

## **Occupational therapy students' experiences and perceptions of culture during fieldwork education**

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**Background:** Understanding a clients' culture allows practitioners to consider the planning of intervention and allows for a client centred approach to be provided. Occupational therapy students can face the challenge of other cultural practices, standards, morals and ways of life coming into conflict with their own culture.

**Purpose:** There is minimal literature discussing the challenges and supporting factors that assist students in becoming culturally competent across cross-cultural settings. As such this article will focus on occupational therapy student's experiences and perceptions of culture during their fieldwork practice.

**Methods:** This phenomenological study was conducted with undergraduate occupational therapy students from a university in Cape Town, South Africa. This study explored the students' experiences of culture, and their perceptions of the barriers and enablers that culture presents during fieldwork practice.

**Findings:** The two main themes that emerged from the analysis, were: 1) Culture is easily defined but not easily described, and 2) Is there no 'me' in OT?

**Implications:** The findings of this study questioned whether cultural competence is static but determined that exposure to, positive attitudes towards and self-reflection on culturally diverse experiences are the factors that contribute towards developing cultural competence in culturally diverse situations.