

THE SUPERVISION PROCESS AND THE FACILITATION OF STUDENT LEARNING DURING PRACTICE PLACEMENTS.

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The Supervisory Process and the Facilitation of Student Learning during Practice Placements.

Introduction

All occupational therapy students undertake practice placements within a range of practice settings to gain experience of working with clients under the supervision of a qualified practitioner. During these placements, students participate in formal supervision sessions with their practice educators. The College of Occupational Therapists (1997) defines supervision as "a relationship concerning accountability and responsibility for work carried out", and a way of ensuring that supervisees "are assisted in their own professional and personal development".

Objectives

To provide an analysis of the supervisory process between practice educators and students during practice placements.

To determine which supervision strategies practice educators use to encourage students to reflect upon their practice.

Methods

A case study approach was used to enable the researcher to gain a unique and valuable insight into the real-life supervisory relationships between occupational therapy students and their practice educators, involving a number of methods of data collection; focus groups; questionnaires; and observations and audio recordings of supervision sessions between students and their practice educators.

Results

The findings demonstrated that many positive experiences had been encountered in relation to the supervisory process and the facilitation of student learning during practice education. Practice educators used various techniques such as; socratic questioning; sharing accounts of their own reflections of past experiences; and giving constructive feedback. However, the findings also revealed areas for future improvement.

Conclusion

Although each practice educator had their own style of supervision they were all endeavouring to assist their student with their professional and personal development with varying degrees of effectiveness.

Contribution to the practice/evidence base of occupational therapy

Examples of good practice were demonstrated in relation to the effective supervision of students on placement, however the preparation of students and practice educators could be further enhanced and strengthened to ensure that both parties fully appreciate the purpose and benefits of effective supervision and their roles within that process.

References

College of Occupational Therapists (1997) Statement on Supervision in Occupational Therapy. London: COT.