

A Practical Guide to Applying Occupation-Centred Principles in Practice: Supporting Occupational Therapy Students and Educators

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Introduction: The Royal College of Occupational Therapists in the UK recognises occupation-centred practice as fundamental to the profession (RCOT, 2015). Translation of these concepts into practice is not straightforward. Placement (fieldwork) learning promotes the development of reasoning and can support occupational therapy students and educators navigate the opportunities of placement learning to bridge the theory-practice gap.

Objectives: The development and evaluation of a resource designed to provide clear structure, templates and strategies to enhance learning of contemporary occupation-centred practice during placement, in line with RCOT guidance will be presented.

Method: A three-year action research study using a social constructionist perspective informed this practice learning resource. This ethically approved study explored the learning experiences of students and educators endeavouring to embed occupation-centred practice in a range of innovative and role-emerging placement settings. International contributions from educators in Canada, Australia and Europe lead to the refinement of the final resource.

Practice implications: The resource uses educational theory to inform its guidance and examples for enabling students to integrate theory with practice. It also offers direction for educators who may or may not have a background in education.

Conclusion: The resource provides a way to scaffold and support students' placement learning, which emphasises the application of contemporary occupation-centred theory to practice. Applying educational theory to its development enabled the identification of key features which supported students' learning and critical points requiring educator facilitation.