



Increasing Clinical Reasoning Skills in Occupational Therapy Students



Presented by:

Pamela Lewis-Kipkulei, Ph.D., OTD, OTR/L



Background

- **Successful completion of the fieldwork experience and proficiency in entry level practice requires students to make safe, ethical, and client centered clinical decisions regarding client evaluation and treatment.**



Background

The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) sets standards for the Doctoral-degree level and the Associate-degree level educational programs represented at our university.

- **Standard B.4.2--*Clinical Reasoning***

- Students must demonstrate clinical reasoning to evaluate, analyze, diagnose, and provide occupation-based interventions to address client factors, performance patterns, and performance skills

- **Standard C.1.0--*Fieldwork Education***

- The fieldwork experience is designed to promote clinical reasoning and reflective practice, transmit the values and beliefs that enable ethical practice, and develop professionalism and competence in career responsibilities.

Background

- **Clinical reasoning is a curriculum thread within the OT program and is imbedded in all courses, especially the practice courses.**
- **Despite preparation through course work and fieldwork, students continue to struggle with clinical reasoning and clinical decision-making as evidenced by scores on the Occupational Therapy Knowledge Exam (OTKE), and the Fieldwork Performance Evaluation (FWPE).**
- **Students also struggle to pass the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) certification examination on the first try due to deficits in their clinical reasoning skills.**
- **By investigating why these deficits exist and then implementing programming to develop and hone these skills, our students will be better able to pass the NBCOT certification examination and be better prepared for clinical practice.**

Purpose

The purpose of the assessment investigation is to determine whether using student scores on the Health Science Reasoning Test (HSRT) and the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) to develop and implement a monthly professional reasoning seminar can impact clinical decision making in OT and OTA students.



Procedures

1. **Administration of the Health Science Reasoning Test (HSRT) and California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) upon admission to the program**
2. **Based on the scores of these assessments, a mandatory monthly 4-hour seminar will be created to develop and hone student clinical reasoning skills through use of case studies (paper, video, and simulation).**
3. **After completion of Level II fieldwork and the OTKE, scores on the FWPE and the OTKE will be analyzed for continued deficits in clinical reasoning skills.**
4. **Students will be given a printout of the strengths and weaknesses of the group with suggested study areas for the NBCOT certification exam.**
5. **Scores for the NBCOT certification exam will be analyzed to determine the success of the program (first time pass and improvement overall in the areas identified as deficits prior to the NBCOT certification exam).**

Outcomes

Expected outcomes:

- Improved clinical reasoning and clinical decision-making skills
- Improved student performance on the FWPE, OTKE, and NBCOT certification examination
- Entry-level clinicians who are prepared to make clinical decisions that benefit their clients

