACOTE standards (2018) reflect a motivation to enhance student learning during Level I fieldwork experiences by expanding the methods of instruction. Methods include simulated environments, standardized patients, faculty practice, faculty-led site visits,

and supervision by a fieldwork educator in a practice environment. The model employed by many universities is to place students individually at a variety of clinical sites. However, the expansion of the Level I methods of instruction provides occupational therapy programs the opportunity to revise and rethink the experiences. In response, the occupational therapy faculty at one university developed a Level I fieldwork model titled Service and Experiential Learning Through Engagement in the Community (SELTEC). The purpose of this paper is to describe the SELTEC model.

Challenges of Level I Fieldwork

Securing enough occupational therapy fieldwork educators is a national and international challenge (Roberts & Simon, 2012; Thomas et al., 2007). Level I fieldworks are not intended to develop independent clinical skills, so students are not required to be supervised by a licensed occupational therapist. However, many students prefer to be with fieldwork educators who are occupational therapists (Heine & Bennett, 2003). Therefore, educational programs and Academic Fieldwork Coordinators (AFWC) often look for occupational therapists to volunteer time as a fieldwork educator for Level I placements. Growing enrollment in occupational therapy schools, increased productivity demands, limited time and space, and changes and reform to the health care system are all factors that make it difficult for occupational therapy practitioners to serve as fieldwork educators (Casares et al., 2003; Fortune et al., 2006; Hanson, 2011). Fieldwork educators also face workload or time restrictions, physical space limitations, concerns about student capabilities, increased cost of staff time, and potential difficulties with clients or consumers (Evenson et al., 2015). Based on the evidence, it is clear that challenges in locating fieldwork educators will continue to be an obstacle in occupational therapy education.

Quality and consistency of Level I fieldwork may be difficult for the educational program to control. Depending on the clinical site and/or fieldwork educator, students in Level I fieldwork experiences can receive a variety of instruction, experiences, and client engagement. One study looked at student perspectives of clinical supervision and found inconsistencies including clinical assignment to one supervisor or a group of supervisors, supervision intensity and autonomy differences, and overall differences in practitioner and facility attitudes toward student learning (O'Brien et al., 2019). Students often see the professionalism and interpersonal skills of the fieldwork educator as either a facilitator or barrier to learning (Grenier, 2015). The amount of feedback and suggestions a student receives from a fieldwork educator impact academic performance and entry-level practice (Beer & Martensson, 2015). However, managing levels of instruction and feedback and the skill level of the fieldwork educator are challenging for the educational institution to control. Students may have differing fieldwork experiences despite unified instruction in the classroom.

Level I fieldwork sites may also vary in their focus on concepts and values of the educational program. For instance, a research study in Australia profiled occupational therapy fieldwork experiences over four years. The study found that students were primarily exposed to a biomechanical model of intervention, thus contradicting the ongoing work in the profession to move to occupation-based interventions (Lynette &

O'Toole, 2017). An educational program may find it challenging to find enough fieldwork sites and fieldwork educators who match their curriculum design and can meet the needs of their students.

Background

The main objective of the development of the SELTEC model was to increase the quality and consistency of Level I fieldwork sites through the use of strategic clinical partnerships. The faculty focused on decreasing the burden to fieldwork sites and educators and integrating opportunities for direct application of didactic content. Furthermore, the faculty hoped the model would promote and advocate for the value of the occupational therapy profession within an underserved community, based on the university's value of service learning. Research by Tyminski et al. (2019) discussed that educational systems have a great responsibility to prepare students for the future of occupational therapy. The skills needed for adequate preparation include knowledge of population health and advocacy skills, among many others (Tyminski et al., 2019). The education program in which faculty established the SELTEC model is located in a rural area. Therefore, the need for promoting client-centered, occupation-based intervention, and expanding the reach of occupational therapy services in emerging practice areas was a top priority. Emerging practice areas, in this context, included sites that had limited or no occupational therapy service. Therefore, the fieldwork experiences included a service-based learning approach to create "buy-in" for the community site. Service learning opportunities enhance students' knowledge by providing meaningful community service while gaining instructions from educators and participating in self-reflection (Seifer & Connors, 2007). Utilizing SELTEC allows for the promotion of occupational therapy service and advocacy for the profession in underserved or emerging practice areas.

The process of developing the model included assessing the needs of the community and the practice of occupational therapy in the region. The identified community and practice needs were then matched with the educational needs of the student. Evidence regarding Level I fieldwork experiences and feedback from students and fieldwork educators led the program to move from a traditional Level I fieldwork model to one with faculty-led experiences. In creating the new Level I fieldwork model, faculty included the use of faculty-led fieldwork experiences at one location for an entire cohort of students. Having students at one location increased the consistency and control of the fieldwork experience and required no fieldwork educators. The utilization of faculty in a clinical setting, one day per week, required examination of time, workloads, and resources to ensure adequate compensation for the instruction. The educational institution supported the model and its continued development.

Placing students in various settings, with varying populations and experiences, created a challenge to ensure consistent integration of learned material across an entire cohort of students. With the SELTEC model, the faculty hoped to provide consistent, hands-on, real-world experiences with ongoing feedback and processing. Research suggests that experiential learning increases students' knowledge through observations, interactions, and reflections (Kolb, 1984). A study by Coker (2010) found that "participation in hands-

on learning with actual clients could reinforce information learning in lecture courses and prepare students for entry-level practice” (p. 281). It was important, in the creation of the SELTEC model, to strategically utilize faculty with expertise in the setting and population of the fieldwork experience and therefore justifying faculty-led Level I fieldwork experiences as an integral part of the model. The faculty realigned the curriculum to allow population-based instruction to be paired with the same population-based experiences (i.e., pairing adult content in the classroom with the adult population in fieldwork).

The revised fieldwork experiences aimed to utilize service and experiential learning, provide consistent, quality fieldwork experiences, and promote the value of occupational therapy throughout the community. Through the articulation of the new approach to students and fieldwork educators, the need for clarification of the model and addition of model principles became apparent. As the fieldwork experiences developed and became more uniform within the program, the faculty established the SELTEC model. The purpose of the model was to provide an alternative approach to Level I fieldwork with set principles and guidelines to clearly define the fieldwork experience and enable its application throughout the occupational therapy education sector. The model principles and guidelines provide a funnel to filter Level I fieldwork experiences to allow for consistency and integrity. The SELTEC model consists of constructs, including units and principles. The units and principles provide guidelines for applying the model in Level I fieldwork experiences.

SELTEC Model Units

The SELTEC model consists of three interlocking units, including the student learner, education system, and community. Each unit provides service and receives benefits from the other two units. The relationships of service-benefit between each of the units are crucial to the continued collaboration between the units. Through the service-benefit relationship of the units, long-term established and controlled fieldwork experiences provide enhanced learning and opportunities for community involvement and service. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the units and the relationship between them.



Figure 1. SELTEC Model Units and Principle Relationships.

Student Learner

The student learner in the SELTEC model is a student enrolled in an occupational therapy or occupational therapy assistant program. The student has the responsibility of engaging in the fieldwork experience and following the expectations set in place by the educational system.

The student receives an evaluation of clinical and professional skills from both the educational system and the community partner. The student serves as the "worker" in the fieldwork model. Led by the educational system, the student learner is sent out with self-driven initiatives and tasks and reports back with information gained and learned. In the "worker" role, the student provides services to the community free of charge and outside of the confines of policy and reimbursement structures.

In the SELTEC model, the student benefits from having faculty in the educational system leading fieldwork experiences. Having a faculty member present allows for increased hands-on learning opportunities and modeled practice. The model also allows for intentional carry-over of learned didactic information into real settings and situations.

The community provides consistent exposure to clients, diagnoses, service delivery models, and interprofessional practice. Furthermore, the community provides environments where students are able to develop soft-skills and professional attributes and decision-making with appropriate supervision. Students practice advocating for the profession of occupational therapy in new and emerging practice areas.

Educational System

The educational system is composed of the college or university, occupational therapy program, and the faculty comprising the occupational therapy program. The educational system is responsible for supporting faculty-led fieldwork experiences. The support includes the identification of strategic partnerships, scheduling of students and faculty, and ensuring the quality of fieldwork experiences.

The educational system provides the student learner with a faculty-led fieldwork experience. The system includes the alignment of didactic content with matching fieldwork experiences, adjusting faculty workloads and release time, scheduling multiple students for fieldwork around course assignments, and providing quality fieldwork instruction. Faculty from the program and department supervise student skills and interactions through the community partnership. Through interaction with clients, faculty incorporate live cases into didactic coursework. In doing so, the need to develop case studies is alleviated, and problem-based active-learning processes are enriched.

The educational system forms strategic partnerships and works with the community to develop service learning. The faculty are involved in providing oversight to the students during the fieldwork experiences while providing services to the community. The students may provide free clinical services to the clients of the community partnership. In addition to the clinical services, faculty assign students a service learning project each term. All three units agree upon the project, and the project must provide a benefit to the community partner.

As the student engages in active learning at the community site, the faculty provide real-time feedback and responses to student skills and professional behaviors. The real-world scenarios and client interactions provide the educational system with enriched learning opportunities as the student engages in the fieldwork experience. The student uses clinical reasoning and processing, paired with a reflection of experiences. Students contribute relevant information in class discussions and apply, analyze, and synthesize didactic material more frequently. The community provides the educational system with real-world application of materials. Being engaged in community practice settings allows the teaching faculty to remain current on relevant clinical skills, policies, reimbursement structures, and settings. The community provides networking opportunities for the educational system to promote and market the program and department.

Community

The community is a strategic partnership in settings related to the educational content of the program. The community includes the physical location of the site, the interprofessional healthcare team and staff, the clinical site coordinator, and the client

population. The community unit is a) responsible for preparing the site for student and faculty involvement, b) providing training and orientation to students and faculty, c) selecting a site supervisor for student fieldwork experiences, and d) providing feedback to the educational system relative to the fieldwork experiences. The community provides services to the other two units of the model, as described below.

The community provides the student with a) enriched learning opportunities to practice and apply didactic content, b) space for student learning in a clinical practice setting, and c) opportunities for interprofessional communication and interactions with members of the healthcare team. Strategic partnerships allow students to practice clinical skills with close supervision, thus preparing students for independent fieldwork experiences throughout the curriculum. The community provides the educational system with fieldwork experiences that accommodate partial or full cohorts of students and eliminate the need for multiple fieldwork sites.

SELTEC Model Principles

The SELTEC model contains five principles by which all SELTEC fieldwork experiences adhere. The principles serve two functions. First, the principles act as the walls of a funnel, filtering the fieldwork experience to include all essential qualities of the SELTEC model. When included in their entirety, the principles unify and clarify the fieldwork experiences for the units and the profession. Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the first function of the principles in the SELTEC fieldwork experience. Secondly, the principles serve as a continual monitor throughout the fieldwork experience to ensure the quality and consistency of the fieldwork experience across all SELTEC experiences. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the model units continuously turning through the model principles. The turning represents the strategic monitoring of the quality and consistency of the SELTEC model principles throughout the experience. The principles, paired with the model units, lay a foundation of expectation for the fieldwork experience while simultaneously acting as a checks-and-balances for the implementation of the fieldwork experience.

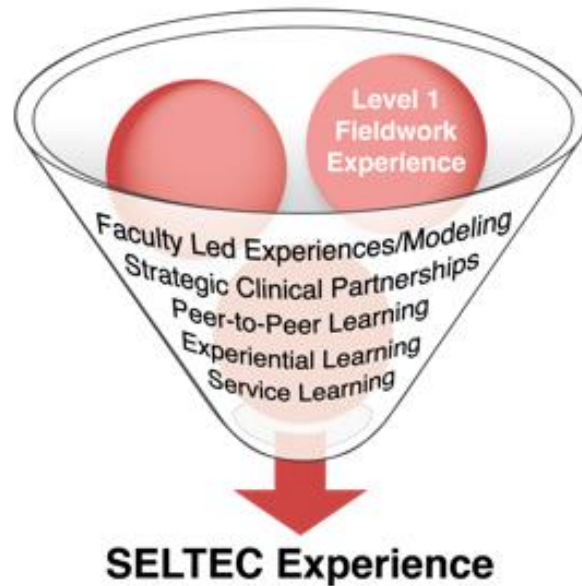


Figure 2. Creating a SELTEC Model fieldwork experience.

Strategic Clinical Partnerships in the Community

Strategic clinical partnerships provide clinical experiential and service learning experiences relative to didactic content. The partnerships provide a physical location where partial or full cohorts of students engage with specific populations of clients. The strategic partnership may or may not have occupational therapists employed, may have limited access to occupational therapy services, or may be considered an emerging practice area. The strategic clinical partnership bridges the gap between the educational system and clinical practice. Research demonstrates that support of the educational program in clinical placements is integral to student learning and provides the student learner with more consistent expectations (O'Brien et al., 2019). The strategic clinical partnership is preferred to be a site where students can advocate for the distinct value of occupational therapy. The advocacy component follows the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) Code of Ethics and Core Values, emphasizing the need to advocate for increased accessibility to health while decreasing health disparities (AOTA, 1993, 2015). Table 1 lists the principles that outline the role and responsibilities of the strategic clinical partnership.

Table 1

Strategic Clinical Partnership Principles

| | |
|---|--|
| Strategic Clinical Partnership Principles | The client population served by the strategic partner complements the didactic content in the occupational therapy program. |
| | The strategic partner provides a thorough orientation and training to students and faculty about the site, population, policies, and procedures. |
| | The strategic partner provides a physical setting and population, accommodating student learning in large groups or entire cohorts of students. |
| | The strategic partner provides a student site supervisor to collaborate with the educational system and act as a direct supervisor in the faculty member's absence. The student site supervisor must be a licensed professional. |
| | The strategic partner collaborates with the educational system to determine service needs, develop the organizational structure of student learning, and analyze the results and quality of student services provided. |

Faculty-Led Experiences and Modeling

The SELTEC model's essential component is the use of faculty-led instruction and supervision. The faculty member with teaching-related didactic content or with expertise in the population attends the fieldwork experience with the students for the entirety of the experience. Having the faculty present allows for intentional carry-over between didactic content and clinical application. It provides the students and faculty real-life case studies, adding a component of fluidity that can be difficult to teach in a classroom setting. Faculty involvement in the fieldwork experiences allows faculty to remain immersed in practice. Specifically, emerging practice settings, where advocacy and best practice can be implemented.

The intentional application of didactic content and implementation of skills during the SELTEC experience ultimately prepares students for Level II fieldwork experiences. A study by Johnson and colleagues (2006) stated, "This limited opportunity to practice clinical skills may explain why students may be perceived as unprepared in Level II fieldwork settings where they are often expected to "hit the ground running" (p. 284). The SELTEC model intends to increase student performance through the consistent supervision and application provided by the faculty member.

Immersing faculty in a practice setting allows them to stay current on trends, reimbursement, and policy relative to clinical practice. The faculty model and demonstrate clinical and professional skills and cultivate interprofessional interactions within the community. Research suggests that in faculty-led experiences, "Faculty members valued the opportunity to model professional behavior, skills, and clinical reasoning to their students" (Rydeen et al., 1995, p. 117). Principles of the SELTEC model pertaining to faculty-led experience and modeling are divided into three subgroups, direct didactic application and feedback, sustaining clinical competency, and modeling the advancement of care. Table 2 outlines the principles in each of the three subgroups.

Table 2

Faculty-Led Experiences and Modeling

| | |
|--|---|
| Direct Didactic Application and Feedback | The educational system facilitates experiential and service learning opportunities providing direct application, analysis, and synthesis of didactic content and coursework. |
| | Faculty members provide on-site, face-to-face, direct supervision of students throughout the fieldwork experience and ensure skills provided by student learners are safe, ethical, and within competency levels of the students. |
| | Faculty members provide debrief sessions at the end of each fieldwork experience and throughout the overall experience to enhance clinical reasoning and problem-solving skills. |
| | Faculty members provide timely feedback to student learners regarding skill competency, the therapeutic use of self, and professional behaviors to enhance student learning and application. |
| | Faculty members encourage the utilization of and assist with the obtainment of resources and research related to the fieldwork experience to enhance student learning and application. |
| Sustaining Clinical Competency | Faculty demonstrate client-centered, occupation-based activities to student learners consistent with the guidelines and evidence of the profession to sustain competency of clinical practice. |
| | Faculty continually renew their understanding of setting policies, procedures, and reimbursement structures, to sustain competency of clinical practice. |
| | Faculty model professional behaviors and interactions, promote interprofessional practice, and positively engage with employees and staff within the fieldwork setting to sustain competency of clinical practice. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Modeling the Advancement of Care | The educational system and student learner ensure services provided to strategic community partners model best-practice and are evidence-based. |
| | The educational system and student learner provide the strategic partner with educational materials related to the role and scope of occupational therapy and strive to increase understanding of the profession. |
| | The educational system works with the student learner and community partner to identify areas of quality improvement and develop strategies for addressing gaps in care. |
| | The educational system and student learner identify ways to advocate for the occupational therapy profession, client, and setting within the fieldwork experience. |

Peer-to-Peer Learning

The SELTEC model allows for peer-to-peer learning by establishing small groups of students who partner together throughout the entire fieldwork experience. Peer-to-peer learning is the “acquisition of knowledge and skill through active helping and supporting among status equals and matched companions” (Topping, 2005, p. 631). Peer feedback and collaboration provide enhanced learning opportunities. Peers collaborate on related assignments, client assessment, intervention, outcomes, and service learning projects. For peer interactions to be successful, the model applies the principles outlined in Table 3.

Table 3

Peer-to-Peer Learning Principles

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Peer-to-Peer Learning Principles | Student learners provide feedback to peers in a constructive manner and seek out the assistance of the educational system when needed to promote peer-to-peer learning. |
| | Student learners actively collaborate with peers during experiential and service learning opportunities to develop professional behaviors and intraprofessional skills to promote peer-to-peer learning. |
| | Student learners actively collaborate with peers during experiential and service learning opportunities to experience group dynamics, including receiving and sharing information and ideas to promote peer-to-peer learning. |

Experiential Learning

The SELTEC model promotes experiential learning from the principles of experiential learning theory. According to the theory, experiential learning is the process in which acquiring knowledge occurs through the revolution of experiences (Kolb, 1984). Early learning theory promotes knowledge obtainment through the process of gathering and changing experiences (Kolb et al., 2001). Kolb and colleagues (2001) described how students comprehend information through concrete experiences or abstract conceptualization. Students then transform the information through reflective observation and active experimentation. Research also encourages the use of experiential learning to increase clinical reasoning and critical thinking skills (Coker, 2010). The SELTEC model utilizes the modes of grasping and transforming of information to influence student learning in the fieldwork experience. Table 4 addresses the SELTEC principles related to experiential learning.

Table 4

Experiential Learning Principles

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Experiential Learning Principles | To effectively engage in experiential learning experiences, student learners must understand, analyze, and reflect on personal and professional factors influencing the ability to perform in a clinical setting. |
| | To effectively engage in experiential learning experiences, student learners must have skills and professional competencies matching or exceeding the demands of the experience. |
| | The educational system provides opportunities for student learners to obtain information through concrete experiences and abstract conceptualization of experiences. |
| | Community partners and the education system facilitate and promote experiential learning opportunities for student learning and engagement. |
| | The educational system provides the ability to retain and transform experiences through reflective observation and active experimentation. |

Service Learning

The SELTEC model promotes and establishes service learning projects for each strategic clinical partnership for each rotation as agreed upon by the educational system and strategic community partner. Service learning is a structured learning experience. During the experience, students participate in community service while completing learning objectives and reflections. During the community service experience, students learn about the context of the service, build a connection between the work and their academics, and enhance understanding of their role as a citizen (Seifer, 1998). Service learning projects emphasize benefits to the site and the promotion of the occupational therapy profession. Service learning provides a benefit to the strategic community

partner while allowing the student and educational system to engage in learning. Table 5 describes the principles related to service learning in the SELTEC.

Table 5

Service Learning Principles

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Service Learning Principles | Strategic community partners and the educational system collaborate to identify service learning opportunities and develop strategies for implementation to provide service-based learning opportunities. |
| | The educational system provides the student learners with tangible, service learning projects to be completed within the time frame of the overall fieldwork experience. |
| | The educational system ensures the service learning projects apply to didactic content, professional role and scope, and the setting and population through which the fieldwork experience exists. |
| | By engaging in service learning, the student will gain and apply principles of civic duty and responsibility to the occupational therapy profession. |
| | By engaging in service learning, the student and educational system will strengthen the local community. |

Application of the SELTEC Model

The faculty developed the SELTEC model to meet the needs of occupational therapy Level I fieldwork experiences. ACOTE dictates the minimum standards for Level I fieldwork education as part of the educational curriculum in occupational therapy programs. The occupational therapy curriculum design for the educational program focuses on three main practice areas: pediatric, adult, and psychosocial. The educational system uses the SELTEC model during Level I fieldwork rotations for each practice area. The units of the model work to develop strategic clinical partnerships in settings corresponding to the practice course, and in doing so, allows for information to be processed and applied in a relative clinical setting and identified population.

Students attend fieldwork at the community partner site for three hours, one day per week, for an entire semester. The faculty instructor of the practice course is on-site for the duration of the fieldwork experience. During the fieldwork, the faculty member provides hands-on demonstration and facilitation of student learning and modeling of clinical skills and professional behaviors. In addition, the faculty provide feedback to the students on professional behavior and clinical skills and assist with the application of didactic content from related coursework. The strategic clinical partner and the educational system establish areas of service learning before the start of the fieldwork experience, allowing the partnered site to receive a service from the students that may not otherwise be obtainable. The student learners benefit from the service provided by gaining knowledge of the population, service delivery, role and scope of the

occupational therapy profession, and areas of therapeutic impact. Each week, the faculty brings students together as a cohort to reflect and discuss all aspects of the fieldwork experience. Table 6 describes the SELTEC model application in each practice area.

Table 6

SELTEC Application by Practice Area

| Principle Topic | Pediatrics | Aging Adults | Psychosocial |
|---|--|--|---|
| Strategic Clinical Partner in the Community | Pediatric Day-Treatment Facility | Assisted Living Facility | Adult Residential Treatment Facility |
| Occupational Therapy Presence | Occupational therapists are employed but pull children out of the classroom setting for 1:1 intervention. Students are assigned to classrooms and are focused on “push-in” intervention. | The assisted living facility does not have occupational therapists employed or contracted, considered an emerging practice area. | One occupational therapist is employed part-time, providing 1:1 intervention with residents. Students are assigned to a home of 10-12 residents and assist throughout the daily routine of the residents. |
| Faculty Involvement and Course Link | Pediatric Practice Course instructor is on-site faculty assigned to fieldwork experience | The aging Adult Practice course instructor is an on-site faculty assigned to fieldwork experience | The psychosocial Practice course instructor is an on-site faculty assigned to fieldwork experience |
| Peer-to-Peer Learning | Each classroom is assigned three students. The group of three students is assigned 3-4 child clients to implement the OT process throughout the fieldwork experience. | The faculty assign one resident to a student who works collaboratively within the small student group on the implementation of the OT process with the resident throughout the fieldwork experience. | One home of 10-12 residents is assigned three students who work collaboratively on the implementation of the OT process with the residents throughout the fieldwork experience. |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Experiential Learning | Students are exposed to live client demonstrations and have interactions with the therapy team including occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, nursing, education specialists and techs, administration, and psychology | Students are exposed to live clients and demonstrations and have interactions with the healthcare team, including activities coordinator, nursing, techs, administration, and janitorial staff. | Students are exposed to live clients and demonstrations and have interactions with the healthcare team, including occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, nursing, physicians, paraprofessional aides and techs, house staff, administration, education specialists and techs, and janitorial staff. |
| Service Learning | Students provide the facility with additional support in the classroom and assist with classroom management. Quality initiative projects are developed and presented to the CEO and administration team at the end of the fieldwork experience. | Students provide the facility with free occupational therapy services for the residents, group activities, and assist in the organization and operation of a "Senior Olympics" community event. | Students provide the facility with additional support in the homes and classrooms of the residents. Students may provide adaptive equipment and are involved in projects, including the development of "Rainy-Day" activity carts, a sensory room, and a sensory swing structure. |
| <i>Notes: SELTEC model application</i> | | | |

Challenges of the SELTEC Model

As with any model, there are challenges to the implementation and sustained cohesion of the model. Challenges exist to all three units of the model. The student learners often come in with knowledge of fieldwork programming. They have expectations to be paired with a practicing occupational therapy practitioner where they can observe and imitate clinical skills. Student learners are challenged to change their perspective on learning with the SELTEC model. Students learn to understand that knowledge occurs through

the application of the didactic coursework and faculty-led supervision and instruction. However, as previously mentioned, the gains made from the application that occurs can far outweigh the challenges.

The main challenge in utilizing the SELTEC model is the ongoing faculty involvement from the educational system. Having a faculty member on-site during the fieldwork experiences limits the amount of time available for other academic responsibilities. Furthermore, the faculty spend three hours with each group of eight to ten students. Another challenge is the student-faculty ratio for supervision and adequate assessment of student performance. The educational system must collaborate with the strategic partner to establish on-site supervision in conjunction with faculty supervision. The additional on-site supervisors can assist in assessing student performance and allow the faculty to focus on clinical training and skill assessment. Overall, strategic planning by the educational system is needed to support the model, especially concerning scheduling and workloads.

Challenges to the community partners also exist. The consistency of having student learners in the facility can be a challenge. Due to breaks in the academic schedule, there are gaps in care when the student learners are absent that must be planned for. Another challenge to the community is the education and understanding of the SELTEC model. A third challenge is educating on occupational therapy concepts and skills to all staff and employees of the community model. Due to turn-over rates, it is difficult to maintain a consistent understanding of the fieldwork experience by all staff. However, despite the challenges, the fieldwork model provides the student learner with faculty-led experiences fostering the enriched application of didactic knowledge that may not otherwise be obtainable.

Implications for Occupational Therapy Education

The SELTEC model provides benefits to the student learner, the educational system, and the community. The model utilizes the principles of creating strategic clinical partnerships, providing faculty-led fieldwork experiences, and facilitating peer-to-peer learning, experiential learning, and service learning opportunities. The principles serve to enhance fieldwork education and clearly define a SELTEC experience. Incorporating the SELTEC model into Level I fieldwork experiences allows the educational system to increase the application of knowledge in student learners while terminating the need for multiple Level I placements. In addition, the model provides faculty with continued clinical practice and allows the educational system to create and sustain strategic partnerships within the community.

The faculty have begun conducting research to determine how students and stakeholders perceive the model. Additional research is being conducted to determine how the model aligns with the ACOTE standards related to Level I fieldwork. Additional studies may also focus on the supervisory approaches and challenges of the SELTEC model. The SELTEC model's continued development relies heavily on the accepted implementation of the model by other educational programs. By channeling the creativity of occupational therapy educators, the occupational therapy profession can

lead out in providing effective and innovative fieldwork experiences for student learners and ultimately impact the profession in its entirety.

Conclusion

Occupational therapy programs are facing a multitude of challenges in an ever-changing educational and healthcare environment. The challenges and changes require the development of innovative strategies. The strategies must meet the demand for both high-quantity and high-quality fieldwork experiences for student learners. The SELTEC model provides a solution adaptable to the individuality of occupational therapy curriculum among various levels and contexts. The SELTEC model utilizes the service-benefit relationship of the model units to strengthen partnerships and enhance the fieldwork experience. In addition, the SELTEC principles serve as a funnel and monitoring system by which unique experiences in various occupational therapy programs can be filtered to produce a SELTEC experience. Production and communication of SELTEC fieldwork experiences can provide a foundation of clear expectations and roles to the SELTEC units and the occupational therapy profession as a whole.

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