

Models of Fieldwork

1 Student : 2 Educators

Description:

A fieldwork model that involves one student assigned to two fieldwork educators during the same fieldwork placement.



How it Works:

In this model, the student divides his/her time between two fieldwork educators who work in either the same or different areas of practice. The student may be simultaneously assigned to two fieldwork educators for the entire fieldwork placement. Alternatively, the student may spend half the placement with one fieldwork educator and then be transferred to another fieldwork educator for the second half. The essential factor for success of this model is good communication between the two fieldwork educators, between the fieldwork educators and the student, and the consistency of performance expectations.

Strategies for Success:

The **role of the fieldwork educator** is to see her/himself as a partner in the supervision of the student, and to work collaboratively with the other fieldwork educator to provide a good learning experience for the student. Strategies for doing this are as follows:

- Meet with the partnering fieldwork educator prior to the beginning of the placement to develop a joint organized supervision plan. Try to arrange the switch between therapists to occur at the end of the day or week versus in the middle of the day for the student.
- Agree on and maintain similar expectations of the student's performance throughout the placement. It is particularly important to be consistent regarding the student's responsibility for clients and in establishing guidelines for documentation.
- Orient the student to both areas of practice (if different) at the beginning of the placement and provide structure for the placement. This includes setting up supervision schedules for joint supervision meetings (both therapists present), individual supervision meetings (one therapist present), clarifying expectations, and providing guidelines to the student for setting priorities (e.g. caseload, time management, etc.)
- Develop a Learning Contract together with the student and with the partnering fieldwork educator. Agree on which specific objectives are a shared responsibility between the two therapists and the student, and which objectives are worked on by the student in collaboration with only one of the therapists.
- Discuss and agree on procedures for the midterm and final evaluations with the student and collaborating fieldwork educator at the beginning of the placement. It may be helpful to keep a log to monitor the student's progress and any other issues.
- Meet with the partnering fieldwork educator throughout the placement, even if the placement is split in half, to discuss any issues such as signs that the placement is creating unexpected stresses for the student.
- It is important that each fieldwork educator be aware of workload demands being made upon the student by the partnering educator to ensure the student does not become overloaded.
- Share the task of evaluation. It may be beneficial for each therapist to write a draft of the evaluation prior to meeting to ensure similar expectations for student performance, review and discuss his/her observations; come to a consensus regarding grading and comments; and organize the process for providing feedback to the student.
- Attend both midterm and final evaluations along with the partnering fieldwork educator so feedback can be provided to the student directly.
- If the student is being transferred from one fieldwork educator to the other halfway into the placement, then it is crucial that the second fieldwork educator be present during the midterm

evaluation in order to hear the student's progress to that point and be involved in setting the objectives for the second half of the placement.

The **role of the student** in this model is to be an active participant by accepting responsibility for self-directed learning and assisting in coordinating the structure of the placement. Strategies for doing this are as follows:

- Recognize the strengths and differences of each therapist's approach to clients.
- Communicate to the fieldwork educators any needs or concerns relating to differences in style, personality, or pace that are causing undue stress.
- Be aware that switching back and forth between two different fieldwork educators provides a different experience than a placement where there is only one fieldwork educator.
- Negotiate with the fieldwork educators issues concerning projects and expectations for down time.
- Seek feedback from both fieldwork educators regarding performance.
- Be flexible.

The **role of the University** includes: educating students and fieldwork educators about this model to ensure that all have the same information and that roles/expectations are clear. If necessary, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator would meet with the student before the placement and discuss the implications of this model upon his/her learning experience. The University will also be available to provide ongoing guidance and advice to the student and fieldwork educators during the placement.

Advantages to this model include:

- Students are provided with broader fieldwork experiences, access to placements in specialty areas, and exposure to a greater variety of different styles of fieldwork educators
- Provides opportunity for part-time therapists to be involved in fieldwork education.
- Provides students with the opportunity to develop time management and organizational skills.
- Fieldwork educators benefit from the discussion and collaboration that occurs while participating in this shared experience.
- As students spend only half their time with one therapist, this may put fewer demands on the therapist's time and workload than the traditional 1:1 type of placement.

References (Note: Suggested readings are marked by an *)

*Gaipman, B. & Forma, L. (1991). The split placement model for fieldwork placements. The Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 58(2), 85-88.

O'Connor, L. & Collier, G.F. (2000). Emerging Fieldwork Models. In S.C. Merrill & P.A. Crist (Eds.), Meeting the Fieldwork Challenge (Self-Paced Clinical Course), (Lesson 9), The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.

Jung, B., Martin, A., Graden, L. & Awrey, J. (1994). Fieldwork Education: A shared supervision model. The Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 61(1), 12-19.

*Steele-Smith, S. & Armstrong, M. (2001). 'I would take more students but . . .': Student Supervision Strategies. British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 64(1)549-551.

Please contact the Outreach Developer for your region, _____, or the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator at (204) 789-3992 if you would like more information about this model or the fieldwork program.

