

Fieldwork of OT students since first year: a report
Cristina Yoshie Toyoda , Léa Beatriz Teixeira Soares, Débora Couto Carrijo - Federal University of S. Carlos - S.Paulo - Brazil

Cristina Yoshie Toyoda, Léa Beatriz T. Soares, Débora Couto Carrijo
Federal University of S. Carlos, S. Carlos - S. Paulo, Brazil

One of the biggest difficulties of OT students, when they get to senior years is to link their previous theoretical/practical knowledge acquired during the early years of the course, with new demands, when they start the therapeutic intervention with their clients. The most familiar manifestation are when the students express: "I don't know anything !" or " I could not learning a thing" that reveal fear, insecurity and resistance to face the reality of academic life.

With the objective to reduce the problems pointed above, the curriculum of Federal University of S. Carlos Occupational Therapy course was changed, by introducing an academic discipline that offer a "practical subject" to student since the first year. The present report is based on experience of three OT professors that followed the 30 students during 2008. Each professor took ten students and gave them theoretical and practical support once a week, during three hours and followed them at family health unity located in the outskirts of the city. The academic discipline had three stages: a short period of observed therapeutic practice at University clinic, where the students observed a child, an adult and an elder people. The second stage was started when the student went to Family Health Unit and collected data about users and their health problems, as well as, where the schools, nursery school, leisure areas were located. Finally, at the third stage, the students went to Family Health Unit and were divided in 5 dyads that visited from two to four families chosen by community agent due their educational, health or social needs. Each professor followed the group the students. Home visit gave them a idea about problems from public health and life style (hygienic habits) to learning disability, refuse or resistance of family to accept the student visit. These problems were considered a "diary fight" by community agents and professionals from Family Health Unit. The visits were essential to personal and professional growing of students by offering them early development of competence and skills, without theory and practice dissociation.