Implementing a Clinical Practicum Experience: Impact on Occupational Therapy Student Development

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Objectives

1. Describe the clinical practicum experience,
2. Identify how this experience reinforces classroom learning objectives
3. Summarize the benefits of this experience on students and program outcomes.
PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Clinical Practicum is to provide enhanced classroom learning through clinical experiences within the Occupational Therapy Department at Rush University Medical Center.
Practicum Overview

• Occurs 1st three semesters
• 4 weeks – 3 hours/week
• Assigned a faculty liaison
• Focus:
  – Semester 1: Introduction
  – Semester 2: Skill Building
  – Semester 3: Application of Knowledge
• Associated with course in curriculum
• Practicum assignments address course content and clinical/professional development
• Sample assignments:
  – Occupational profile
  – IRM observation
  – Activity analysis
## Student Perceptions

### Benefits
- Gradual integration into more challenging clinical situations
- Increased confidence in working/interacting with clients
- Increased confidence in fieldwork
- Opportunity to see application of what we learn in class

### Limitations
- Too short!
- Varying expectations between clinical instructors
- Difficult to get to know clinician in just 3 hours a week
- Limited knowledge in first quarter prevented me from asking quality, in-depth questions
Clinician Perceptions

**Benefits**
- Giving back to the profession
- Thinking more deeply about what I am doing and how to describe it
- Reinforcement of my own knowledge and skills
- Building confidence in students

**Limitations**
- Productivity
- Working with students pushes me to think more deeply about what I am doing and how to describe it to others. This can be demanding and create anxiety that I am not delivering what I want to deliver
Conclusions

• Practicum experiences offer additional learning opportunities
  – Outside of didactic coursework
  – Direct application of learning

• Impact student satisfaction

• Impact clinician satisfaction
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