Recently Graduated Occupational Therapists' Perspectives on the Influence of

Role-Emerging Fieldwork on Practice

By

Margaret Anne Campbell-Rempel

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Rehabilitation Sciences

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore, from the perspective of recent graduates, reasons for undertaking role-emerging fieldwork, the role-emerging fieldwork experience and the impact of role-emerging fieldwork on practice. Using interpretive description seven practicing therapists who had completed role-emerging fieldwork participated in semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis led to the development of three themes "Right for me", "Different learning: learned differently", and "Shaping my OT lens". Participants chose role-emerging because of interest, opportunities role-emerging afforded and program requirements. Role-emerging versus non-role-emerging fieldwork were described as very different experiences. Participants recounted increased performance expectations, increased independence, and development of unique skills within the role-emerging environment. Participants believed role-emerging fieldwork supported their transition to practice, helped shape where they sought employment and continued to impact their future employment plans. Implications are discussed for the profession of occupational therapy and the occupational therapy program that was the focus of this research.

Dedication

I dedicate the completion of this thesis to my family.

To my parents Audrey and Colin who believed I could accomplish whatever I set out to do, and supported me in the process.

To my husband Peter and daughters Mackenzie and Melinda who accompanied and supported me on this journey.

To my granddaughter Isabella who I hope will have the opportunity to embark on her own journey of exploration and follow her interests in life.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

Health care education programs are a mixture of academic and fieldwork learning opportunities. The fieldwork component of an occupational therapy (OT) curriculum provides students' opportunities to apply knowledge, skills and theories learned in academic courses within a practice setting. These fieldwork opportunities support the development of clinical reasoning (Overton, Clark, & Thomas, 2009). Students are exposed to the realities of practice and are socialized into the profession (Alsop & Donald, 1996). Fieldwork education is seen to shape the student's future practice (Crowe & Mackenzie, 2002).

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT) outlines the minimum standards for OT education programs (WFOT, 2016). The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists (CAOT) educational program accreditation document outlines additional standards that build on the WFOT document (CAOT, 2017). Each of the organizations require OT graduates to have successfully completed a minimum of 1,000 hours of fieldwork education supervised by a registered occupational therapist to be eligible to be registered to practice. The CAOT accreditation standards indicate that students' fieldwork profiles must include a wide range of experiences consistent with the *WFOT Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists* (WFOT, 2016) and the current Canadian practice profile (CAOT, 2012). In addition, the CAOT accreditation document states OT students can be supervised by an on-site or off-site occupational therapist (CAOT, 2017) .

 OT programs do not educate their students solely for current practice, rather the CAOT accreditation standard requires that the professional framework of each educational program incorporate "new and emerging occupation-based professional practices/theories/ trends" (CAOT, 2017, p. 18). In order to equip graduates with the skills required for future practice,

students need access to a wide variety of fieldwork experiences. Further, Thomas, Penman and Williamson (2005) highlighted the need for these experiences to extend beyond the majority of services currently available within role-established fieldwork opportunities. Expanded experiences enable students to develop a vision and understanding of the potential of OT beyond current practice thereby encouraging students to seek expanded practice areas both now and into the future. Therefore, the fieldwork component of an OT program is tasked with providing students opportunities both within current practice areas and in areas which will prepare them for future practice (Cooper & Raine, 2009; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016).

Historically an apprenticeship model has been the primary model used for OT fieldwork education (Bossers, Cook, Polatajko, & Laine, 1997; Huddleston, 1999a). The apprenticeship model consists of one educator providing one student with clinical education in a practice or non-academic setting across a defined length of time. During the fieldwork placement students are expected to learn and be able to display the specific OT knowledge, skills and attitudes required within the fieldwork environment. Students are evaluated across the course of the placement to ensure they are able to meet placement learning objectives. However, for a variety of reasons, this apprenticeship model has proven to be a difficult model to sustain.

As early as 1979 programs identified difficulty recruiting sufficient fieldwork placements to meet the needs of OT students (Hachey, Duguay, Matteau, & Page, 1979). As a result of many factors, the shortages continue to be identified in the literature (Alsop & Donald, 1996; Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002b; Huddleston, 1999a; Ladyshewsky & Healey, 1990; Overton et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2005). Responding to the needs of a changing population, many countries have increased the number of OT programs, and the size of the cohorts within those program (Brown, McKinstry, & Gustafsson, 2015; Casares, Bradley, Jaffe, & Lee, 2003; Hamilton et al., 2015;

Huddleston, 1999b; Thomas et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2005). As health care has become more complex so has OT practice within health care systems. Health care system changes, along with moves to more autonomous practice environments such as the community, have contributed to this complexity (Casares et al., 2003; Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002b). Additionally, occupational therapists are increasingly practicing in systems outside health care such as education, justice, social services and others that include non-governmental organizations and private businesses (Rodger et al., 2007), providing service outside of direct care such as case management and staff education (Rodger et al., 2007; Thomas et al., 2005) and are more commonly found in both private practice and medico-legal work (Thomas et al., 2005). Increased caseload and productivity demands have placed additional demands upon therapists (Casares et al., 2003; Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002b; Thomas et al., 2007) and limited a therapist's flexibility to clear time to provide student education (Casares et al., 2003; Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002a). Other factors, such as an increase in the frequency of occupational therapists being employed part-time, are also seen as a barrier to clinicians providing fieldwork education (Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002b).

Role-Emerging Fieldwork

OT educational programs have created different fieldwork models to address the shortfall in fieldwork opportunities and to offer students opportunities that will prepare them for future areas of practice (Bossers et al., 1997; Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002b; Fortune, Farnworth, & McKinstry, 2006; Friedland, Polatajko, & Gage, 2001; Huddleston, 1999b). One such model is role-emerging (RE) fieldwork; the focus of this study. The term RE is typically used in reference to occupational therapy fieldwork and the characteristics of RE fieldwork are described in many ways within the literature.

Bossers et al. (1997) traced the history of RE fieldwork placements situated in organizations without OT positions or programs. First described in the literature in 1974; RE placements were primarily community-based, and focused on preparing students for community practice (Bossers et al., 1997). Some authors described RE fieldwork as placements where students are provided daily ongoing supervision by an on-site non-OT staff in conjunction with less regular consultation, supervision and evaluation by a registered occupational therapist (Bossers et al., 1997; Fisher & Savin-Baden, 2002b; Sullivan & Finlayson, 2000). However, placements described in this way have also been called independent community placements (Mulholland & Derdall, 2005), community based fieldwork (Friedland et al., 2001), non-traditional (Overton et al., 2009), alternative placements (Backman, 1994), atypical placements (Alsop & Donald, 1996) and self-directed fieldwork (James & Prigg, 2004).

The focus of RE placements can include exploring, promoting, establishing and implementing the potential role of OT in a given environment (Bossers et al., 1997; Overton et al., 2009). Within this definition projects can form the "work" of the placement and provide both students and organizations an opportunity to explore the potential impact of OT within the organization. Overton et al (2009), however, viewed project placements as separate from RE fieldwork, because they see a difference in focus between the two placement types. Overton et al. (2009) described project placements as focusing on completing a project designed to address the needs of the program and can include either onsite or off-site supervision by an OT fieldwork educator in the placement. In contrast, the focus of a RE placement is to explore, develop and initiate an OT role in a site with offsite supervision by an occupational therapist and on-site supervision by a non-occupational therapist. While RE fieldwork can include a project; a project placement does not only occur as a RE placement.

Bossers et al. (1997) included examples of student service learning in the history of RE fieldwork. Duncan and Alsop (2006) describe service learning as an "emerging educational approach" (p. 16) within practice education incorporating a variety of strategies designed to enhance student civic responsibility and focused on the needs and priorities of community participants. Included in the service learning experience are opportunities for participants to reflect upon and integrate learning. However, other authors view service learning as separate from all fieldwork because the focus of service learning encompasses both student education and benefitting the population served in the experience rather than focusing primarily on student education (Bazyk, Glorioso, Gordon, Haines, & Percaciante, 2010).

Other writers simply defined RE fieldwork as student placements in settings with no established OT role, and do not speak to the structure of supervision and evaluation (Clarke, Martin, de Visser, & Sadlo, 2015). RE fieldwork placements can be developed specifically for individual students (Sullivan & Finlayson, 2000), or to provide enough placements to accommodate each member of a full cohort of students during the same timeframe (Thew, Hargreaves, & Cronin-Davis, 2008). RE placements can also be developed in specific circumstances such as a program's lack of fieldwork opportunities to meet demand (Prigg & Mackenzie, 2002), to meet a specific objective (Rodger et al., 2007) or can constitute an ongoing component of a fieldwork program (Bossers et al., 1997; Campbell-Rempel, Leclair, & Mendez, 2015).

Warren (2014) suggested placements should not be identified as RE after four offerings in the same environment. She argued that as the student placements become more common in the environment typical RE characteristics are less evident. With repeating RE placements, the OT role in the site becomes more established thereby providing direction for incoming students.

With less uncertainty incoming students can focus more on implementing a predetermined OT role. In turn, less time is spent on understanding the site to determine how OT fits in the environment.

Limiting the life of RE placements or describing them differently after a number of offerings is not common practice in all environments. Across Canada, 248 RE placements were completed during the 2013-2014 academic year. Of these, 150 were used previously, and 98 were newly developed. The fieldwork programs involved in the study indicated they assumed that the 150 previously developed placements and 82 of the newly developed placements would be used again. Of the 16 remaining newly developed placements, 12 would not be used again and four placements were not described. Some of the 150 previously developed placements were described as long standing (Bossers et al., 2015).

As outlined above, RE fieldwork is described in a variety of ways in the literature with no universally accepted definition. For the purposes of this study RE fieldwork will be described as fieldwork offered as a regular part of a university program's OT fieldwork placement opportunities, occurring within an environment where there is no established OT role. During the placement, students are provided daily ongoing supervision by an on-site non-OT staff in conjunction with less regular consultation, supervision, and evaluation by an off-site registered occupational therapist. The OT students are expected to explore, promote, establish and implement the potential OT role in the given environment. As the RE placement is offered more frequently the student role evolves from focusing on exploring and promoting the OT role to establishing and implementing the OT role in the given environment (Bossers et al., 1997; Mulholland & Derdall, 2005; Overton et al., 2009).

Throughout this study, fieldwork which is not RE and occurs frequently within OT educational programs will be described as non-RE fieldwork. This will include a variety of models of fieldwork such as two students supervised by one educator, two educators jointly supervising one or two students, and supervision of OT students by a therapist who works part-time.

Context of RE Fieldwork at One Canadian University

This research study will focus on the experiences of Master of Occupational Therapy (MOT) students at one Canadian university. As part of a two-year MOT program, students complete four fieldwork placements of varying lengths. Within their final year of the program, MOT students complete an eight-week placement starting in early January and a six-week placement starting late June and ending by mid-September. Prior to the implementation of the MOT program in 2003, limited RE fieldwork opportunities were available each year. These opportunities were developed based on the interest of individual students in the graduating class and only offered once (Sullivan & Finlayson, 2000). Since the transition to the MOT program, RE opportunities have been included within fieldwork placement offers thereby being open to all students within their final year of the program. Placements are allocated to students based on placements available for the time frame, each student's fieldwork profile, and student preference.

The fieldwork program has developed RE placements in collaboration with a variety of community agencies and systems. Included in this collaboration are registered occupational therapists prepared to provide off-site supervision in these different settings. Initially, RE placements focused on the potential role of OT in the targeted environment. Once this objective was met, students did not return to these sites and new sites were developed to enable the program to continue to offer RE placements. However, each placement required a number of

hours of development before a student fieldwork opportunity could start. From an efficiency

perspective, re-developing different sites increased faculty workload with little return.

Additionally, both faculty and other participants questioned the ethics of completing a needs

assessment related to an OT role, and not following up with the recommendations. Many

organizations were unable to fund an OT position even though a RE fieldwork placement had

identified the need for such a role in the environment. Therefore, now, the focus of RE

placements typically evolves from exploring the OT role, to completing projects that fit with the

identified potential OT role and are useful to the placement site. Students always receive on-site

mentoring from a non-occupational therapist and supervision and evaluation from a designated

off-site occupational therapist. Within the current RE model most students are placed in

collaborative pairs.

In 2015, a review of the frequency with which students in the program were assigned to

RE placements, and descriptors of those placements were completed (Campbell-Rempel et al.,

2015). The results showed a marked increase in the frequency across time with which students

were assigned to RE placements. In 2004-2005, less than 2% of assigned placements were

designated as RE placements. However, by the 2013-2014 academic year, nearly 20% of the

placements assigned to final year MOT 2 students were RE. The focus of the placements also

changed across time. In 2013-2014 the placements occurred in areas of lifestyle education, needs

assessment, parent and pre-school education and employment skills. In 2008-2009 and 2009-

2010 independent living skills constituted the highest numbers of offers available to students.

However, by 2013-2014 living skills constituted the lowest frequency of assigned RE fieldwork

placements(Campbell-Rempel et al., 2015). This shift is reflective of the fact that different

fieldwork sites participate in RE fieldwork at different times, and the needs of the participants are different. Therefore, the focus of RE placements change across time.

RE fieldwork has been explored from the perspective of students involved in RE placements. However, little is known about the perspective of practicing clinicians who completed RE fieldwork as part of their entry to practice program. Since fieldwork is integral to an occupational therapists' preparation for practice it is imperative that we understand how, if at all, RE fieldwork prepares students for practice. This study has been undertaken to explore practicing clinicians' perspectives of RE fieldwork if they had completed a RE fieldwork placement and had practiced for at least six months after graduation. The research objectives were to explore, from the perspective of recent OT graduates who are practising, 1) reasons for participating in RE fieldwork; 2) placement characteristics of the RE experience; 3) the influence of RE fieldwork on their preparation for practice, their current practice, and their practice plans.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

While the research on RE fieldwork is not a large body of literature, researchers have investigated a variety of facets of RE fieldwork. To date, the majority of the research has focused on exploring students' experiences in RE fieldwork (Roberts, Hooper, Wood, & King, 2015). This literature review will provide an overview of the current state of research on the students' experiences of RE fieldwork and factors that impact students' experiences. The overview will provide a basis upon which to situate the exploration of practicing occupational therapists' perspectives of their RE fieldwork experience and the potential influence of their RE fieldwork on their development as an OT practitioner.

Current State of the Evidence

The available literature about RE fieldwork includes descriptive accounts of RE experiences (Sullivan & Finlayson, 2000; Thomson & Thompson, 2013; Totten & Pratt, 2001; Vaisberg et al., 2014), opinion pieces (Cooper & Raine, 2009; Friedland et al., 2001; Hamilton et al., 2015; Hanson, 2011; Overton et al., 2009) as well as books focused on RE (Thew, Edwards, Baptiste, & Molineux, 2011) and innovative fieldwork designs (McAllister, Paterson, Higgs, & Bithell, 2010). Of the 18 available research papers and PhD dissertations focused on RE fieldwork 14 used a qualitative research design (Boniface, Seymour, Polglase, Lawrie, & Clarke, 2012; Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke, 2012; Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al., 2015; Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, & de-Visser, 2014, 2015; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009; James & Prigg, 2004; Knightbridge, 2014; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Smith, Cornella, & Williams, 2014; Solomon & Jung, 2006; Velde, Wittman, & Mott, 2007; Warren, 2014), three used a mixed methods design (Rodger et al., 2009; Thew et al., 2008; Thew, Thomas, & Briggs, 2018) and one used a quantitative design (Gat & Ratzon, 2014). Of these studies, two were PhD dissertations (Clarke,

2012; Warren, 2014) of which one (Clarke, 2012) provided the data for 3 published papers (Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al., 2015; Clarke et al., 2014; Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015) Please see Table 1 below for further description of these 18 research articles and dissertations.

RE Skills and Preparation

The skills and preparation needed for RE fieldwork were often discussed in the literature. There was disagreement within the literature as to whether student selection is important for the success of RE placements (Bossers et al., 1997; Rodger et al., 2009; Solomon & Jung, 2006; Thew et al., 2008). In the studies reviewed most articles (7) do not describe how participants were assigned to RE fieldwork (Bossers et al., 1997; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009; Gat & Ratzon, 2014; James & Prigg, 2004; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Smith et al., 2014; Thew et al., 2018). Participants volunteered for RE fieldwork in six studies (Boniface et al., 2012; Clarke, 2012; Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al., 2015; Clarke et al., 2014; Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Velde et al., 2007). Two studies used their typical allocation process (Rodger et al., 2009; Warren, 2014) and two studies included the entire cohort of students in RE placements (Knightbridge, 2014; Thew et al., 2008). Solomon and Jung (2006) chose the student participants for their study based on the students' ability to work collaboratively without direct supervision, their superior communication skills and their interest in the placement. They indicated special attention should be paid to student selection to ensure students have the skills required for the placement, as well as ensuring the student has a choice in selecting the placement focus and a RE placement (Solomon & Jung, 2006).

Based on the results of their study, Bossers et al. (1997) questioned whether specific characteristics were required of participants prior to the RE placement. Their participants identified characteristics they had developed while participating in RE fieldwork that they felt

Table 1:

Summary of Published Research Focused on RE Fieldwork

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
Qualitative Methods			
Boniface et al. (2012) **Study Location:** Wales	Qualitative Method: Semi-Structured Interview Thematic Analysis **Study Goal:** Investigate the students' and supervisors' experiences in collaborative learning and offsite supervision in this role-emerging placement	**Study Participants:** 4 OT students – 2 final year from Cardiff University(Wales) 2 from Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education in Warsaw 2 Fieldwork Educators, one of which was new to supervising RE fieldwork **Assignment of Students:** Cardiff Participants were volunteers Polish Students not described **Level of Education:** Cardiff Students: Master Polish Students: Diploma	**Identified 4 themes:** **1. Need for preparation** Responsibilities need clarity. Cultural preparation would have been useful. **2. Negotiating Relationships** Linked to theme one nature and process of developing the relationship between the students. Important that FEW facilitate this **3. Support Needs.** Support required in many directions: -Between students. -For students by FWE -novice RE FWE required supports from experienced RE FWE **4. Experiential learning** Highly valued, but seemingly contradictory to theme 1 preparation. Too much preparation

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
		Placement Length: 12 weeks	would decrease potential for experiential learning. There is a need to balance preparation and opportunities for experiential learning **Future Research:** The researchers suggest the need to study the needs of RE supervisors.
Bossers et al. (1997) **Study Location:** Canada	Qualitative Method: Semi-Structured Interview Constant Comparative Analysis and the development of units, categories and themes **Study Goal:** Gain an understanding of the perceptions and meanings students assigned to their RE placements.	**Study Participants:** 11 OT students 10 females and 1 male Age Range 21-32 years From 3 different cohorts **Assignment of Students:** Assignment was not addressed **Level of Education:** Baccalaureate **Placement Length:** 4 or 8-week placements	**Identified themes were:** -Client became a person -Personal and Professional Growth **Factors Students Saw as Contributing to The Learning Experience:** -Community context, -Placement structure (which included the fact that the OT role needed to be developed) -Pre-placement preparation -Consultation Model of OT Supervision -Contrast with Previous Role-Established Placements -Student Requisites **Future Research:** The researcher suggests further study to examine the impact of different sites on the role-emerging experience.

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
			Additionally, she suggests further study of the impact of RE fieldwork on future practice.

Clarke (2012)
 	
(PHD dissertation)
 	
Study Location: England
	Qualitative Method:
	
	underpinned by hermeneutic phenomenology
	
	Semi-Structured Interview
	
	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
	
	Study Goal:
	To explore the experiences of OT students in RE placements and to explore how (if at all) these placements influence the professional development and practice of OT graduates.
		Study Participants:
		5 female OT students interviewed both within the 1-month post placement and again after working for 6 months
		
		Assignment of Students: Students identified they wanted to complete a RE placement, and set them up themselves
		
		Level of Education: Master
		
		Placement Length:
		Not described
			Five Themes Identified each with sub-themes:
			1. **Not a run of the mill placement**
			   a. Outside the box
			   b. In two minds
			2. **Thrown in**
			   a. Going it alone
			   b. Facing the challenges
			3. **Finding a way forward**
			   a. Drawing on inner resources
			   b. Being part of a team
			4. **Awareness of change**
			   a. Development of a 'new' self
			   b. Re-appraisal of the profession
			   c. Making a difference
			5. **'Being' in the world**
			   a. Standing on my own two feet
			   b. 'Being' an occupational therapist
			Future Research: The researcher suggests exploring the RE placement experiences of academically weaker students or students in compulsory RE placements. She also suggests it would be useful to explore what further

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
			preparation is required for students prior to a RE placement. Further, the long-term impact of RE placements on OT practice needs to be examined, as does the experiences of on-site educators and RE fieldwork educators. The experience of transition to practice should also be examined for OT graduates following RE and non-RE placements.

Clarke et al. (2014)
 	
Study Location: England
	Qualitative Method:
	
	underpinned by hermeneutic phenomenology
	
	Semi-Structured Interview
	
	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
	
	Study Goal:
	To gain a deeper understanding of OT students' experiences of RE placements.
		Study Participants:
		5 female OT students interviewed both within the 1-month post placement and again after working for 6 months
		
		Assignment of Students: Students identified they wanted to complete a RE placement, and set them up themselves
		
		Level of Education: Master
		
		Placement Length:
		Not described
			The paper presents 1 of 5 themes identified in the original PHD research with related sub-themes and concepts:
			1. **Awareness of change**
			  a. Development of a 'new' self
			    i. emerging from the shadows
			    ii. growing up
			    iii. belief in self
			  b. Re-appraisal of the profession
			    i. having a deeper belief in the profession
			    ii. seeing clients in a different light
			  c. Making a difference
			    i. seeing the smile
			    ii. leaving a legacy
			Future Research: The author suggests the need to explore the long-term impact of RE fieldwork on graduates practice and identity.

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research

Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al. (2015)
 	
Study Location: England
	Qualitative Method:
	
	underpinned by hermeneutic phenomenology
	
	Semi-Structured Interview
	
	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
	
	Study Goal:
	The goal of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of OT graduates' experiences of role-emerging placements and the influence of these RE placements on the graduates professional practice and development once qualified.
		Study Participants:
		5 female OT students interviewed both within the 1-month post placement and again after working for 6 months
		
		Assignment of Students: Students identified they wanted to complete a RE placement, and set them up themselves
		
		Level of Education: Master
		
		Placement Length:
		Not described
			The paper presents 1 of 5 themes identified in the original PhD research with related sub-themes and concepts:
			1. **Reality of Practice (Described as 'Being' in the world in the PhD Research)**
			   a. Standing on my own two feet
			      i. gaining employment
			      ii. confidence for practice
			   b. 'Being' an occupational therapist
			      i. real life
			      ii. consolidation of professional identity
			      iii. challenge to identity
			
			Future Research: More follow-up/longitudinal studies to monitor the impact of role-emerging placements on professional practice and development.
			Also suggests comparative studies between participants in RE and non-RE placements.

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research

Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al. (2015)
Study Location: England
	Qualitative Method:
	
	underpinned by hermeneutic phenomenology
	
	Semi-Structured Interview
	
	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
	
	Study Goal:
	Exploring how OT students experienced their RE placement. This article focused in the challenges experienced by participants in the early days of their RE placement.
		Study Participants:
		5 female OT students interviewed both within the 1-month post placement and again after working for 6 months
		
		Assignment of Students: Students identified they wanted to complete a RE placement, and set them up themselves
		
		Level of Education: Master
		
		Placement Length:
		Not described
			The paper presents 1 of 5 themes identified in the original PHD research with related sub-themes and concepts:
			1. **Thrown in**
			   a. Going it alone
			      i. Uncharted waters
			      ii. Out there on my own
			   b. Facing the challenges
			      i. Need to sing from the same hymn sheet
			      ii. Responsibility on my shoulders
			      iii. The emotional toll
			Future Research: Repeating the research to see if similar themes arise.
			Exploration of the RE experiences of academically weaker students
			Exploring the differences experienced on inter-professional RE experiences
			Exploring the experiences of on-site educators and RE fieldwork educators.

Fieldhouse and Fedden (2009) **Study Location:** England	Qualitative Method: Participant Observation and journal keeping by the investigator and	**Study Participants:** 2 OT students,	**The dimensions of the student's learning gleaned from the supervision journal were:** -Greater awareness of the therapeutic use of self

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
	two Focus Groups to create a topic guide Inductive data analysis **Study Goal:** The focus of the study was to examine the learning process of students while in a RE placement. What kind of learning experiences did the students undergo?	The fieldwork educator and site care home manager. **Assignment of Students:** Assignment was not addressed **Level of Education:** Not addressed **Placement Length:** 7 weeks	-Understanding oneself as an occupational being -Developing skills in assessment and observation -Becoming an enabler of occupation-using activity analysis and adaptation -recognizing the importance of person-centered goal setting -linking theory with practice-using a model of practice **Future Research:** It would be useful to explore other settings to understand the interaction between the setting and the learning students undergo.
James and Prigg (2004) **Study Location:** New South Wales Australia.	Qualitative Method: Focus Group Nominal Group Technique **Study Goal:** An evaluation of the experiences of participants in an	**Study Participants:** 18 OT students **Assignment of Students:** Assignment was not addressed **Level of Education:** Baccalaureate **Placement Length:** 3 weeks full-time	Results are included with discussion **Professional skills developed during placement:** Research skills Report-writing skills Time management skills (forward thinking and planning) Problem-solving skills Computer skills Teamwork, task allocation

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
	occupational health RE placement.		Communication, liaising, interaction Observation skills Explaining the OT role **Positive:** Collaborative placement Self-directedness of placement Time management Practicing report writing **Challenges:** Limited exposure to the rehabilitation focus Concerns about evaluation Feeling lost in the initial stages of the placement Limited understanding of OT by onsite personnel Some students felt their workload was higher than for students in more traditional settings **Rank order of occupational health-related skills:** Risk assessment procedures Task analysis Reinforced knowledge and application of: Manual handling regulations

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
			Work cover guidelines Occupational health and experience. safety legislation Students also outlined positive and challenging aspects of the experience.

Future Research: None identified. |
| Knightbridge (2014) **Study Location:** Australia | Qualitative Method:

Content-Analysis Design

Study Goal: The goals of the study were to understand experiential learning that occurred during an alternative practice education experience and to understand the potential impact of this experience on entry-level competency, personal growth and future practice | **Study Participants:** 14 OT students (of the cohort of 32 that participated in the RE placements) **Assignment of Students:** The entire class were placed in RE fieldwork **Level of Education:** Baccalaureate **Placement Length:** 300 hours of practice education across two semesters | 57% of meaning units were related to entry level competency, 31% was related to personal growth and 12% were related to influence on future practice. If it is accepted that the frequency of the particular meaning unit is directly related to student learning then the student was most frequently engaged in learning related to entry-level competency. The areas of personal growth included the development of personal skills which will positively impact upon future professional skills. Finally, the authors point to the meaning units related to future practice as a reflection of the participants increasing understanding of the potential for a variety of future positions within alternative practice areas. |

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
			Future Research: The authors suggest more longitudinal research to identify the impact of RE placements on graduates' future practice.
Mattila and Dolhi (2016) **Study Location:** United States	Qualitative Method: 1. Semi-Structured Interviews 2. Entries related to the fieldwork experience were extracted from student journals Descriptive coding was completed then collapsed into themes. **Study Goal:** To understand the transformative experiences of OT students involved in RE experiences.	**Study Participants:** 5 OT students **Assignment of Students:** Assigned to small groups, but no description of how assignment occurred **Level of Education:** Master **Placement Length:** ½ day/week over 8-10 weeks and 1 week full-time	**Four themes were identified**: 1. Initial impression: Fear and anxiety of the unknown 2. Clinical reasoning and self-reflection 3. Personal and professional growth 4. Further understanding of occupational therapy **Future Research:** It would be useful to conduct some more-post interviews of surveys to find out if there is a change in attitudes, behaviours and skills across the placement. Further research to understand transformative learning in RE placements is recommended.
Smith et al. (2014) **Study Location:**	Qualitative Method: Grounded Theory Approach	**Study Participants:** 14 current students or graduates	**Three themes were identified:** 1. Operational therapy at its core 2. Cultural awareness and competence 3. Basic skills for any setting

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
United States	Semi-structured interviews, but accepted written answers to questions from 7 participants **Study Goal:** Explore the benefits and challenges of non-RE compared to RE fieldwork. Explore the utility of OT in working with refugee populations.	Participants were from 3 different universities. **Assignment of Students:** Assignment was not addressed **Level of Education:** Master **Placement Length:** 12-week Full-time fieldwork experience.	**Future Research:** None identified.

Solomon and Jung (2006)
 	
Study Location: Canada
	Qualitative Method:
	
	Structured Interview
	
	Qualitative Content Analysis
		Study Participants:
		1 OT and 1 PT student
		
		Assignment of Students:
		Selected for this placement because of skills they had demonstrated.
		
		Level of Education: Master
		
		Placement Length:
		5 weeks full time
			Themes not developed rather comments fall into 3 areas:
			1. **RE Placement design**
			   a. exciting and challenging
			   b. initial apprehension that was decreased by collaborative placement model
			   c. belief not all students would thrive in a RE setting
			   d. 5 weeks was too short
			   e. disappointed staff were not aware of their role

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research

			2. Inter-professional Learning model
			  a. Helped discriminate between roles
			  b. Provided an opportunity not available in academic portion of the programs
			3. HIV focus
			  a. able to develop a joint assessment which made it easier and less demanding for clients
			  b. students were required to be assertive and advocate for their roles
			  c. students needed to think critically about their interventions especially since limited practice guidelines were available.
			Future Research: Further evaluation of RE placements in all areas of practice is recommended.

Velde et al. (2007) **Study Location:** North Carolina United States of America	Qualitative Method: Phenomenological Paradigm Focus Group The data was coded and a collaborative Analysis Process was	**Study Participants:** 12 current student or alumni who had completed the placement age range 21 – 29 years **Assignment of Students:** Student volunteers	**Three themes were identified:** 1. Hands-on learning with silent partners works: 2. Personal enrichment is achieved through hands on learning. 3. Cultural competency is fostered through hands-on learning.

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
	used to achieve consensus. **Study Goal:** This research was to determine the perspectives of former participants in the Tillery experience.	**Level of Education:** Baccalaureate **Placement Length:** Not described	**Future Research:** Researchers indicate further research is warranted to explore other aspects of the Tillery experience.

Warren (2014) (PHD dissertation)
 	
Study Location: Ireland and the United Kingdom
	Qualitative Method:
	
	Phenomenological.
	
	Semi-Structured Interview
	
	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is used for the student strand.
	
	Analysis of the occupational therapist and supervisor strands were completed using thematic analysis.
	
	Study Goal:
		Study Participants (three groups):
		
		5 female OT students (student group)
		Range 23- 34 years of age
		
		6 Occupational Therapists who had completed a RE placement during their OT education. Graduates of either Irish or English programs were included. (occupational therapist group)
		 Age range 26 – 50 years.
		
		3 on-site and 5 off-site supervisors who had supervised a minimum of
			Themes were developed for each participant group:
			1. **Student Group:**
			  a. **"Outside the box"** Identity strengthen through innovative practise
			  b. Personal growth through supported reflexivity
			  c. Portfolio of overt transferable skills
			  d. Enhanced "student centred" ethos
			2. **Occupational Therapist Group:**
			  a. Heightened awareness of self and others
			  b. Tool Box of skills
			  c. Informal ethos nurturing responsibility
			3. **Supervisor Group:**
			  a. Containing Expectations and emotions

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
	Explore how RE learning contexts support the development of student occupational therapists.	1 RE placement with the University of Limerick. (supervisor group) Ages ranged from 31 – 45. 2 of the participants were male. **Assignment of Students:** Typical allocation process. Participants expressed an interest in the RE placement. **Level of Education:** Master **Placement Length:** 8 or 9 weeks full-time	b. Matching supervision approaches with student need c. Students as budding managers d. Freedom to blossom **Future Research:** The author suggests research focused on inter-professional RE placements, a comparative study of different supervision models, student preferences and learning outcomes across RE placements in health disciplines and exploring the perspective of clients within the RE site. Further the author supported comparison between RE and non-RE placements focused on the development of specific skills currently identified as being developed in RE placements. Finally, the author supported research to explore differences between master's and baccalaureate students and the efficacy of collaborative fieldwork models.
Quantitative Methods			
Gat and Ratzon (2014) **Study Location:** Tel Aviv Israel	Quantitative Method: Retrospective Cohort Survey **Study Goal:**	**Study Participants:** 23 OT students in Traditional Fieldwork (Control Group) 27 OT students in Community Fieldwork	No significant difference was found between community fieldwork (CF) and traditional fieldwork (TF) on the participants' perception of their personal and professional skills. However, when there was no onsite educator the student evaluated their personal

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
	To examine if students in community fieldwork (CF) would have a more favorable perception of their professional and personal skills compared with students with non-RE fieldwork (TF). Also examines the assumption that students in CF without an active OT would have a more favorable impression of their professional and personal skills than students at sites with an active OT present.	Within the Community Fieldwork group 15 had an on-site educator and 12 were RE with no onsite educator **Assignment of Students:** Assignment was not addressed **Level of Education:** Baccalaureate **Placement Length:** Not described	responsibility, cultural competence and personal skills as significantly higher than if there was an on-site educator. No significant difference was seen in the participants' perception of their professional skills. The timing or type of placement did not have a significant impact on the participants' perception of their skills. **Future Research:** Authors suggest that further studies comparing different types of fieldwork are warranted.
Mixed Methods			
Rodger et al. (2009) **Study Location:** Queensland Australia	Mixed Method: Concurrent Nested Pre-post structured telephone interviews. Post placement survey using a Likert scale.	**Study Participants:** 6 OT students and 8 Fieldwork Educators Students were from 2 universities Student ages ranged from 20 -30 years	**Qualitative:** **Pre-placement themes:** 1. Novelty and optimism 2. Possibility and concerns 3. Collaborative placements: What's it all about? 4. Collaborative placements: But what if?

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
	Open coding content analysis of the interviews. Themes were developed. Post placement survey responses were totalled and means were determined. **Study Goal:** Describing the evaluation of two innovative placement models in mental health. These are role-emerging and collaborative supervision models.	**Assignment of Students:** Standard process based on preference and profile needs **Level of Education:** Baccalaureate & Master programs **Placement Length:** Varied between Programs from 10 - 14 weeks	5. Role-emerging placements: What's it all about? 6. Role-emerging placements: But what if? **Post Placement themes:** 1. Collaborative placements: multiple benefits and high expectations 2. Collaborative placements: some challenges 3. Role emerging placements: Forging a role 4. Role emerging placements: Cultural issues and pressures. 5. Role emerging placements: High expectations. 6. Time, workload and resources. **Quantitative:** Post-placement questions Likert scale - 5 = strongly agree; 1= strongly disagree Student results all 14 questions are above 3.5 5 comments where agreement is at or below 4 out of 5 • Develop skills as an OT • Develop OT role in the specific placement setting

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
			• Clear goals and objectives to achieve on placement • Interested in working in mental health in the future • Fulfilled my hopes for this learning experience 5 comments at or above 4.5 out of 5. • Welcomed and valued member of the inter-disciplinary team • Appropriate support and guidance • Work independently • Develop time management skills • Work with appropriate level of responsibility **Future Research:** The study suggests follow up studies of a more longitudinal nature to ascertain if these placements impact career choices in the future.
Thew et al. (2008) **Study Location:** England	Mixed Method: Sequential Explanatory Students: On-line Anonymous Questionnaires followed by Focus Groups	**Study Participants:** A full class of 22 students & OT Practice Placement Educators **Assignment of Students:** Included the whole class but placed in pairs. Students chose the site they would like to be assigned to. **Level of Education:** Master	**Quantitative results:** 8 of 17 students strongly agreed and 3 of 17 students agreed the placement helped them gain confidence in professional practice. 9 of 17 strongly agreed and 5 of 17 agreed that they would recommend the placement to future students

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
	OT Practice Placement Educators: Provided feedback via workshops and telephone conversations **Study Goal:** The study is an initial evaluation of a program to provide RE placements for an entire cohort of OT students.	**Placement Length:** Placement was scheduled 1 day/week for 5 weeks followed by 5 weeks full-time.	15 of 17 students agreed they were well prepared for the placement 6 of 10 students rated the RE placement as a very good learning experience, while one student rated it a good experience, 2 students rated it a good experience and 1 student rated the experience as poor. **Qualitative Results:** Positive aspects of the placement: 1. Knowledge of client group/condition/lived experience 2. Developed personal skills such as communication and developing rapport 3. Developed reflection 4. Increased confidence in own knowledge; 5. Learnt about local policies/legislation 6. Freedom to try new things 7. Providing OT knowledge/how to promote occupational therapy and concept of occupation 8. Opportunity for using occupation was overwhelming 9. Really had to apply clinical reasoning/define your role to client group 10. Learnt about how to evidence unmet needs assessment/didn't realise the extent

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
			of unmet need until completed placement setting 11. Staff came to realise how occupation, when engaged in meaningfully, is important. **Negative or dissatisfying aspects of the placement** 1. On-site educators: some better prepared than others, and more committed 2. Would have liked to have met/known other students who had been on one 3. Not knowing if your proposal/project would be developed after you left 4. Staff attitudes – negative about OT 5. Lack of support/educators working part time – in placement 6. Supervision – could have been better formalised/would have liked more 7. Heart breaking to see so much potential and so little resource 8. Different expectations from university and from educators 9. Would have liked more opportunity to explore own ideas for placement setting rather than those of the OT educator (one comment)

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research
			Future Research: Useful to investigate how much a placement experience influences the practice or career development of OT graduates.
Thew et al. (2018) **Study Location:** United Kingdom	Mixed Method design: Exploratory Sequential Design Case finding study followed by qualitative semi-structured interviews. A thematic analysis was used to explore the interview results. **Study Goal:** Explore practicing occupational therapists' perception of the impact of RE fieldwork on employability, practice and career path.	**Study Participants:** 130 potential participants were approached. This constituted graduates from an MSc entry to practice OT program across 9 years. **Online Survey:** 19 participants completed an online survey. **Semi-Structured Interview:** 6 respondents self-selected to participate in the semi-structured interview. Participants had practiced between 6 months and 7 years in each stage of the study. **Assignment of Students:** Not addressed **Level of Education:** Master	**Survey Results:** ▪ 26.3% of respondents work in a non-traditional setting or role ▪ 36% of participants were unsure about moving into an emerging practice area. ▪ 100% of respondents indicated they were offered the first post they interviewed for and had referred to their RE placement in the interview. ▪ respondents described the RE placement as definitely (73.68%) or somewhat relevant to their current work setting ▪ participants indicated the skills learned in their RE placement were definitely (68.42%) or somewhat (31.68%) valuable in their current practice. ▪ All participants working in an emerging practice role indicated a RE placement should be required for all students. Three themes with subthemes were developed:

Study authors, year published, and location	Study design and methods	Study participants assignment to RE placement, level of education, and length of placement	Study results and recommendations for future research

		Length of Placement: not addressed	1. Complementary benefits of non-RE and RE Placements embedded within the curriculum
			2. Inward Impact: Personal skills and identity
			  a. The RE placement gives you the passion and the "why" you do occupational therapy.
			  b. Confidence to promote and develop Occupational Therapy
			3. Outward impact: Added skills and value for occupation-focussed service development and delivery
			  a. Extra skills for practice following REP, particularly service development
			  b. Added value for employability
			
			Future Research: The author suggested it would be useful to examine the experiences of baccalaureate graduates to determine if the experience and maturity of post-graduate students impacts the RE opportunity. Further the author suggested it would be useful to repeat the study with participants who did not complete a RE placement.

were in keeping with the characteristics they believed students required to participate in a RE placement. This disconnect between what participants felt they learned and what they felt was required prior to undertaking a RE placement is not addressed. Rodger et al. (2009) reported participants suggested screening of RE participants was necessary prior to being allocated to the placement. However, the type of screening is not reported, and the same participants had not been screened prior to participating (Rodger et al., 2009).

Preplacement preparation was seen to be important for students (Boniface et al., 2012; Bossers et al., 1997; Thew et al., 2011). Bossers et al. (1997) described pre-placement interviews, coursework and visits as part of the RE experience. Their participants identified these activities as contributing to their success. Some students suggested that meeting others who had previously participated in RE fieldwork could help prepare students (Thew et al., 2008). One study reported participants saw a mandatory orientation as crucial in preparing students for a successful RE experience (Velde et al., 2007). While Boniface reported the need for greater preparation, she cautioned that too much preparation may decrease the potential experiential learning in RE placements. Participants described the power of successfully dealing with the unexpected and finding one's own way as creating unique learning opportunities on a RE placement. Too much preparation had the potential of removing these unique characteristics.

RE participants identified specific skills they developed during RE placements (Boniface et al., 2012; Dancza et al., 2013; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009; James & Prigg, 2004; Knightbridge, 2014; Smith et al., 2014; Thew et al., 2008; Warren, 2014). Students identified time and resource management (Dancza et al., 2013; James & Prigg, 2004; Knightbridge, 2014), organizational skills (Dancza et al., 2013; Warren, 2014), collaborative goal setting (Knightbridge, 2014), occupationally-based role development (Thew et al., 2018) and evidence

based practice (Knightbridge, 2014; Thew et al., 2008; Warren, 2014) as skills developed during RE placements. Similar to Solomon and Jung (2006), Fieldhouse and Feddon (2009) reported students identified developing specific assessment skills during their RE placements. While each of these skills could have potentially been honed in a non-RE placement, the RE placement required the participants to practice these skills more autonomously and without the oversight of an onsite fieldwork educator.

The Profile of Occupational Therapy Practice in Canada (CAOT, 2012) outlines communication skills as a key component of professional practice. Competent practitioners are expected to communicate effectively with many different people in a variety of environments. Students identified that RE placements provided the opportunity to develop communication skills (Boniface et al., 2012), professional communication (Knightbridge, 2014; Thew et al., 2008), and to adapt their communication to both the environment and the individuals with whom they were communicating (Dancza et al., 2013; Thew et al., 2008). RE participants were required to exhibit these skills independently in their fieldwork environment. With their collaborative partner the RE participants needed to navigate the "office politics" and dynamics of their fieldwork environment without first having an OT fieldwork educator to model expectations or guide them through the process of understanding the dynamics or interactions in the environment.

Personal and Professional Growth Related to Fieldwork

Students highlighted both personal and professional growth when completing RE placements (Boniface et al., 2012; Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke et al., 2014; Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Dancza et al., 2013; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009; Gat & Ratzon, 2014; Knightbridge, 2014; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Smith et al., 2014; Thew et al., 2018; Warren,

2014). Students described increased self-confidence as a result of overcoming adversity in their RE placements. Others reported students learned to trust themselves and their independent decisions (Boniface et al., 2012; Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Knightbridge, 2014; Smith et al., 2014; Velde et al., 2007) and developed greater self-awareness while engaging in RE (Boniface et al., 2012; Knightbridge, 2014; Warren, 2014). RE participants described increased cultural competence (Smith et al., 2014; Velde et al., 2007), enhanced clinical reasoning and critical thinking (Dancza et al., 2013; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Smith et al., 2014), increased use of reflection (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke et al., 2014; Dancza et al., 2013; Gat & Ratzon, 2014; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Rodger et al., 2009; Warren, 2014), better use of models (Dancza et al., 2013; Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009) and improved ability to link theory to practice (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009; Warren, 2014) as a result of the experience.

RE students also saw themselves as becoming more self-directed (Bossers et al., 1997; Warren, 2014), able to meet clinical demands (Knightbridge, 2014), and respond with flexibility in a changing environment (Dancza et al., 2013); all skills required to practice in a clinical setting. Unlike settings where students used onsite OT educators as role-models; students in RE placements had the opportunity to explore the potential of OT and develop their own professional identity (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke, 2012; Clarke et al., 2014; Dancza et al., 2013; Warren, 2014). Warren (2014) reported student participants were seen to develop a strong OT role identity during the RE placement which is generally not anticipated until after graduation.

Gat and Ratzon (2014) found that there was no difference between students' perception of their personal and professional skills whether they experienced community or institutional fieldwork. However, within the community fieldwork group students in a RE placement evaluated themselves as significantly higher than non-RE students on personal skills, cultural

competence and personal responsibility pointing to the impact of the RE placement on students' perceived level of skills (Gat & Ratzon, 2014).

Students described the affective experience of RE fieldwork as different from what they experienced in fieldwork with an onsite OT fieldwork educator (Clarke et al., 2014; Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Dancza et al., 2013; James & Prigg, 2004; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Rodger et al., 2009; Warren, 2014). Students reported being more aware in this placement than in others of making a difference in people's lives and community as well as feeling a sense of satisfaction at the end of the placement (Clarke et al., 2014; Dancza et al., 2013; Knightbridge, 2014). More than other placements, students suggested feeling anxious and fearful of the unknown prior to starting the placement (Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Rodger et al., 2009) and the placement experience itself as being more emotionally intense and exhausting (Dancza et al., 2013; James & Prigg, 2004; Knightbridge, 2014). At the same time, the RE placement was described as having a slower tempo than other placements because students needed to reason independently resulting in more time being required for research and thinking prior to implementing a plan (Dancza et al., 2013; Warren, 2014).

Students reported their relationships with participants in RE placements were very different from what they had experienced previously. In RE situations, students were more able to see participants as individuals rather than through the lens of a diagnosis. This view, in turn, resulted in a more client centred approach (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke et al., 2014; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016). As a result of these types of relationships and experiences students saw themselves as more prepared for practice (Mattila & Dolhi, 2016).

Students who participated in RE placements described the impact these placements had on their view of occupation, their understanding of the profession of OT and their ability to

convey that understanding to others (Clarke et al., 2014; Dancza et al., 2013; Fieldhouse &
Fedden, 2009; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Thew et al., 2018; Warren, 2014). Students understood
the potential of OT, as well as the importance of occupation in the lives of individuals (Clarke et
al., 2014; Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Thew et al., 2018; Warren,
2014). These experiences were different from more medically based placements where the focus
was less on occupation and more on treatment procedures and processes (Dancza et al., 2013).
Finally, the RE placement gave the students an opportunity to see themselves as both an
occupational being and an enabler of occupation for others (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009).

Very few studies have focused on the experience of new graduates who completed RE
(Clarke, 2012; Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2014; Thew et al., 2018;
Velde et al., 2007; Warren, 2014). Warren (2014) included both recent graduates (6 months post
graduation) and occupational therapists (2 –20 years post graduation) who had participated in RE
fieldwork during their OT education. She also incorporated interviews with RE supervisors into
her research. Warren (2014) identified several themes related to the positive impact of the RE
environment on learning, the "tool box of transferable skills towards competent professional
practice (Warren, 2014, p. 232) and "personal growth enhanced with supported reflexivity"
(Warren, 2014, p. 232). Each of these themes is consistent with the areas explored in other RE
literature.

Clarke et al. (2015), Clarke (2012) and Thew et al. (2018) each found practicing
graduates felt the RE experience had increased their confidence within job interviews, given
them a competitive edge when job hunting and helped them feel prepared for practice. The
graduates saw the RE opportunity as increasing their ability to market themselves into different
positions and to look forward to potential unique employment activities. Thew et al. (2018)

outlined how participants had each received a job offer from their first interview post-graduation. Graduate therapists employed in role established positions found these roles to be more confining and less congruent with the nature of OT practice as experienced in RE placements. Clarke (2012) found that one participant who had moved into a traditional position reported struggling with her OT identity after being able to enact a broader role as part of her RE placement. This discord resulted in a feeling of discontent with a traditional practice position (Clarke, 2012; Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al., 2015).

Thew et al. (2018) described RE fieldwork as impacting the graduate both inwardly and outwardly. She described the inward impact to be affecting the graduates' commitment to OT and their confidence to promote themselves and their OT profession. The outward impact was described as the graduate developing skills in program development. Smith et al. (2014) included both current students and graduates as participants in her study. Her participants identified how RE fieldwork provided the opportunity for them to understand the impact of occupation in peoples' lives, to understand how culture pervades our everyday lives, and the importance of understanding an individuals' culture when you are planning with them (Smith et al., 2014).

Early descriptive pieces of RE focused on the structure of RE fieldwork. More recent RE research has focused primarily on students' perceptions of their learning in the RE environment. Roberts et al. (2015) mapped international literature focused on OT fieldwork education that included RE fieldwork. They called for a move away from a focus on the need to increase the quantity of fieldwork placements and increased focus on the quality of such placements, an increased focus on the impact of specific fieldwork curriculum on OT practice and finally a move from single subject descriptions to more rigorous research design. While there has been a

move to more rigorous research design in RE research as described in this paper, there has been little research looking at the impact of RE fieldwork on OT practice.

Summary of the Current State of Research in RE Fieldwork

The purpose of fieldwork is to effectively prepare students for practice upon graduation. There has been an increase in the frequency of RE placements completed by student occupational therapists in one university program (Campbell-Rempel et al., 2015). A scan of Canadian OT programs in 2014 showed approximately five percent of fieldwork placements were RE and they occurred in practice areas which employed a relatively small percentage of occupational therapists (~16%) (Schmitz, Storr, & White, 2018).

The experiences of students and the students' perception of the benefits of RE fieldwork have been well-documented, primarily through qualitative research methods. Numerous authors have highlighted the need for OT to explore whether RE fieldwork does provide the learning opportunities required to support graduates' successful transition to practice (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al., 2015; Clarke et al., 2014; Dancza et al., 2013; Hamilton et al., 2015; Knightbridge, 2014; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Roberts et al., 2015; Thew et al., 2008).

To date there have only been five studies resulting in six research articles or dissertations that included the experiences of practicing occupational therapists who completed RE placements. The dissertations focused on exploring how RE placements influenced the professional development and practice of newly graduated occupational therapists (Clarke, 2012) and learning on RE placements (Warren, 2014). The research papers have explored the development of professional identity during RE fieldwork (Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al., 2015), the experience of RE fieldwork (Velde et al., 2007) and the benefits and challenges of non-RE fieldwork as compared to RE fieldwork (Smith et al., 2014). Only one study has focused

on the impact of RE fieldwork on practicing therapists' success in securing a position after graduation, practice plans and professional practice (Thew et al., 2018).

Given the ongoing difficulty with recruiting sufficient numbers of fieldwork placements, and the continuing use of RE fieldwork placements as a way to meet the demand for fieldwork, it is imperative that we move from exploring student experiences to exploring the perceptions of practicing therapists who have completed RE fieldwork in order to determine occupational therapists' perceptions of the influence RE fieldwork has on practice. This study will explore RE fieldwork through the lens of practicing occupational therapists that have completed RE fieldwork in the final year of their MOT program.

The Importance of Studying RE Fieldwork

As the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator (AFC) within the program that is the focus of this study, I am responsible for all fieldwork components of the MOT program. RE fieldwork has come to represent a substantial percentage of the placements we offer to students. RE placements require considerable time and energy to develop and manage for students. The occupational therapists providing the offsite supervision often volunteer their time to support the placement. Within the OT community I have heard questions about whether RE placements prepare students for clinical practice. With a lack of literature to support the impact of RE fieldwork on graduate practice, I felt I needed to learn more about our graduates' perspectives. I was interested in exploring how practising OT graduates perceived their RE fieldwork experience.

Chapter 3: Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations, Methodology, Methods

Study Purpose and Research Questions

Current literature focuses primarily on the RE fieldwork experience from the perspective of student occupational therapists. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the RE fieldwork experience from the perspective of recent OT graduates who are practicing. Using a qualitative methodology, this study explored the following question: How do recent OT graduates perceive their RE fieldwork experience after they have practiced OT for at least six months? More specifically the research objectives were to explore, from the perspective of recent OT graduates who are practising, 1) reasons for participating in RE fieldwork; 2) placement characteristics of the RE experience; 3) the influence of RE fieldwork on their preparation for practice, their current practice and their practice plans.

Theoretical Framework

As outlined by Wener and Woodgate (2013) situating a qualitative study within a theoretical framework is a necessary step following the development of a study purpose and research questions. They suggest that once the study question and objectives are developed it is important for the researcher to consider the underlying beliefs about the research to be undertaken. These beliefs then guide and inform choices of research epistemology, theoretical framework, methodology and methods (Wener & Woodgate, 2013).

This study explores the participant's experience of RE fieldwork while recognizing that the understanding of RE fieldwork is co-constructed between the researcher and participant. There is an understanding that there are multiple realities and that each participant in the study will have a different experience of the events. Therefore, a constructivist paradigm is the most appropriate epistemology to guide this study. This study explored the experiences of graduate

occupational therapists, in their natural state without any interventions and sought to provide a deeper understanding of the individual experiences which are then synthesized to help form an overarching view of the event. This synthesis went beyond description and is seen through the lens of the researcher. Therefore, the theoretical perspective for this study would be seen to be both naturalistic inquiry and interpretive (Gray, 2009).

Interpretive description (ID) was chosen as the study methodology because it is consistent with constructivist epistemology and an interpretive, naturalistic inquiry theoretical framework which frames this study (Thorne, Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes, 1997). ID was developed by Thorne (2008) from "an applied qualitative research approach that would generate better understandings of complex experiential clinical phenomena within nursing and other professional disciplines concerned with questions "from the field"(p.27). Thorne (2008) challenges the researcher to go beyond describing the study phenomenon to interpret the data in relation to each other, to uncover similarities, differences, and patterns. The intent of the exploration is to build upon what is known (Thorne et al., 1997), to use interpretation of the data to challenge prior beliefs and finally to provide an understanding of the data which both makes sense to clinical experts and still provides new understanding (Thorne, Kirkham, & O'Flynn-Magee, 2004).

Thorne et al. (2004) describe ID as borrowing from grounded theory, naturalistic inquiry, ethnography and phenomenology, but having its own epistemological underpinnings. ID is seen to be aligned with an interpretive naturalistic orientation (Thorne, 2008; Thorne et al., 2004). Sandelowski (2000) sees naturalistic study as investigating a phenomenon in its natural state with no pre-selection or manipulation of variables; to view the activity as if it were not being studied. Thorne (2000) describes the epistemological underpinning of ID to be based on the

belief that experiences are socially constructed between the researcher and participant and that these experiences may encompass multiple realities across different individuals. The sharing of these realities is seen to be of mutual interest and needs to be explored within a naturalistic context. Subjective and experiential knowledge is a valuable core of the research process.

Fieldwork or experiential education within OT can be seen to fit with a number of theories. Student development across fieldwork experiences is framed by step wise developmental models developed by Bossers, Miller, Polatajko, and Hartley (2008) and Sullivan and Bossers (1998). Students involved in this study had completed RE fieldwork in the second year of their MOT program, at which time they are at the later stages of development in fieldwork. These RE opportunities were in keeping with the goals ascribed to this stage of student development in that students in this level of placement are expected to assume responsibility for and become independent in many of the fieldwork tasks and processes that will form part of their future practice. These fieldwork tasks fall into the realm of practice management including tasks such as documentation and caseload management and into the broader area of OT practice. During these later placements students are enhancing their practice skills using self-evaluation and self-directed learning while using reflection and critical thinking skills for practice development and implementation. Educators are encouraged to have students focus on preparation for practice and the transition to independence.

Fieldwork fits a constructivist view of learning in that students build their own learning and understanding based on their experiences within fieldwork and their pre-existing knowledge related to the experience (Applefield, Huber, & Moallem, 2000). Further, fieldwork can be seen to fall into the social constructivist realm of learning as knowledge is co-created between the student(s), their OT fieldwork educator and in addition, in the case of RE fieldwork, their

interactions with both the site and the on-site non-OT staff (Applefield et al., 2000) and the client. Hence, students participating in this study each entered the RE fieldwork with different experiences and realities. This context, in turn, resulted in each participant having a unique understanding of the RE placement experience based on their own history, and the unique RE learning experience created in collaboration with their onsite and off-site educators, the RE site, their clients, and their student colleague at the site.

Methodology and Research Plan

I used interpretive description (ID) for this study. Oliver (2012) and Thorne et al. (2004) described the development of ID as coming from a need for clinical researchers to explore clinical phenomenon in a way that was not amenable to the methodological requirements of traditional qualitative methods. Thorne (2008) describes an ID approach as enabling researchers to adhere to a "coherent methodological framework within which a fairly wide range of options for design decisions can be enacted and justified" (p 75). ID allows researchers to explore practice issues and achieve results that both advance practice and make sense to the discipline (Oliver, 2012).

Further ID is appropriate when the researcher wants to form a deeper understanding of the common experience of a phenomenon or event, potentially make changes to structures or processes that form the experience as well as incorporate an understanding of individual experiences of the phenomenon under study (Oliver, 2012; Thorne, 2008). Thorne (2008) describes a successful ID study as providing an expert clinician with an understanding that is coherent with clinical experiences and allows the discipline to use the results in practice immediately. ID then, is not a useful tool if the goal of research is to develop a theory. Rather, the function of ID is to enable the researcher to uncover clinically useful information.

Based in the belief that clinical research generally requires more than pure description ID extends beyond purely qualitative descriptive approaches in that it includes an interpretive component (Thorne, 2008; Thorne et al., 2004). Thorne et al. (2004) suggested that ID provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Based in professional knowledge, ID is seen to be a useful framework within which to explore individuals' experience of a phenomenon. Data coming from the exploration is then used to create a universal understanding of the experience. The depiction of the event must both make sense when compared to an expert clinicians' experience and extend the profession's understanding of the phenomenon (Thorne, 2008; Thorne et al., 2004). ID does not prescribe a specific study design nor data collection methods but rather encourages the researcher to use a pragmatist perspective whereby the research study is developed consistent with the research question and objectives (Thorne, 2008; Thorne et al., 2004).

I sought and received ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Board (H2016:302) (See Appendix A). The study took place between October 2016 and January 2017.

Methods

Sample and Recruitment.

Thorne (2008) asserts that the ID ideal sample size is based on the research question. While some sample sizes include 5 to 30 individuals, other studies can call for a sample size up to and beyond 200 (Thorne, 2008). Saturation of the data or when the participant interviews no longer provide additional or new information is also seen as a guidepost for determining the appropriate number of participants for a qualitative study (Creswell, 2007). Thorne (2008) however, argues that data saturation is unlikely in clinical research because individual

experiences can continue to exhibit infinite variation and investigators are unlikely to uncover all of the potential variations which could exist related to the phenomenon. Rather, Thorne (2008) posits data gathering can continue until that which is discovered is consistent with the clinical reasoning and experience of expert clinicians in the field of study. The point at which this consistency of information will be reached is difficult to predict in advance of a study but can be used during the study to make decisions about the recruitment process. I used maximum variation purposive sampling to target occupational therapists of one university MOT program who graduated in 2013, 2014 or 2015; participated in a RE fieldwork placement within the final year of their program; and had practised as an occupational therapist in Canada for at least six months since graduation (Patton, 2002). Within the sample I wanted to try to include participants who had completed their RE placement in a variety of settings, with a variety of fieldwork educators, had practiced different lengths of time and included a similar number of participants who completed their third or fourth placement as RE.

Thorne (2008) suggested that no specific recruitment techniques were required for ID. Rather recruitment must make sense within the context of the intent of the research and the study design. I sent MOT graduate cohorts of 2013, 2014 and 2015 an email informing them of the study. Graduates who were interested in participating in the study and met the inclusion criteria were encouraged to contact me. I provided individuals interested in participating in the study with a standard description of the purpose of the research via e-mail. I obtained e-mail addresses from a list of alternative e-mail addresses collected from students as they graduate. Students provide these email addresses to the MOT program with the understanding the addresses will be used to provide them with information that may be of interest to them after they finish the program.

Creswell (2007) suggested opportunistic ways of recruiting participants were appropriate. Since the initial recruitment process did not yield sufficient participants, I contacted specific graduates known to be in ongoing contact with their graduating class via social media. I asked the class representatives to inform members of their cohort of the opportunity to participate in the research. Finally, since further recruitment was still required, I sent a repeat email blast to the three MOT cohorts. This repeat email blast required ethical approval to change the third recruitment attempt from an email blast through the provincial occupational therapy society to a repeat email blast using emails collected by the department for sharing information with graduates. This change was made because a focus on a provincial organization would preclude participants from other jurisdictions. I provided research participants with a $25.00 gift certificate to thank them for their time while participating in the research study.

I had planned to recruit eight to ten participants. After approaching the participant pool three times eight participants expressed interest in participating; however, one participant was not able to complete the interview process. There appeared to be consistency in the information gleaned from the seven interviews. After consultation with my supervisor and committee members a decision was made to proceed with the data collected from the seven participants. Table 2 describes participant and placement characteristics including the timing, length and focus of the RE placement as well as the participants' employment at the time of the study. Participants completed RE placements in seven different sites within Manitoba. Two participants completed two RE placements for a total of nine RE placements amongst participants. Five RE placements were completed as the 3rd of four placements within the MOT program, and four RE placements were completed as the final fieldwork placement. There were four different RE off-

site fieldwork educators. All participants were practicing at the time of the study and living in three different provinces.

Table 2

Participant and Placement Characteristics

	Timing of RE placement	Placement length (weeks)	Focus of RE placement	Focus of current employment
P	Third placement	8 weeks	Adolescents in the School System	Adolescent Mental Health (Outpatient)
Z	Final Placement	6 weeks	Primary Care Clinic	Pediatrics in The School System
Y	Third and Final placements	8 weeks 6 weeks	Homeless Shelter Primary Care Clinic	Community Home Care
X	Final placement	6 weeks	Transitional Housing	Community Mental Health
W	Third and Final Placements	8 weeks 6 weeks	Supportive Housing Primary Care Clinic	Community Mental Health
V	Third Placement	8 weeks	Family Resource Centre	Pediatrics in the Community/Schools
U	Third Placement	8 weeks	Homeless Shelter	Acute Care Hospital

The majority of participants (5) were currently practicing in Manitoba. Six of the participants were employed with the same organization they joined upon graduation. The seventh participant had most recently changed positions because of a family move to a different province. Two participants had practiced between six months and one year. One participant had practiced between one and two years and three participants had practiced two to three years. Once sampling was complete the participant pool showed diversity in years of practice, placement site and timing of the RE placement. Therefore, targeted recruitment was not required.

Data collection.

Thorne (2008) describes the importance of data collection being coherent with the intent of the study. I used in-depth semi-structured individual interviews as the data source and obtained informed consent from all participants prior to the interview (Appendix B). Participants were informed that they could withdraw consent at any time throughout the research process. Prior to the interview, participants received a copy of the questions used to guide the interview (see Appendix C for the information provided to participants). Participants resided both within and outside of Winnipeg, and in other provinces in Canada. Therefore, face to face interviews were not always feasible. I completed interviews via telephone (2), skype (1), and in person (4). During the interviews, I explored the graduates' experiences of RE fieldwork using an interview guide to provide direction (see Appendix D for the interview guide). At the end of the interview, I asked participants to contact me if there was any further information they wished to share. Interviews were each approximately 90 minutes in length. The hands-free function was used on the telephone. For both the telephone and skype interviews, I was located in a private space. I completed the face to face interviews in private rooms on campus. All interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participant. All of the interviews were digitally recorded.

Following each interview, I completed reflective notes about the interview including impressions of the interview environment, and questions/reflections about the interview process and personal reflections of areas to attend to for future interviews. I used these comments and reflections to inform future interviews. For example, when it became clear that participants were not describing any concerns with RE fieldwork, I became very intentional about including statements like "It is important for me to hear both positive and negative aspects of RE to really

understand" into the interview to encourage a broad explanation of participants' experiences and thoughts.

Data Analysis.

I downloaded the digital recordings to a password protected computer and transcribed them verbatim into a Word document. I assigned each participant a letter that I used throughout the transcription process and removed all identifiers from the transcripts.

I followed the six stage system of thematic analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This is outlined in Table 3. I immersed myself in each interview by first reviewing the audio tape, then checking the transcription for accuracy by listening to the audio tape again while reviewing and revising the written transcript. The transcript was then converted to a portable document format (PDF) to ensure the numbered lines of the transcripts stayed constant so it would be possible to link the quotes to the original transcripts. In subsequent readings of the interviews, transcript quotes were highlighted. These quotes were then coded. I inserted notes at the right of the document to link the quote and codes. I compiled the codes and their definition

Table 3

Six Stage System of Thematic Analysis

Stage in the process	Steps within each stage
Stage 1 Immersion in the data	• listen to the audio recordings, and review the written transcripts for accuracy as soon possible after completing the interview • make notes and highlight ideas throughout the entire dataset. Stage 1 outcome: a list of ideas of interest from the data
Stage 2 Initial codes	• review and code all of the data in each interview • match all data extracts to the related code. Stage 2 outcome: all data are coded, collated and there is a comprehensive list of codes.
Stage 3 Searching for themes across interview data sets	• analyse across interview data sets. • consider how the different codes can be sorted into themes considering relationship between codes and overarching themes Stage 3 outcome: initial grouping of themes across interview data sets
Stage 4 Reviewing the themes	Phase A: refine the themes considering internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity Stage 4A outcome: data effectively placed into a "candidate thematic map" (p. 91) Phase B: • reread the dataset to ensure the map and themes represent the entire dataset • identify and code any missed data. Stage 4B outcome: the map fits the data set
Stage 5 Defining and naming themes	• define each theme • ascribe data to each theme • identify subthemes per theme (as required) • name each theme Stage 5 outcome: parameters of themes are clear and describable
Stage 6 Producing the report	• complete final analysis and write report • provide sufficient information and context to support the credibility of the analysis • provide enough context and examples to allow readers to understand the arguments made to support the analysis of the research. Stage 6 outcome: final report including analysis of the data in relation to the focus of the research

(Braun & Clarke, 2006)

into a table. Following preliminary coding of the first few transcripts, I reviewed the initial codes with my advisor who had also reviewed the same transcripts. A preliminary coding scheme was developed and used to review each subsequent interview in the context of the current codes, and new codes were added as required. Newly added codes were also considered in relation to the previously coded interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Once all of the interviews were reviewed and codes identified, I extracted the data relating to each code. I developed a table including the code, definition of the code and the related quotes. Data was reviewed to identify areas of overlap. This resulted in some codes being collapsed together. Throughout this process, I reviewed the data to recognize similarities and relationships across the codes and collapsed the data further into categories which contained related information. The data was also reviewed in relation to the objectives of the study. Throughout the process I used memo writing and discussions with my advisor to continue to review and redevelop the relationships within the data. This iterative process of reviewing the data resulted in the development of themes which formed the basis for the results of the study. Throughout the process of analysis, I used tables to group data to enable me to review and question the relationships within and between the codes, categories and finally the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Table 4 provides an example of the relationship between themes categories and codes, and Table 5 shows sample quotes with their respective code.

I kept all paper copies of transcribed interviews in a locked drawer in my office and stored electronic versions of the data on a password protected external hard drive that when not in use was stored in a locked drawer. I will keep the transcript files for five years following completion of the study and then destroy them using confidential shredding and delete them from my external drive. Audio files were destroyed following transcription.

Table 4

Theme: "Different learning: learned differently" with Sample Categories and Codes

Theme	Category	Codes
Different learning: learned differently	Unique learning opportunities	• **Differences between RE and non-RE placements** • Collaborative fieldwork varies • developing the placements • Project placement • Leaving a legacy • Perception • Potential for catastrophe • Out of our scope • I wish I had known • Feeling like a fraud • Placement process (roller coaster) • Understanding the clinician role • Others understanding OT
	What I drew on	• **Linking theory and practice** • What I drew on • Impact of academia • Connection with OT community

Table 5

Sample quotes assigned to codes

Code	Definition	Quote
Differences between RE and non-RE placements	The participants' perception of how RE differed from non-RE placements	W: I'm thinking, I think I kind of like having things sort of a little bit messier and just, and you figure it out, with more traditional positions where you're modeling, you know, after your educator and there's very set ways that you do things. You can't really be an individual in that role. I think role emerging really allows you to just be yourself, using things that you already have. And, and like grow so much from that, because it gives you, it's just so independent, you know, it just allows you to kind of forge your own path.
Linking theory and practice	Participant's description of linking theory and practice, and sharing with colleagues	X: And also, like I said, just kind of figuring out like what is the OT role here and defining that for ourselves like over and over and over and then having someone there who was reaffirming that. Like yea, you know, we're on track here and. So I think that was a good opportunity because I feel like you talk about it for two whole years in OT school. Like what's the definitions.

Rigour.

Law and MacDermid (2008) described the four components of trustworthiness considered to be the underpinning of rigour in qualitative research. These components are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility.

Within qualitative research it is widely accepted that the interaction between interviewer and participant influences the research process (Finlay, 2002). Reflexivity is one tool used to assist in ensuring transparency and addressing the issue of research trustworthiness. Finlay (2002, p. 532) defines reflexivity as "thoughtful, conscious self-awareness." ID recognizes that researchers bring their experiences and perceptions into the relationship and interaction with participants thereby impacting the research process (Thorne, 2008). Further Thorne et al. (2004) and Thorne (2008) described the researcher as ultimately determining the relative importance and relationships amongst the data as well as providing the filter through which the research conclusions are viewed. ID requires the researcher to explore and document her experience, thoughts and beliefs prior to starting the research processes as well as throughout the data collection and analysis processes thereby giving light to the filter through which data is viewed and assimilated (Thorne, 2008; Thorne et al., 2004).

I used reflexive memos to explore and record my thoughts and questions. These memos were written prior to the first interview, at the end of each interview as part of her field notes and throughout the analysis of the data. These comments and questions are also recorded as part of the tables used to organize, analyse and synthesize the interview data.

Student researcher reflection.

I entered into this research with some skepticism. While I was familiar with RE research and had discussed RE experiences with students after they had completed a placement I was still unsure that RE placements could provide the "full" OT preparation required for our students to successfully transition to practice. Perhaps I was too influenced by the comments of practicing OTs who expressed concerns to me that students would not have the requisite "OT skills" required to practice. I had supported the inclusion of these placements within our program partially because of the need to provide sufficient numbers and variety of placements to our students. I also recognized the need to provide our students preparation for the unique opportunities available in our community. However, I believed it was possible I would hear concerns from our graduates about completing the RE experiences and feeling unprepared for practice.

Positioning of the researcher.

Given my role in RE fieldwork, as the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator within the OT program, it was crucial that my position be considered within the reflexive process. To assist in this, I logged my thoughts and questions about the data that related to my RE academic responsibilities as I proceeded through the research process. Throughout the process, I was also aware of the past relationship between the participants and me which could have an impact on the participants' responses. At the beginning of the research, I underestimated the potential impact of the relationship on the research process. After noting a lack of comments related to the challenges of RE fieldwork, I became more intentional so that whenever possible during the interview I framed questions to welcome both positive and constructive comments. Frequently I

included comments like "it is helpful to hear all sides to really understand" in an attempt to encourage a fulsome answer from the participant.

Triangulation.

Triangulation was used in this study to enhance data credibility by using "multiple data sources and perspectives" (Law & MacDermid, 2008). This study aimed to use multiple data sources by including data from seven participants who experienced RE fieldwork in a variety of different times and environments. Throughout the process, I worked with my supervisor to ensure different perspectives of the data were included in the analysis. I met my supervisor on several occasions to review the data and discuss the subsequent analysis including preliminary coding of the data, the initial development of categories, and the ongoing development of the themes.

Member checking.

Member checking is a process whereby the researcher provides participants with copies of their data and requests that the participant review the information to ensure accuracy. Member checking is a key element in creating research credibility. Creswell (2014) suggested providing a somewhat "polished" (p 202) version of the themes or description as a credible approach to member checking. Carlson (2010) outlines numerous potential pitfalls in member checking. She suggests careful consideration be given to the presentation of the data, the timing of the request within the data analysis process and the wording of the request made of the participant. Once data across interviews was synthesised, I e-mailed each participant a two-page summary of the study results. This summary included a copy of the themes and related subthemes with relevant descriptions. Participants were asked to review the information, confirm or challenge the interpretation and to forward any comments, questions or different perspectives to the researcher.

All participants responded and indicated the results were reflective of their interview. One participant wanted one of her comments more strongly emphasized. This was incorporated in the reporting of the results. I discussed feedback from participants with my advisor.

Transferability.

Transferability refers to the degree with which findings can be successfully transferred to another situation. To ensure transferability, I provided a fulsome description of the sample and setting for the research project. This description will then enable the reader to decide to what degree the results might apply to another situation.

Dependability.

Dependability speaks to the relationship between the findings and the data upon which those findings are based. Connelly (2016) describes this as the stability of the data across time. She suggests the use of audit trails and peer-debriefings with a colleague as a way of ensuring dependability. I described the process of data analysis and maintained and reported an audit trail to describe the data analysis. Finally, throughout the analysis, I held discussions with my advisor.

Confirmability.

This concept relates to the "neutrality of the data" (Law & MacDermid, 2008) or the degree to which the findings are able to be repeated (Connelly, 2016). In addition to participating in a reflexive process and using member checking, my advisor participated in data analysis. These processes are used to ensure the results are not biased by the researcher and are seen to be valid by others.

Chapter 4: Results

It is important to highlight that all of the events and insights shared by the participants were memories of their experiences and provided in hindsight. Looking at the experiences in retrospect means that the descriptions of RE fieldwork were coloured by the participants' experiences between the RE placement and participating in the interview. Participants described how their perception of RE changed between the time they completed the placement and the time of their interview for this study. "But, it was just another placement again, I didn't feel as passionate or strongly about it until I knew afterwards the larger impact it made" (Participant U). "I liked the question of looking back now. I totally have a different perspective of it now than I did when I lived in it" (Participant V). The results in this study then, are reported by the participants in retrospect and through the lens of practice

Participants were also provided with an outline of the study questions prior to the interview. They were asked to reflect upon the questions in preparation for the interview. The process of reflection provided participants an opportunity to identify how their perspective of RE may have changed since their experience.

Themes

As a result of the research questions and data analysis three themes were identified: 1) Right for me 2) Different learning; Learned differently 3) Shaping my OT lens. Table 6 outlines the themes and related subthemes identified in the study.

Table 6

Themes with Related Sub Themes

Theme	Related Sub Theme
1) Right for me	- Fieldwork requirements and placement focus - Others' perspectives and previous experience - Placement structure and timing - Completing two RE placements - Fit with student's skills and learning style
2) Different learning: learned differently	- Unique learning opportunities - What I drew on
3) Shaping my OT lens	- How I see clients and their world - How I practice in the world - Practice trajectory

Theme #1: Right for me.

This theme speaks to how the participants discussed RE fieldwork as being a good fit for themselves and what a current student should consider when selecting a RE placement as a potential fieldwork opportunity. Participants discussed that when selecting role-emerging fieldwork as a student they considered the fit between their fieldwork profile requirements, their practice interests and the features of the placement that appealed to them. Participants also shared that when reflecting on the experience as a practitioner, there were a variety of RE features related to personal and placement characteristics that they would recommend students consider when selecting role-emerging fieldwork.

Fieldwork requirements and placement focus.

As students, participants were required to meet a variety of criteria within their fieldwork profile for graduation (e.g. a variety of practice environments, a variety client age groups, a variety of OT roles). Therefore, participants considered these requirements when they chose fieldwork placements. Some participants mentioned the profile requirements as influencing their decision to select the RE placement. Participants described RE fieldwork as a way of adding to the variety of placements available to them while meeting fieldwork profile requirements. One participant described RE as a way of "filling some of the holes as far as finding fieldwork placements" (Participant P).

The participants indicated that their interest in the practice area was also influential in their choice of the RE placement. They saw the placement as an opportunity to experience a practice area they wanted to learn within and fitting with their interests. When choosing a placement, participants also considered their plans for future practice and described wanting to gain fieldwork experience in an area that they hoped to practice in upon graduation. "I really tried hard to get as much community experience because I knew that that was where I was going to end up." (Participant W). Some participants described the potential for the placement to impact the profession of OT as being important to them when they selected the RE placement. "just hearing that we get to make an influence on what role is going to come into play more permanently later was a challenge I wanted to be involved in." (Participant U). Some participants spoke about not even really considering the RE aspect of the fieldwork opportunity when selecting it. Rather, other aspects of the placement like the practice area were more central to their considerations.

Participants suggested students should contemplate the different roles offered in RE in relation to their learning needs when deciding whether to choose a specific RE placement. While participants described learning opportunities in all situations they encouraged students to consider the opportunity that would be most suitable for them. Participants described a variety of responsibilities in different RE placements; each placement offering various client interactions and activities. Some placements focused primarily on development of the occupational therapy role thereby providing more experience with assessing the needs of the site and with program development while some RE placements included more project work. In contrast other RE placements included more opportunities for client contact activities such as developing and running groups or completing individual assessments thereby including more client contact. "Yea, another disadvantage again was that the position was pretty like project-based and wasn't as much direct client time as I would have liked. And especially going out into the real world." (Participant Z). "Knowledge of program development and management, because we did those groups. We did it from scratch… We got to both develop and facilitate those groups." (Participant Y)

Participants described how, in hindsight, some of the characteristics they saw as disappointing in the placement were actually of benefit to them. Participants recognized that a single placement could not offer everything, but that there were a variety of useful opportunities in a placement.

> Yea I think at the time I thought I would have liked to do more work with clients. But now, like looking back, obviously, all of the positives and negatives were trade-offs, right …. If I had spent all that time in client time, then I wouldn't have got that valuable experience working on clinic whole projects. And if I'd had an OT onsite then, lots of

shadowing then I wouldn't have developed that independence. So, I know it's about

trade-offs and obviously you can't have it all. (Participant Z)

Others' perspectives and previous experience.

Feedback from other students was seen to be important to participants when selecting RE

placements. Participants described listening to and considering the feedback of others and

highlighted how the decision to complete a RE placement was not always easy.

I had a variety of opinions. There was a pair of students that didn't have the one I did but

very similar in another clinic in primary care. And they loved it. They loved running

groups. They loved their autonomy, being kind of on their own figuring it out.

Advocating for OT and defining it. And then there was another set of students, well, or

one student out of the pair who just kind of told me that… careful … because you don't

have an OT on site so if you really want to learn from that OT, you don't have one to

learn from so you have to watch how much value you're going to get out of it. So, I was,

playing with the idea a little bit. (Participant U)

Participants identified that having completed a collaborative placement in the past

increased their willingness to choose a RE placement. These participants indicated they thought

their familiarity with the placement structures made them less afraid of the unknown.

Placement structure and timing.

Unlike a non-RE placement; the RE placement has an offsite fieldwork educator.

Participants described the positive aspects of being independent with supports. "But having that

connection with an OT was, um, super. Um, it was confidence building but it was super

confirming for me." (Participant V). Participants highlighted the importance and impact of

having access to their offsite fieldwork educator.

And to get that reassurance that you're doing a good job... But also, here's another idea for next week or do you guys feel like you got this accomplished this week? No, never thought about that. Well for next week, look into that. And sort of, so just giving that little bit of guidance. So, it was nice to be able to talk to her once a week I would say and more if we needed. (Participant V).

Participants described how they saw the experience of a RE placement being different from their previous non-RE experiences, and how that impacted what they expected of themselves in the RE environment.

you know, often an OT will shoot it right back at you. Well what would you do? But it's different when you actually, you don't want to be calling your offsite educator every, like several times a day or sending an email several times a day. You want to at least have tried something. (Participant Y).

However, participants also described how they missed the "in the moment" feedback opportunities they experienced in non-RE placements. Students were encouraged to consider this in their deliberations about their own learning needs.

A few times where I feel like I may have missed out on some of those in-the-moment learning opportunities …, we would go about our day and then we would kind of make a list of things that we would want to discuss or ask our educators the next time we met with them or next time we communicated with them. But there's something lost if they don't see what's happening, they don't hear what the person said. They don't see the body language and that kind of thing. And that in the moment learning where you can discuss it immediately after (Participant Y).

RE placements typically occur in the student's third or fourth (final) placement. Participants presented pros and cons for each of these placement times. Some participants saw an advantage in working with an OT during a final placement. Participants indicated this may be especially true if they moved into a very independent position upon graduation. One participant described her positions since graduation as being very independent, and her sense of regret at not having a last opportunity to learn directly from a practicing therapist within her last fieldwork environment.

Some participants saw the RE placement as a good option for the final placement as this provided a transition to practice. Participants described this as a way of dealing with their fear of transitioning to an independent practitioner. They saw the RE placement as a way of assisting them in the transition. One participant described moving from a third placement as RE into a final placement where the nature of the placement resulted in considerably less autonomy. This "step backward" presented some challenging situations for the participant. "I backtracked. And it was for a lot of reasons. But my level of autonomy was extremely less … But it was very frustrating. Very, very frustrating." (Participant U)

Completing two RE placements.

Two of the participants in the study completed RE placements for both their third and fourth placement. This is not a common occurrence. One participant (Y) described how she was unsure this was a good decision because she had feedback that not all of the OT community support RE placements. During member checking, this participant indicated she wanted it noted that she would not recommend students complete two RE placements.

And one of my classmates was talking about how his educator had said that they

wouldn't hire somebody who had had too many role emerging placements... But, I hadn't

65

thought of that before because I was only looking at the positives. And then, it made me

rethink that whole situation. So, then I thought maybe I should have just done one. But

too late now. (Participant Y)

Participant Y also reflected on how she feels she has missed some learning opportunities

by completing two RE placements and that she now goes to her colleagues with questions.

those in the moment learning opportunities there's been a few times where I've talked to

a therapist who has 25 experience and he looks at me and he says, didn't you learn that in

school? Or didn't you get to do that on placement? And I say, no. And exactly like with

this, the equipment part of things, the specialized stuff where people's needs are a little

bit more complex…. lifts, transfers, seating. Anything that gets to be a little bit more

complicated. (Participant Y)

Both participants were able to describe how their RE placements each prepared them for OT

practice. They were able to compare and contrast the skills and experience each RE placement

afforded them in their development as an occupational therapist.

Fit with student's skills and learning style.

Participants identified several personal skills students would find useful in the RE

placement. They saw time management as an important skill for student success in RE fieldwork.

Participants suggested students could gauge their time management and organization skills based

on their performance of these skills at school. Participants spoke about the need to be self-

directed and take responsibility for their own learning in RE fieldwork. The RE placement

required students to develop placement goals with their fieldwork educator and onsite-educator.

From these placement goals, the students generally developed a work plan for the placement.

Participants spoke about needing to be able to work independently to develop the placement

plan. "You need to be, self-motivated and you need to be able to manage your time and organize your plan and or create a plan and then get organized… you have to be kind of ready to take the reins and direct your, that whole self-directed piece." (Participant Y).

Participants identified the importance of potential RE students considering how their learning style would mesh with the learning opportunities on a RE placement.

If they can learn well from looking up techniques in their textbooks or online or in their notes, and some collaborating with other students then that's really a good sign. And then if they, if you learn better from actually observing, then you're not going to have as much of an opportunity to do that. (Participant Z)

Students who are struggling academically, or who had not excelled academically in the OT program were seen as poorer candidates for RE placements because of the many demands within the placement. In addition, there was an expectation that students would be able to use the academic knowledge they have acquired without the ongoing support of an educator.

Communication was seen to be a key skill required within a RE placement, "Their communication skills are huge. Just because you are on your own out there. You need to be the face of what you're doing and of OT." (Participant V) Participants were also divided on whether students needed to be able to establish good working relationships with other students prior to the RE placement, or if this could be developed within the placement. However, the good working relationships between the students were seen to be important to the success of the placement.

The student's personality or personal characteristics were also discussed in the context of whether or not RE would be right for them. Most participants saw students who were able to put themselves out there in order to establish relationships with others in the placement site and

students who were ready to take on a challenge as more likely to be successful in a RE placement. There was disagreement amongst participants about whether RE placements were suited to quieter students. Some participants thought quiet students would not fare very well "So, if you are a shy introvert who, struggles to be independent and needs a lot of direction, I think that you'd have a really hard time in those kinds of placements for sure." (Participant P); while other participants thought that RE placements offered opportunities for introverted students as well. "I would say even for those who are more of an introvert, in their shell. Yes, it was such a good experience…. Yea, I definitely would (recommend a RE placement)." (Participant V)

Some participants also considered the extent to which the RE placement would challenge them and their comfort level in this type of placement when considering which placement to choose. Participants talked about selecting a RE placement as a way to challenge themselves and push themselves out of their comfort zone. As one participant indicated

As I was saying for me, with the other three placements, I barely spread my wings because I just didn't feel comfortable so this one just forced me to. To be the primary lead and be the practitioner that was working with people versus just watching the OT direct. (Participant X)

RE placements were seen to be more unpredictable than non-RE placements and as such there needed to be congruence between the placement demands and the students' ability to meet those demands. Participants encouraged students to consider,

Yea, just their ability to be comfortable in an unknown situation I think. And their ability to understand that there might be more required of you or a little bit more of a challenge because not everything is set out in stone for you. You're not just following a routine or a

protocol or something that somebody, OTs usually, done for the past 20 years there. You

might be challenged to go on a different path, and you have to be sort of on your toes a

little bit. So, I think they need to be comfortable with that. (Participant V)

Participants recognized that students with many life challenges or additional stresses

outside of school may not be as suited to RE because of the many demands on students

completing a RE fieldwork placement such as;

if you have a lot going on already in your life. If you had, you know, family emergency.

If you, if you have your own health concerns you're dealing with or struggling with the

current, uh, program materials, absorbing. And you really just skimmed a lot of the stuff

and weren't excelling. (Participant U)

Participants identified a variety of criteria they used to make decisions about choosing a

RE placement as a student. However, when reflecting upon their decision from the perspective of

a practicing therapist, they outlined additional criteria for students to consider when choosing a

RE placement. In summary, when choosing the RE placement, participants considered fieldwork

profile requirements, the focus of the RE placement in relation to their areas of interest, and the

characteristics of the RE placement in relation to their learning needs. Participants suggested

students should consider their: time management, organizational skills, ability to communicate,

ability to establish relationships and ability to take responsibility for situations as they consider

completing a RE placement. In addition, participants described the need for students to think

about their learning style, their ability to manage unpredictable situations and their current

academic and personal situation when considering a RE placement.

Theme #2: Different learning: learned differently

This theme speaks to the participants' descriptions of how the RE experience provided the possibility for various independent learning opportunities that differed from typical placements where the learning was guided by the fieldwork educator. Participants described how these differences led them to hone different skills as opposed to skills specific to a given OT role, and what they drew on to meet these different demands.

Unique learning opportunities.

Participants described how expectations of what the student would learn on the RE placement differed as compared to the non-RE placement. Rather than learning the job of the occupational therapy fieldwork educator the student developed the role of an occupational therapist and learned the skills required for the development and implementation of such a role.

> when you go into other placements, you're there to learn the job. What is the job of that OT who's there? And this placement there was no OT there. So, you have to learn what to do and how to do it, with support of course. (Participant P)

Participants contrasted the process of entering the structured learning environment of a non-RE placement compared to starting a RE placement where the student was responsible to make decisions and define the parameters and implementation of their fieldwork placement with off-site supervision.

> like floundering around for the first little bit though. But that's how you figure out what direction you're going to go to. You have to kind of have multiple options in front of you or all the options. And then you got to narrow it down, so in that way you don't get to just dive right in and start doing OT because there's not an OT there with an established caseload and referrals already waiting there for you. (Participant Y)

Participants described how they were able to use opportunities within the RE placement to hone and practice strategies and phrases to respond to clinical situations they were unsure of. They also spoke of how they continued to use those strategies in practice.

> I don't know…we'll figure it out…the questions from the team were challenging, but that's what it feels like in real life.…Best part was getting that experience of feeling challenged and put on the spot and relying on my own clinical reasoning until I can find out more for them. And just learning those key phrases of, you know what, this is what I do know but I will find out more for you. (Participant U)

In non-RE placements objectives are typically provided by the fieldwork educator. However, participants described how in RE placements they were responsible for developing their own placement objectives in consultation with their offsite fieldwork educator.

Participants described feeling responsible to be more informed and to do more self-directed learning in RE placements than in typical placements. In contrast to having ongoing ready access to a fieldwork educator who answered questions, provided demonstrations or directed them to sources of information, participants had less access to their offsite educator, and were more responsible for implementing their own research and self-direction for the placement.

> So, I feel like you had the responsibility to do more learning so that you're more informed. And normally in most places that you go, they say, here's what you learn and here's some places you can learn it. Well here you had no one so you had to; you had to learn on your own. (Participant P)

Compared to their experience in non-RE placements the participants described how the requirement and opportunity to create their own structure in RE placements required them to be more independent. They identified building their skills in time-management and prioritization on

71

the RE placement and contrasted this with typical placements where the educator often assumes

more of the responsibility for directing placement activities.

> I was definitely forced to use them (self- directed skills, research skills and time
>
> management skills) and develop them on that placement rather than some of my
>
> educators saying, OK we've got this schedule at this time and this time and this time.
>
> And between these two assessments that I've already determined are appropriate, which
>
> one do you think we should do? Whereas it would be like, you know, for us for sensory,
>
> where do we even start? (Participant V)

Participants described the need to manage the day to day organization of the placement as

being more emotionally challenging than in a non-RE fieldwork placement where many things

are organized in advance of the students' arrival. Participants were also able to identify how this

emotional experience created a learning opportunity for them within the RE placement.

> having that responsibility, coordination. We coordinated everything. We didn't walk
>
> into anything assigned or set up for us. The trial and error piece were really scary and
>
> frustrating at the time. Not knowing how. Not being able to get the detail when we
>
> needed to or seeing an example. But then developing that courage to just go for it and
>
> then finding out we have enough knowledge to start. We can do this, right? But
>
> sometimes we don't get to go through that emotional process and frustration with an
>
> educator because they give you that security. They lead by example. (Participant P)

Participants highlighted the opportunity to develop and implement processes for

themselves that would normally have been embedded in a non-RE placement. Rather than

following along something established in the past by someone else, the RE student must

establish assessment and intervention processes as part of developing the placement. In addition,

the participants were completing the process they set up independently rather than depending upon an onsite educator through out the process. The opportunity to develop the components of the treatment process and to see the impact these structures have on practice was seen to be very useful.

> like the sequence of how you intervene and like the assessment and the noting and, just like that clinical thinking I think was really helpful. And really sort of set up a format that I think I use now. And I think it's, sort of the classic and everyone does it and that's what you're taught. But, until you actually are doing it in real life, you don't really understand like why it's so important to do it that way…. Like I had never really done that. It had always been my educator doing that and me sort of like tag teaming. But it was me being totally responsible and that definitely lended to my position now. (Participant W)

Being responsible for much of the implementation of the placement also allowed participants to understand practice responsibilities they were not exposed to in non-RE placements. Participants identified paperwork and charting responsibilities as being greater than what they had been aware of while a student on a non-RE placement. This led to an enhanced recognition of the responsibilities of a practicing therapist.

Seemingly small events like meeting members of the treatment team or individuals in the placement were also described as different in a RE placement. Unlike non-RE placements where an educator would introduce the student, orient the student to OT contacts, roles and resources, participants described having to do this independently. Participants reflected on how these networking and navigating skills developed in their RE placement have been very useful in their practice.

And so definitely those role emerging placements you have to go and make those

relationships work yourself. There's not an educator there that's going to say, oh this is

my student, you know, and you just smile politely and shake their hands. You're the one

putting your hand out there and introducing yourselves. (Participant Y)

Unlike a non-RE placement where the fieldwork educator would have already established

relationships with the multidisciplinary team; the development of these relationships fell to the

RE participants. Participants described the importance of understanding the needs of the team

within the organization, and the process of explaining potential OT roles in relation to these

needs. Participants described first doing research to be sure they could speak to the potential OT

roles in the RE environment, considering the needs of the multidisciplinary team, and the

importance of adjusting their definition of OT to their audience. Finally, participants described

the feeling of success when the multi-disciplinary team asked them to contribute.

As well as establishing roles, participants talked about the need to set limits related to the

OT role. Again, in a non-RE placement, the OT fieldwork educator would typically manage the

setting of limits.

We were asked to do some housing stuff which was way out of our wheelhouse. And we

had no idea what to do with that one, so that one got put back because we said, I'm sure

that we could help but we don't know how to help. And we had no idea where to even

start with that. (Participant P)

Two participants described seeing the potential for harm or negative incidents in the

placement. Both indicated they did not experience anything negative but saw potential for

something to happen.

I think that you need a good relationship with your fieldwork educator and with the

university field co-ordinators that you have to be comfortable if something, if shit does

hit the fan that you have somebody to go to and are willing to and able to go to them to

kind of help you solve some of your problems. Because I think that you're way more

likely for stuff to hit the fan in one of those placements than in one of the other

placements. (Participant P)

Participants described an investment in the RE placement they had not felt in other

placements. As a result, participants wished to leave a legacy of their investment in the

organization. In some RE placements participants shared projects within a file sharing site.

Some participants spoke of still having access to these files and being pleased to receive

notifications of changes to files shared with subsequent student pairs. Other participants spoke of

their projects still in use within the organization. With this awareness came a sense of pride that

their efforts were useful to the organization. "I think they still offer the group that we

developed… I remember feeling like that was, like we actually made a difference, you know, we

actually gave something that was able to be used later." (Participant W)

As participants described the RE placements they also reflected upon negative emotions

they experienced within the RE placement. Further, participants described these emotions "as

mimicking emotions they experienced later as novice practitioners. Participants described

"feeling like a fraud sometimes," (Participant P) and expressed a sense of regret looking back on

some of their decisions within the RE placement. A participant described a situation where the

RE site was very grateful for the student interventions; however, the participant felt she could or

should have done more. One participant expressed the wish she had her current level of

knowledge about the practice area when she was in the RE placement. She drew a parallel to

hearing practitioners reflecting upon their practice and expressing regret at past decisions made when they were less experienced practitioners.

What I drew on.

While the structure of a RE placement was more challenging than a non-RE placement; the RE placement structure provided flexibility and supported the participants in using both their academic knowledge and personal experiences differently than in a non-RE placement. Participants saw this flexibility as an opportunity to draw on their own strengths as opposed to modeling their educator and practicing within specific limits.

Without an on-site fieldwork educator, participants described how they drew on a variety of experiences and knowledge to frame their practice within the RE placement. Some participants described using previous fieldwork experiences to guide part of the RE placement. "So the first week, I kind of based it off what I did at [site]" (Participant X). Participants drew on academic experiences and theoretical knowledge to support the development and implementation of their placement plan. Participants described using specific theories to guide their assessment and intervention plans within their placement. Participants also outlined using problem-based learning processes to frame their clinical reasoning and support their decision making in the placement.

> but I know PBL (problem-based learning) was huge for us because you can use those steps
> to work with anyone and figure out to kind of put plan based using theories like the
> CMOP. So, it forced you to use your theories because there's nothing else to go on. Like
> where do I start? OK. You know back to kind of PBL mode here. (Participant P)

Participants highlighted that the RE placement afforded them the opportunity to develop a wide variety of skills they did not believe they would have developed in a placement with an on-

site educator and to use their own unique experiences and strengths during the fieldwork placement.

Theme 3: Shaping my OT lens.

Throughout their education participants developed an OT lens through which they viewed practice. Both academic and fieldwork experiences shaped this "OT lens". Participants described how RE experiences moulded the OT lens with which they entered the RE placement; how this influence continued through a subsequent placement into their current practice, and how they believed the impact of the RE placement would continue to affect their OT practice in the future. Specifically, participants identified that the RE placement had influenced how they saw the client and their world, how they practiced and their practice trajectory.

How I see clients and their world.

Participants described having opportunities to interact differently with clients as compared to more non-RE placements. Further, they described how these different connections impacted their perceptions of their clients' lives. For example, one participant described an opportunity to work alongside clients for a number of days. This experience provided an opening for the participant to understand the clients' stories and the realities of the clients' lives.

> it still opened my eyes even more just about how circumstances that are often out of a
>
> person's control can play a role in how their life turns out… And so, I think about things
>
> a lot differently… it just reminds you that you're getting a snapshot of the client's life
>
> and that it is so much more that has happened before that led up to the point where you
>
> came into their life. (Participant Y)

In other RE placements participants frequently visited or were working within the clients' living situation or the school where students spent their days. These experiences gave

participants the opportunity to see and more clearly understand the clients as people within the context of their everyday environment.

> what that placement taught me though it's not that they're not being compliant, something else is going on there. And I think that it really just humanized people for me. So, I think it's a good reality check that if I didn't have that experience I wouldn't understand it otherwise …I feel like that was where I learned that the most, about positive regard for other people (Participant P)

Finally, participants identified that they felt more responsibility for the client and more ownership for the therapeutic relationship they established with the client. This experience contrasted with non-RE placements where the fieldwork educator often mediated the student client relationship. The bond created with clients resulted in different relationships which in turn impacted the participants' perceptions of their clients and their lives.

> By the end of the placement you don't want to leave because like it's your dog and you're leaving your clients and well, I felt like they were my clients, not someone else's clients. …we had started some relationships with people, especially the people that attended the groups. And, they knew it was going to be a finite number of sessions, but regardless, still they were our clients. That's our group. And, you know, and we felt a little bit more ownership I think. (Participant Y)

How I practice in the world.

Participants identified that completing a RE placement impacted how they practiced OT. They described how the similarity between their RE placement and their OT position helped smooth their transition to practice. Participants described how their RE experiences helped them feel more comfortable and confident in their newly acquired position. They applied strategies

which were successful in the RE placement to the new position. "this is where those role emerging placements are going to be helpful because I've done this before, now I'm just doing it on my own instead of with a partner." (Participant Y)

Participants credited their RE experience for helping them to develop a broad understanding of the OT role and for increasing their confidence to practice within that role. The RE site may not have ever had an occupational therapist working in their environment. The RE experience provided participants opportunities to operationalize a broad perspective of the OT role to fit with the needs of the site.

Where this placement, it was so much wider than that. What else could I do? How could I assess? What should I research? How can I influence not only my clients but also the staff that my clients are working with? The school environment that my kids are working in. Getting jobs. Like it was so much wider. And I think that sometimes you can get stuck and just doing the job that's laid out for you. Where this, because I had so much freedom, there was an expectation, I could think, so much further. And so that experience taught me how to think outside the box (Participant P).

Participants described how they carried this broad scope of OT practice into their current positions, and they were not necessarily accepting of the limits imposed by current job descriptions. Some participants described using the RE experience to expand their role beyond their initial position description, feeling they were able to "do things outside the box" (Participant X). One participant, currently employed within an acute care setting, described the frustration of trying to practice as broadly as she knew was possible, but being limited by her work environment. She described her ongoing efforts and strategies to advocate within both her role and within the institution, to fill a broader scope of practice.

Trying to incorporate what I'm so passionate about (into) such a quick pace, already black and white type of OT role…what I find I'm advocating for is to change their perspective now. They have a perspective on OT, so now, well let me revamp it a little bit (referring to the OT role within the institution) (Participant U)

Participants also described how the RE placement experience also triggered their interest in advocating for OT services in the larger community.

Like more macro instead of just micro and meso… But I guess like as me as a person too, even if you think like macro again, like who do you vote for? …So, I think that it just influences not only my OT brain but it also influenced like my cultural and social brain and how I see the world … I have a passion for that now where I didn't have that before. (Participant P)

Participants outlined how the RE experience helped them develop confidence in their clinician role. By assuming the responsibility for setting up and implementing a program the participants felt comfortable receiving comments, and then considering the opinion of others through their own lens as opposed to feeling compelled to just following the feedback.

Like being independent, learning to start from scratch kind of thing. Being, your own clinician. And so not like other people tell you what you should do, but taking feedback and using it, with your clinical eyes and with even your personality. Like seeing what fits for you as a person. (Participant P)

Participants outlined how their RE experience helped them develop confidence in their own decisions, and to practice as an occupational therapist which can be seen in many aspects of their practice. A participant described how she developed an appreciation for the complexity and impact of OT interventions while in the RE placements. She saw this appreciation as supporting

80

increasing confidence which has resulted in increased ability to function within her current

position and to not be unduly affected by families or clients who may not appreciate the OT

interventions.

> I'm not just getting them to do some finger Olympics just because …it's not just, oh well
>
> this is what a textbook showed me to do. I'm taking this and this and this and this into
>
> account and we've talked and I've gotten to know a little bit more about this. So, this is
>
> what I think might work, …There's sort of a little bit more, it's more of a maze than that.
>
> It's totally more complex...I think it really, really gave me the confidence of they're
>
> really going to look at me as the OT. They're going to take what I have to heart. So, not
>
> taking those families to heart or feeling like, oh I'm an awful OT. (Participant V)

A participant described how meeting the challenges of the RE experience gave her the

confidence to face a challenge and thereby learn from the experience. In addition, she described

that the rewards she received from the RE placement have encouraged her to not shy away from

opportunities, and to reap the rewards of meeting challenges. Participants discussed how the RE

placement increased their confidence in managing situations which were both new and had little

structure. Because they had successfully navigated such situations as students in RE placements,

participants felt equipped to deal with such situations in practice. "And it also gave me a comfort

of just being thrown into something kind of where there's no structure." (Participant P)

As opposed to seeing themselves as needing to know all once they are practicing,

participants described how the RE placement experience enabled them to recognize the

importance of being a lifelong learner, and to include learning as part of their OT role.

> it's OK, maybe just go online and read stuff to figure out more about something so that
>
> you can do something later down the line. So, it helped me learn that, but it's OK to

learn. And it's OK to watch and observe, and to ask questions. So, it really helped me

grow as a clinician before I was a clinician. (Participant P)

Further, participants described how the RE experience helped them to feel comfortable, not

always looking for "the only right answer" (participant V), thereby developing tolerance for the

perspective that in practise there can be many right answers.

I would still be looking for the right answer and would not have yet realized or not as

early realized that there's not a right answer and that's part of taking all that. All the

different things into consideration so, I think definitely that's where I would still be if I

didn't have that (referring to a RE placement). (Participant V)

One participant described success in her RE placement when they reached out to an

occupational therapist practicing in a similar area for additional mentorship. Using this

experience as a model, the participant reached out to other occupational therapists when she

moved into her first position in a newly developed OT role. The RE experience has continued to

impact her practice as she now also provides this mentorship to novice OT clinicians. Other

participants talked about using RE experiences to now give themselves the freedom to approach

others, ask questions and ask for help as needed.

Practice trajectory.

Participants identified that the RE placement influenced their interest in the practice area,

their job search, transition to practice and their plans for the future of their career. By having

seen the potential of community practice participants described seeing the importance of

practicing in that environment in the future. Participants talked of the need to practice in the

community as a way of understanding a clients' reality.

I think it really changed my perspectives on how valuable it is to see people in their

homes which made me think about community OT. And just that, how that gives a

whole different perspective because I had done a placement, my first placement was in

acute care. And you just ask people questions, about their home and how they're

managing. And they can tell you all kinds of stuff and you just have to take their word

for it. But this, … seeing people in their homes, that's where it started. And then the

primary care placement doing home assessments there, that's where OT belongs. If

people are spending the majority of their time in their homes, that's where we need to

be. (Participant Y)

The broad view of practice gained through RE not only influenced the participants view

of their current practice. Participants credited their RE experience with enabling them to see the

potential for OT roles in a variety of settings and to expand their view of OT practice.

Participants described how the RE placement expanded their perspective of the types of roles

they could consider as an occupational therapist. Having experienced the development of an OT

role in an environment which had not housed on occupational therapist previously encouraged

participants to look at other environments and try to identify potential OT positions. As a result,

some participants anticipated they would continue to move into different positions than they

would have considered without their RE experience.

I don't just think about what other job can I get, I think about what else can I do as an

OT. And I think that that is how that placement has fed into my contemplation. … So, it

didn't colour where I am now but it definitely is going to colour where I could go in the

future. (Participant P)

One participant spoke about currently working in a hospital-based position but continuing to look at and considering applying for community and health centre positions because they are more in keeping with her preferred practice area. Though, participants described how, upon graduation, they frequently applied for whatever positions were available. At that point, they did not necessarily feel they had the luxury of waiting to apply for their "perfect position". "We don't always have that choice about what direction we're going to take in our career when we're first starting out." (Participant Y) "You apply for everything but you hope for certain ones more than you hope for others." (Participant P)

The RE experience enabled participants to apply for positions they would not have previously considered. Participants described their willingness to expand the breadth of their job search as being the result of feeling confident and competent. Participants linked successfully managing a variety of experiences within the RE placements to their sense of confidence and therefore to their expanded job search. "I doubt I would have applied for this job had I not done RE placements. Because it would have been too scary, too far out of my comfort zone." (Participant Y) By completing placements with high levels of independence participants felt more able to apply for and be successful in jobs requiring this level of independence.

The RE experience gave participants insight into the characteristics of the practice environment they would like to consider for themselves as they contemplated their job search. Participants discussed how the RE experience helped them identify the structure and support they were hoping to find in their work environment. One participant described how she believed some therapists would like complete autonomy and others are content within very structured environments. As a result of her RE experience she knew she, however, wanted something in the middle between those two extremes. Without the opportunity of a RE placement she would not

84

have experienced a very autonomous placement. She had found the balance in her current position.

Other participants spoke of how the RE placement experience and requirements helped them consider what processes would be required to establish an OT position in a new environment.

> Yea, actually that was the total thing that happened as a result of, being in that placement because I recognized OK, if I'm going to work here, I'm going to have to set up a secure filing system and like I had no idea even what would be involved in terms of operating as an OT there. But what I did know is I didn't want to do it. (set up things like a record keeping system without any supports) (Participant X)

Within the participant pool three individuals indicated they felt they had already found the position they would like to stay in for the foreseeable future. These three participants were all working in the community. Two were working in their "dream positions" with children and one is working as the first occupational therapist in community mental health in the region. Of the remaining four participants, one participant is contemplating her future, and the other three are continuing to monitor available positions. However, each of these four participants indicated the RE experience does impact the positions they will consider.

> But these placements taught me that, that may still be something I do somewhere down the road but it really expanded my view of what I can do in OT. Not necessarily what OTs can do but what I can do as an OT (Participant Y)

The RE placement shaped the lens with which the participants' view OT practice by shaping how they see their clients and the clients' world, how they practice in the world and their practice trajectory.

85

Three themes were developed from the seven participant interviews. The theme "Right for me" described the ways RE fieldwork was right for the participant and what, in retrospect, participants would suggest students weigh as they consider RE for a potential placement option. The second theme "Different learning; learned differently" described how the learning experiences afforded participants in RE fieldwork provided unique opportunities for learning which resulted in the development of different skills as compared to the non-RE environment. Participants described how they were able to draw on academic and fieldwork experiences to be successful in the RE environment. Finally, the theme "Shaping my OT lens" spoke to the impact RE fieldwork had on the participants' practice. Participants described how RE fieldwork shaped the way they see their clients, their current OT practice and plans for their future OT practice.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore how recent OT graduates perceived their RE fieldwork experience after they had practiced OT for at least six months. While students' perceptions of RE are well documented, there is little information from the perspective of recent OT graduates who are practising, particularly related to the influence of RE fieldwork on their development as a professional, reasons for participating in RE fieldwork, and their experience of the RE placement. Using interpretive description, three themes were developed and will be explored in relation to the study objectives, and the current research. Finally, the themes will be explored considering the implications this information has for individuals and groups involved in OT fieldwork education and the recommendations that spring from the findings in this study.

Objective 1: Reasons for Selecting RE Fieldwork

Objective 1 in this study was to explore, from the perspective, of recent graduates, their reasons for selecting RE fieldwork. More than one factor guided a participant's decision to select RE. Some participants considered the characteristics of a RE placement and described choosing RE placements as they felt it would provide them with the opportunity to become more active and independent rather than watching or following a fieldwork educator. Clarke (2012) described her participants choosing RE as a means of trialing their independence and focusing their RE placement on an area of interest. Many authors describe how their participants felt more independent while participating in a RE placement (Clarke, 2012; Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al., 2015; Clarke, Martin, Sadlo, et al., 2015; Rodger et al., 2009). Similar to all fieldwork, an interest in the placement practice area was a consideration for participants when choosing the RE placement. Participants described the RE placement as a way of gaining experience in an area where they wanted to practice in the future. Mattila and Dolhi (2016)'s participants identified an

interest in working with the population that was the focus of the RE experience but no comment is made about whether the student's interest impacted their assignment to the RE placement. Somewhat surprisingly, one participant indicated that they were unaware the placement was RE until after they were matched to the placement. No other studies on RE fieldwork have described students selecting a RE placement without understanding the type of placement they were selecting. If students are going to assess their fit for the placement demands and structure, they would be well served to be aware the placement is RE.

Participants also saw the RE placements as providing opportunities to experience practice environments not available within non-RE placements or environments seen as new areas of practice that students were interested in pursuing upon graduation. For example, student placements within high schools, primary care clinics, and homeless shelters were not, historically, available to participants in non-RE fieldwork placements. Choosing a RE placement for this reason is not explored in the literature. A survey of 248 RE placements across Canada in the 2013-2014 academic year saw the practice areas of health promotion and wellness (46%), mental health (18%), social inclusion (15%) and work vocational rehabilitation (7%) constitute 86% of the RE placements undertaken that year. However, according to 2014 CIHI data, these four practice areas only comprise 16 % of Canadian OT practice (Schmitz et al., 2018). This data supports the view that the majority of RE placements occur in areas where OTs can, but currently do not, practice. Exploring the OT role and providing fieldwork opportunities in new practice areas are RE fieldwork goals (Sullivan & Finlayson, 2000). By providing students with unique opportunities, RE placements allow students to develop unique skills in areas not typically included in a student's profile. Practice areas and sites such as primary care, and homeless shelters included in past RE fieldwork have now started to employ occupational

therapists. This outcome fits with the OT program goal of educating our students for future

practice and can highlight the potential for RE to create OT practice opportunities in novel areas.

A unique finding of this study, a participant described the potential of future employment

at the RE site as a significant factor in her decision to include the site on her preference list.

While finding employment is always a possibility; according to Schmitz et al. (2018), RE sites

do not typically develop OT positions following a RE placement. Clarke (2012) did not identify

possible employment as a reason for participants choosing a placement; however, one participant

did gain employment at the site following the RE placement. The academic OT program is

focused on helping students develop practice skills, finding employment for students through RE

is not the focus of the program. RE placements are learning opportunities. There is the potential

for conflict between the educational focus of the placement where students are encouraged to

hone and develop new skills and job hunting which requires the candidate to always present their

best selves. The RE experience can be stunted if the student focuses more on securing a position

than on their learning opportunity, particularly when the RE placement is the student's final

placement in the program, and they will begin practicing upon completion.

Objective 2: Placement Characteristics of RE Fieldwork

The second objective was to explore the placement characteristics of RE placements from

the perspective of newly graduated practising occupational therapists. Exploration of this

objective resulted in participants also identifying various characteristics that students needed to

ponder when considering RE placements and their fit to a RE placement.

Participants described ways in which their learning environment was different in RE

fieldwork compared to non-RE fieldwork. Non-RE placements use an apprentice model of

education where one educator provides one or two students with clinical education in a specified

practice environment across a defined length of time. During the fieldwork placement students

are expected to learn and be able to display the specific OT knowledge, skills and attitudes

required within the fieldwork environment. Participants described how, to be successful in non-

RE placements, they felt they were expected to mimic the fieldwork educator and were not

encouraged to develop their own independent style. In contrast in RE placements, participants

were forced to develop their own style and did not have a therapist watching as they worked.

Unlike practice environments with established roles; students in RE fieldwork needed to be able

to not only develop a role but needed to use theory and evidence to justify that role to others.

Participants described the RE learning environment as more emotionally demanding

without the buffer of an educator, it gave them the opportunity to truly understand the realities of

practice. Researchers described the challenging environment of RE placements that allowed

participants to think outside the box while being more anxiety provoking than a non-RE

placement (Clark (2012) and yet still enabling RE participants to develop confidence in their

ability to practice (Thew et al., 2018). Smith et al. (2014) described how the freedom from

ongoing supervision allowed students to focus more on the needs of their clients than on the

protocols of a specific environment. The chance to experience the realities of practice more

independently provided many opportunities to prepare students as they transitioned to practice.

Participants described RE placements as placing different demands on students compared

to non-RE placements. Participants described several personal characteristics that they have

identified, in hindsight, as important for success in the RE environment: being organized, able to

manage your time, and being self-directed; the ability to be flexible and to manage uncertainty;

and finally, being able to establish good relationships both with their collaborative student

partner and with the individuals within the role-emerging site. These characteristics were

consistent with the literature (Bossers et al., 1997; Wood, 2005), however, there is disagreement about whether participants need these skills prior to RE or whether the skills will be developed in the RE placement (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke, 2012; Rodger et al., 2009). Further exploration of these attributes and their development among student occupational therapists in RE fieldwork placements could shed some light on this question.

Study participants encouraged students considering RE to recognise that these placements can require more time and energy than non-RE fieldwork. Potential RE students were encouraged to consider their life circumstances. A participant suggested that if a student was experiencing additional demands within their personal life then RE may not be a good choice at that time. The extra time and energy that may be required within a RE placement is consistent with the findings of Clarke et al. (2014) who found the early portion of RE placements to be "physically, cognitively and emotionally demanding" (pg. 124). Dancza et al. (2013) described the RE experience as a "roller coaster" (pg. 6) and Knightbridge's (2014) participants used the term "overwhelming" (pg. 443) to describe the start of the RE experience. The feedback linking the placement demands to life circumstances is new to the literature. This caution is especially important when we consider many of the students within our educational programs who are managing roles such as parent, caregiver to elderly parents, and employee in addition to their student role. Again, these demands can be explained to students to enable them to make informed decisions about RE placements.

Participants spoke of the need for a fit between preferred learning style and the realities of RE fieldwork. The relationship between learning style and success in RE fieldwork has not been examined in the literature. Again, this information is important to share with students considering RE fieldwork. Students considering RE fieldwork would be well served to recognize

that without an occupational therapist onsite they will need to seek out opportunities in other

environments to receive specific training or to watch a therapist perform tasks. Potential RE

participants must be prepared to use resources, as well as collaborative and self-directed learning

in the placement. The program could provide this description to students to help them self-assess

their fit for this type of placement.

Participants also identified success in the academic portion of the OT program to be

important for success within the RE environment since participants were required to use this

academic knowledge more independently than in a non-RE placement. While the need for

academic strength has not been explored in depth elsewhere, Wood (2005) suggested that based

on her survey, the academic strength of the student is considered as an allocation criterion but

that this practice results in students having unequal access to RE placements. Solomon and Jung

(2006) selected their participants based on skills the students had demonstrated previously. The

program that is the focus of this study does consider student academic success and fieldwork

strength when allocating RE placements. RE fieldwork educators are not available at all times

nor are they onsite; therefore, the support available to students is less than in a non-RE

placement. As a result, students who have struggled in previous fieldwork placements or in the

academic portion of the program are not seen to be good candidates for RE placements.

Participants encouraged students considering RE to think about the characteristics of the

particular RE experience. Within the program in question, a RE placement can be offered more

than once and be completed by a different group of students in each offering. The focus of the

RE placement and the student role evolves across time. Generally, the initial RE placement gives

students the opportunity to explore the OT role within the fieldwork environment and once the

RE placement is more established, there is greater opportunity for students to work with clients

and less opportunity for program development. Participants indicated it was important for students thinking about RE to consider whether the placement would meet their learning needs based on the evolution of the placement. The changing characteristics of RE placements and the related learning opportunities for students has not been explored in the literature.

Participants stressed the value of completing the RE placement in collaboration with another student. The relationship with a collaborative student partner has been explored in relation to interprofessional learning (Solomon & Jung, 2006) and the use of collaborative learning in RE placements (James & Prigg, 2004; Rodger et al., 2009). Clarke (2012) recommended placing students into RE placements in pairs as a way to decrease anxiety and increase peer-learning opportunities. As outlined earlier, the OT Program that was the focus of this study only offers collaborative RE fieldwork placements. Students do not have the option to participate alone; this has been intentional knowing the importance and benefits of the collaborative model for students' learning, particularly as it relates to RE fieldwork.

It appears from this study that participants did not see RE placements as a good fit for all students. This is consistent with some conclusions outlined in the literature (Bossers et al., 1997; Solomon & Jung, 2006). However, other studies suggest that based on the perceived benefits of RE fieldwork, all OT students should complete a RE placement as part of their entry practice education (Clarke, 2012).

Objective 3: Influence of RE Fieldwork on Preparation for Practice, Current Practice and Practice Plans

The third objective was to explore, from the perspective of recent OT graduates who are practising, the influence of RE fieldwork on their preparation for practice, their current practice and their practice plans. RE fieldwork offers many opportunities to help prepare students for

practice. Successful completion of a RE placement requires being able to synthesize information from a variety of sources and apply the information to a novel environment. Students are expected to analyze, evaluate, and create within the RE environment. When considering Bloom's taxonomy of learning in relation to the performance required of an OT student in RE fieldwork we see the student is expected to perform at the highest cognitive levels (Bouchard, 2011). This level is in keeping with independent practice. Success in these experiences appears to create a sense of confidence for the student and therefore seems to support their successful transition to practice after graduation.

Participants described using processes and clinical reasoning they had honed within their problem-based learning courses and previous fieldwork to apply research in tandem with both their academic and clinical knowledge to the unique situations they encountered within the RE environment. Having the opportunity to think outside the box, not depend upon already established processes, and develop their own interventions and programs enabled the RE participants to feel more comfortable and confident in their competence. By successfully navigating these RE environments, the participants described feeling a confidence which they were then able to use to support their transition to practice. This description is consistent with the literature where RE fieldwork is seen to enable students to link theory and practice (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009), and to feel increased confidence in their professional practice (Clarke, 2012; Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al., 2015; Thew et al., 2008; Thew et al., 2018). Research identifies this confidence and the ability to apply knowledge in new situations as requirements for successful transition to practice in super-complex environments such as those encountered in community and in new and evolving OT practice (Fortune & McKinstry, 2012; Holmes & Scaffa, 2009; Robertson & Griffiths, 2009).

Participants reflected upon the pros and cons of completing RE as the last or second to last fieldwork placement within their OT program. When considering RE as a third or fourth placement there was no clear consensus amongst participants as to which timing is preferred. Participants identified different reasons for selecting one time over another. For example, one participant wished she had done her RE earlier because she did not have access to mentorship in her positions post graduation and in hindsight would have liked to have worked with an occupational therapist in her final placement. Her practice trajectory, then, influenced her perception of the best timing for a RE placement. Clarke (2012) suggested that RE was best suited to placements at the middle or later within the OT program but not for placements at the end of the program. She suggested the first fieldwork is best situated in a non-RE setting. Clarke (2012) further stated that students are afforded the opportunity to develop an understanding of practice and identity in RE fieldwork which can form a solid foundation upon which to situate further learning. Therefore, a RE placement in one of the middle placements ensures students have the opportunity to use this learning in a future placement prior to practice (Clarke, 2012). Participants in Bossers et al. (1997)'s study felt RE placements were best suited to final placements. By contrast, Gat and Ratzon (2014) found that the timing of the fieldwork placement did not affect the impact of RE fieldwork on participants. The preferred timing may vary depending upon what is being examined and the participants' experiences post graduation. However, students considering RE placements would benefit from knowing the potential advantages and disadvantages to the timing of RE placements within the context of their placement options, so the students can effectively consider different options in their decision-making.

Participants described how RE fieldwork provided an opportunity to get to know their clients as people and to understand the realities of their clients' lives which formed the basis for the positive regard felt for clients in practice. Descriptions of how relationships with clients are different in RE placements (Bossers et al., 1997; Clarke et al., 2014; Mattila & Dolhi, 2016; Thew et al., 2008; Velde et al., 2007) and the impact this relationship has on client-centeredness (Fieldhouse & Fedden, 2009; Kearsley, 2012; Smith et al., 2014; Thew et al., 2018) are well-documented in the RE literature. However, there is no discussion in the literature of how these unique relationships impact participants' future practice.

The RE placement also provided the impetus for participants to develop an interest in advocacy which had continued into their practice as occupational therapists. Kearsley (2012) outlined how students, who had completed RE placements, saw advocating for OT as difficult at first but also described the experience as an important learning opportunity. Advocacy is an important skill for occupational therapists to develop and use in practice. The Canadian profile of practice for occupational therapist (CAOT, 2012) outlines the role of change agent as an essential focus of practice. This role requires occupational therapists advocate for the role and benefits of the profession. RE fieldwork provides opportunities for student occupational therapists to develop and implement these skills prior to entering practice.

Participants described using similar strategies in their practice as what they had used in their RE experience. Participants described developing and using the statement ", "this is what I do know but I will find out more for you" as a strategy to deal with situations within the RE environment; the RE environment provided participants with an opportunity to develop a comfort using this strategy and implement it in practice. Hodgetts et al. (2007) outlined how, in their research, most new graduates were not confident enough to say "I don't know" in their OT

position. While new graduates surveyed by Hodgetts et al. (2007) continued to seek knowledge to support their OT role; most believed they should know everything to perform the role for which they had been hired even though it is generally accepted that it takes at least 6 months to two years for clinicians to feel clinically competent (Hodgetts et al., 2007). Educators provide students with the opportunity to manage unpredictable and unanticipated situations in non-RE fieldwork; however, participants highlighted that these situations feel very different in a RE placement with no ready access to a fieldwork educator. This different learning environment then seems to provide more opportunity for students to implement and further develop skills to deal with a variety of situations in practice.

A participant discussed being able to set limits to the OT role within the RE placement when the request made of them was beyond what they saw as fitting within both their level of competence and the OT role. Another participant described recognizing the potential for harm within their RE placement environment. The participants' perception of setting limits and the potential for harm were not explored further in this study. This finding is at odds with Clarke's (2015) finding where participants described feeling uncomfortable with situations where they felt expectations were beyond their capability yet where they still took on the tasks asked of them. Being able to set limits and determine when requests fit within their competence and role and recognizing potentially harmful situations are similar to practice contexts where, upon graduation, new graduates may be asked to perform tasks they are not comfortable doing for various reasons. Having exposure to this opportunity in RE fieldwork while students are independent but can still access a mentor could help students prepare to manage similar situations in their future practice and warrants further exploration.

Participants described how RE fieldwork broadened their understanding of the OT role in practice and how this understanding of OT practice affected both how they practice in the world and their practice trajectory. As a result of the RE experience, participants described an increased interest in the practice area, feeling more empowered to apply for positions they would not have considered without their RE experience and once hired less limited by the parameters of an OT position. Further, participants described using their RE experience as a way of increasing their marketability when competing for positions. Participants described looking for positions which fit the skills of an OT rather than looking at "OT positions" and looking at situations and thinking about how an OT role could fit into the environment. In this study, six of seven participants were practicing in the community when they were interviewed. Of these, two were the first OTs in their position, and three were working in positions which could be filled by other disciplines and therefore were not specific OT positions. Thew et al. (2018) reported 100% of her participants described their RE experience in their job interviews and were offered the first position for which they interviewed. In addition, Thew et al. (2018) found that even a graduate with 7 years experience felt the RE placement was still impacting her practice. Clarke, Martin, de Visser, et al. (2015) found participants were able to look at potential OT roles and to use the RE experience to market themselves into these roles. RE fieldwork appears to broaden graduates' perspectives of occupational therapy practice and open doors for occupational therapists to work in new and evolving areas of practice.

In this study participants reflected upon how the RE placement impacted the type and characteristics of the environment they wanted to work in upon graduation. They described both barriers and enablers to practice. One participant considered pursuing a position within the RE environment where she had completed her placement. This position would have been the first

employee position, aside from the manager, within the organization. However, with this opportunity came a number of challenges. For example, she described the potential difficulty in meeting provincial OT regulations for documentation and the management of client records. The challenges related to the development of the position led the participant to choose an autonomous community position with structural supports, such as charting protocols, in place. Barriers to developing positions within the RE environments are not explored within the literature. Another participant reflected on how the RE environment led her to choose a work environment with both autonomy and a community focus but again with supports such as access to a mentor and other structural elements because she learned from the RE placement that she wanted these things in her work environment. How participating in RE fieldwork impacts what graduates look for in a practice environment upon graduation is not explored in the literature but this study offers some potential insights that warrant further exploration.

One participant explored the practice challenges created by completing two RE placements. The participant pointed to specific OT skills she did not learn in her fieldwork that she attributed to having 50% of her fieldwork as RE. This finding is not explored in the literature and warrants further exploration to understand the implications of doing more than one RE placement on students learning outcomes. In keeping with this finding, managers of occupational therapists expressed concerns about a graduate who completed too many RE placements as part of their fieldwork requirement not being adequately prepared with the requisite "OT skills". This notion was briefly explored in the literature. Wood (2005) described one of 21 participants in her survey indicated concern about practice preparation of students who completed a RE placement. Cooper and Raine (2009) described the perception of some individuals that non-RE placements

provided more appropriate education opportunities. The prevalence of this concern is not well documented and warrants further exploration.

Implications for the OT Profession

RE fieldwork appears to support the development of skills required for a students' successful transition to practice. This includes the development of practice management, evidence-based practice, advocacy, collaboration and communication skills. Program development and implementation skills cultivated on RE placements appear to enhance a graduate's ability to be successful in a variety of environments where these skills are required for practice. Many of the skills developed align with the Profile of Occupational Therapy Practice in Canada (CAOT, 2012) that outlines seven key roles for practice: expert in enabling occupation, communicator, collaborator, practice manager, change agent, scholarly practitioner, and professional. Participants described each of these roles to some extent in relation to their RE experience.

The experience of the RE learning environment appears to differ from that experienced in a non-RE placement. Without the buffer of an onsite OT fieldwork educator participants in RE placements seem to experience a learning environment which provides a more realistic sense of independent practice. RE participants developed a broader perception of the OT role. The opportunity to use theory and research to develop and justify an OT role appeared to provide them the confidence and experience to move beyond defined "OT positions" and explore where OT would fit in a variety of environments. This preparation appeared to allow them to move into more autonomous areas of practice and to see a range of professional opportunities.

It appears then, that completing RE fieldwork helps prepare our graduates to enter and be successful in complex environments. By developing skills which facilitate transition to practice

and confidence in their ability to function as an effective clinician; graduates who completed RE fieldwork appear to be prepared to consider practice in a variety of venues. Successful transition to practice in a variety of environments and the ability to develop and adjust to the needs of the practice environment are key to the success of occupational therapists and the broadening of the profession of OT. The ability to adapt to new environments and situations should support the growth and development of the profession in a variety of settings. When graduates see potential positions and are successful in securing those positions, we expect to see an increase in the profile of OT in a variety of environments. Developing new positions then, could offer graduates a broader scope of practice and potentially access to a broader practice trajectory. Ultimately this increased breadth of practice could increase the potential roles available to occupational therapists.

One of the goals of RE fieldwork is to explore new practice areas for OT, and thereby develop new positions in those areas. If there are many barriers to moving into new practice areas, as identified by study participants, it will be difficult for new graduates to capitalize on the skills gained in the RE fieldwork context and consider trying to develop an OT position in the area. If the OT profession has an interest in expanding practice areas then the profession would be well served to consider providing access to the support or education required for graduates to transition to these emerging practice areas. Access to mentorship to address challenges like setting up documentation processes in unique environments or while creating an OT position in a new environment are examples of supports which would help graduates moving into unique situations. Supports could be available through employers such as health regions, through professional organizations responsible for offering ongoing education to practicing clinicians and through regulatory organizations which are responsible to provide best practice guidelines.

Matching services may also be beneficial to connect mentors with mentees who are interested in learning about moving into unique environments. Facilitating these connections can also be seen to fit with the role of professional organizations.

Implications for the OT Program

It appears from this study that students might benefit from information about and preparation for RE fieldwork at two different times; when considering selecting a RE placement and prior to starting a RE placement. The program which was the focus of this study expects students to assess their fit for placements prior to submitting their placement preferences; in essence students self-select. Knowing that a participant was unaware that the placement was RE begs the question of how students are being prepared to make decisions about RE fieldwork opportunities. It appears students would benefit from being aware of the requirements of specific types of placements such as RE. The program needs to consider how to adequately inform students about what is required to be successful in a RE placement. Prior to placement selection the students should consider their learning style, their academic strength, the types of skills they possess that support success in the RE environment, what they hope to learn in the RE environment and how the additional demands of a RE placement could impact their life. Students would likely also benefit from descriptions of what it could be like to learn within a RE environment to help them see potential benefits and challenges of the RE environment for themselves.

Once a student has been matched to a RE placement the student would likely benefit from information to help them to prepare for the learning environment. Preparation for RE would assist the student in understanding the realities and expectations of the RE placement, and the role and expectations of the RE fieldwork educator. The program that is the focus of this study

provides education to students completing a collaborative placement for the first time. Education to students completing RE fieldwork would be in addition to education about collaborative fieldwork. As well as helping the student to prepare, the education could provide further clarity about the roles of each of the participants in the RE experience including the onsite educator, the offsite fieldwork educator and the student. The preparation may also include things like tips for success within the RE environment.

Student interest, as one of the primary drivers for students choosing a particular RE placement, can create challenges for the OT program. In the interest of efficiency, the program develops RE placements so they can be offered to students from year to year. Interest in particular practice areas can vary across student cohorts. A number of strategies have been used to deal with the variability of interest in a specific placement across time. Focusing on populations or practice areas such as paediatrics or psycho-social practice, which are typically underrepresented in non-RE placements, can increase the likelihood of a placement match. In addition, targeting new or emerging practice areas can also increase student interest in an area of practice. When dealing with a varied or large RE site there may be a variety of projects that students could choose as the focus of their placement. This choice affords the student the opportunity to adjust the placement to their learning needs. The university fieldwork program that was the focus of this study works in collaboration with OT leaders and visionaries to target practice areas and sites that will be in sync with the future direction of OT practice in the region. All of these strategies combined create RE placement offerings which will hopefully be of interest to students and maximize the impact of the time and effort required to develop these placements.

The benefits of RE fieldwork seem to be evident and should continue to be part of the placements available to second year MOT students. Based on participant feedback, to continue to provide the best learning environment wherever possible, these placements should continue to be offered as collaborative placements where two students are placed together in one placement site. The notion of whether or not all students should complete RE fieldwork remains uncertain. Participants described their ability to meet the challenges of RE fieldwork, and for some this was prior to their final placement in the program; however, some participants suggested that not all students may be good candidates for RE placements. From a pragmatic perspective the program which was the focus of this study does not currently have the resources available to develop, implement and supervise the number of RE placements that would be required to make RE fieldwork mandatory. Therefore, it appears that RE placements should not be required of all students.

RE placements, though, are also essential to provide sufficient numbers of placements to our students and increase the available number of placements in areas such as psychosocial practice. The OT program is encouraged to strike a balance between the number of times a student can participate in a RE placement and the variety and number of placements available to a specific student cohort. Sometimes students may choose to complete a second RE placement, despite knowing there are some concerns. They see completing a second RE placement as the best choice given the other options available for a specific placement. While students completing two RE placements is unusual within our program, it would be important to consider these concerns and review this practice.

Intuitively we know that RE placements include some potential risks. Students will be pushed to try things they may not feel comfortable doing; however, there may be times when

they are asked to do something outside of an OT role or that they are ill-prepared to do. The program could consider adding education about setting limits and identifying and managing risk into the student preparation session. This education will likely need to include a formal discussion and written information outlining the limits and expectations of the student in their role, the onsite educator, and the RE fieldwork educator. In addition, students need to have information about setting limits and a clear understanding of expectations prior to the placement. Helping students to learn how to be alert to situations with potentially negative outcomes and discussing a response plan would also likely be helpful components of the plan.

Participants spoke of having the opportunity to get to know and understand their clients as unique individuals while completing RE fieldwork. This experience has the potential to impact students' future OT practice and enhance their ability to view their clients from a client centered strengths-based perspective. Students would be well-served to have more opportunities to develop a more balanced perspective of their clients' lives. RE placements are not available to all students, therefore the OT program could explore other ways of helping students develop client relationships that are less focused on deficits and challenges and more focused on knowing and understanding individual lives and experiences. The program can explore other opportunities to understand client stories that could occur both within fieldwork experiences but potentially within the academic component of the program as well. Spending time shadowing clients or interviewing clients to understand their life story and client panels are both methods of incorporating a balanced view of the lives of clients with whom we interact.

Based on what we know about RE fieldwork, we are able to identify at least some of the characteristics of RE fieldwork that support the professional development of OT students. Educators and fieldwork sites commit time and energy to the education of OT students in non-

105

RE placements; however, participants described the experience as different in non-RE environments. The OT program could learn more about the contrasts as described between RE and non-RE environments. Since it is recommended that not all students be required to complete a RE placement, it would be beneficial if the OT program could work with fieldwork educators to incorporate as many of these experiences found in RE fieldwork as possible into non-RE fieldwork placements offered to students. Students have four placements across their OT program. A graded approach could be developed whereby students are given increasing autonomy and opportunities to increase their self-direction across fieldwork placements.

By working with educators to develop an intentional stepwise plan addressing self-direction, autonomy, and independent application of knowledge to unique situations, it is hoped that some of the advantages of RE fieldwork can be incorporated into non-RE fieldwork. By scaffolding experiences across placement levels, students may have more access to opportunities which are seen to increase autonomy and confidence. The program could work with educators and sites to develop a variety of opportunities and experiences which educators could consider and incorporate into their fieldwork program. Presenting students with opportunities to develop OT roles or interventions within established programs and expecting students to use their academic, experiential and research knowledge to defend their reasoning for these roles or interventions could provide some of the advantages of participating in a RE placement.

Included in these plans could be the development of more role-expanding placements where students work with an onsite fieldwork educator but also look at the environment to evaluate how the OT role could be expanded within the environment. Using knowledge about the advantages of RE placements and providing all students with opportunities to develop skills to assist in transition to practice could assist new graduates as they move into their first roles as

106

occupational therapists. Providing opportunities for students to develop skills in applying knowledge to new environments or in novel ways could assist students to seek out new or expanded roles even within established sites thereby increasing the profile of OT. Competency and comfort with these autonomous learning strategies appear to have the potential to prepare students to practice in autonomous situations where they will not have access to other occupational therapists. These autonomous situations could include private practice, rural and remote environments, community positions or new and emerging practice areas as opposed to practice in OT departments with easier access to OT mentorship and other practice supports.

Developing RE experiences requires considerable time and energy on behalf of the OT program, the RE site and the offsite fieldwork educator. While the on-site educator generally assumes the responsibilities as part of their employment; the offsite fieldwork educator frequently volunteers their time. The program that is the focus of this study needs to develop role descriptions and resources to support both the on-site educator and the offsite fieldwork educator. These resources would both standardize these roles and enable individuals new to the positions to both understand and operationalize expectations. If the OT program is committed to maintaining the number and variety of RE placements available to students, the feasibility of continuing to depend upon volunteer RE fieldwork educators must also be evaluated and an alternative plan needs to be explored to enable the program to recruit RE fieldwork educators.

Future Research

Participants in this study all described their RE experience very positively. It would be useful to hear from participants who saw their RE experience differently to gain an understanding of less positive experiences to further inform RE fieldwork within OT programs.

If employers of occupational therapists have reservations about hiring graduates who completed RE fieldwork, these concerns could limit the perceived value of RE experiences for students. Further research would be helpful to understand both the prevalence of the practice community's concern and the specific concerns about the preparation of students who completed RE placements. Further, it is also important to explore the perceptions of employers of occupational therapists who completed RE fieldwork. This research could explore areas such as preparation for practice and competence in skills required to practice upon graduation. Additional education to the community could provide a balanced review of the potential benefits and challenges of RE fieldwork.

Participants in this study described RE fieldwork as placing extra demands on participants when compared with non-RE placements. Further research would help identify the extra demands outlined by participants in this study. Exploring the nature of these extra demands and potential supports for students might provide direction to OT programs in how to support RE participants while still allowing the students an opportunity to experience the benefits of RE fieldwork.

Further research is required to identify those specific characteristics of RE fieldwork that create unique learning opportunities and experiences which facilitate graduates' transitions to practice and provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge to unique and new situations. Since not all students complete RE fieldwork it would also be useful to understand how some of these characteristics could be incorporated into non-RE fieldwork.

Setting limits to the RE role and the potential for risk within the RE environment, as described by participants, each require further exploration. Research is required to understand how students set limits on RE placements and to further understand and determine the prevalence

of these concern about the potential for harm. This research can inform the development of education and the development of a response plan for students. Given the structure of RE fieldwork with no onsite occupational therapist, it is imperative these potential negative outcomes are reviewed, and a plan is developed to provide safety.

This study explores the practice trajectory of 7 graduates who had practiced between 6 months and 3 years. Further research is required to see if RE graduates of this and other programs also describe their practice trajectory as having been affected by RE fieldwork. As well as needing to know more about how RE fieldwork seems to impact an OT's early practice we also need to know whether the impact of RE is sustained past 3 years. The practice trajectory of students who did and did not complete RE fieldwork could also be compared to see if there are differences between the cohorts.

Limitations

This study included only 7 participants all from one OT program. Participants self-selected to participate in this study and each described the benefits they enjoyed from the experience. Potential participants who did not experience these benefits or see the value of the RE experience are not represented within the participant pool. Therefore, we cannot be sure that all students completing RE placements received the same benefits from the RE experience. It would be important to hear from other participants who have a different perception of RE fieldwork to describe a more balanced perspective.

My role as AFC quite likely had an impact on my recruitment. When I started this study, I did not believe my role would have a large bearing on this research. However, in hindsight I believe recruitment could certainly have been affected by my role. As potential participants were in school and being assigned to RE placements I was responsible for the assignment of

109

placements. Potential participants may have felt uncomfortable sharing their perceptions and descriptions of their RE experience. They may have assumed that I had a vested interest in the success of specific RE placements, or that I already understood their RE experiences.

Since all participants were from one OT program and therefore had one way of defining and implementing RE fieldwork the results cannot be seen to necessarily reflect the responses of OT students in other programs. Further study is required to identify if these results are representative of the experiences of other OTs who completed RE fieldwork in this program and other programs.

Within the MOT program that is the focus of this study there is a concerted effort to integrate academics and fieldwork experiences. Therefore, it is hard to tease out whether the impacts described are not also partially a product of opportunities to trial and develop skills within the academic portion of the program.

This study examined the impact of RE fieldwork through the eyes of practicing clinicians who had practiced for at least 6 months and up to 3 years. It appears that the impact of RE fieldwork was sustained to this three-year mark; however, it is not clear if RE fieldwork continues to affect the graduates' practice. Participants only completed their RE placements during the third or final placement. Therefore, the results may not be reflective of the experience of students who complete RE placements earlier in their program.

Memories can change across time and all of the participant descriptions are memories and therefore vulnerable to the impact of time. While the purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of graduate therapists who had practised; the time lapse between the RE placement and the research interviews will have created some distortions in the memories of the

participants. It is therefore unclear if their description of the RE experiences would have been different closer in time to the RE placement.

Given the student researcher was also the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator responsible for teaching students, matching students to all of their placements, and mediator for any concerns about fieldwork, my relationship with the study participants likely impacted the participants' responses. As much as the data in this study is seen to be co-created between myself and the participants, this relationship will have impacted the study results. It is not clear if responses were limited by this relationship, or if participants' assumptions about my knowledge of the RE experience were accurate. I can surmise that the relationship impacted the participants' responses, however I cannot list the impacts.

Finally, the student researcher's lack of research interviewing experience is a limitation in this study. Upon reflection I believe I should have probed more deeply into participant responses within the interviews, and further explored some responses.

Conclusion

OT students frequently complete RE fieldwork placements as part of their OT education. The experiences of students have been examined both during and immediately following these placements. However, little is known about how practicing clinicians who completed RE placements during their education perceive RE placements. This study explored practicing clinicians' experiences of RE fieldwork. The reasons students chose RE fieldwork, what practicing clinicians think, in hindsight, that students need to consider when thinking about a RE experience, what they learned that was different from non-RE placements and how they experienced that learning were all explored. Participants also described the impact of RE fieldwork on transition to practice, current practice and practice trajectory.

Participants chose RE fieldwork for a wide variety of reasons and gained many skills from the experience. There were many factors they considered prior to committing to the RE experience. Learning in RE placements appeared to be different than in non-RE placements whereby participants were required to independently develop and use skills, apply knowledge to unfamiliar situations, and develop their own approach to OT practice. Participants needed to set limits and manage risk within the environment. They drew on academics and previous fieldwork experiences to meet the demands of RE fieldwork. RE fieldwork is seen to be beneficial and support graduates' transition to practice. It appears participants in RE fieldwork are likely to see an expanded OT role in practice. However, RE placements are more demanding than non-RE placements and may not be appropriate for all students. These findings have led to recommendations related to increasing education to enable students to assess their readiness to participate in RE fieldwork, developing education to prepare students for participation in RE fieldwork and exploring ways of incorporating the benefits of RE fieldwork into other non-RE placements. Further research is recommended to understand the practice community's perception of RE fieldwork, to explore the potential risks in RE fieldwork, to compare practice trajectories of graduates who completed and did not complete RE fieldwork, and finally to explore if graduates believe RE fieldwork impacts their practice beyond three years.

References

Alsop, A., & Donald, M. (1996). Taking stock and taking chances: creating new opportunities for fieldwork education. *The British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 59*(11), 498-502.

Applefield, J. M., Huber, R., & Moallem, M. (2000). Constructivism in theory and practice: Toward a better understanding. *The High School Journal, 84*(2), 35-53.

Backman, C. (1994). Looking forward to innovative fieldwork options. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 61*(1), 7-10.

Bazyk, S., Glorioso, M., Gordon, R., Haines, J., & Percaciante, M. (2010). Service learning: the process of doing and becoming an occupational therapist. *Occupational Therapy in Health Care, 24*(2), 171-187. doi:10.3109/07380571003681194; 10.3109/07380571003681194

Boniface, G., Seymour, A., Polglase, T., Lawrie, C., & Clarke, M. (2012). Exploring the nature of peer and academic supervision on a role-emerging placement. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 75*(4), 196-201. doi:10.4276/030802212x13336366278211

Bossers, A., Cook, J., Polatajko, H., & Laine, C. (1997). Understanding the role-emerging fieldwork placement. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 64*(2), 70-81.

Bossers, A., Miller, L. T., Polatajko, H. J., & Hartley, M. (2008). *Competency based fieldwork evaluation for occupational therapy.* Toronto: Nelson Education.

Bossers, A., Murphy, S., White, C., Storr, C., Schmitz, C., Shimmell, L., . . . Mendez, L. (2015). *Role-emerging fieldwork: Academic influence on new directions for practice*. Paper presented at the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists Annual Conference, Winnipeg, Canada.

Bouchard, G. J. (2011). In full bloom: helping students grow using the taxonomy of educational objectives. *The journal of physician assistant education : the official journal of the Physician Assistant Education Association, 22*(4), 44. doi:10.1097/01367895-201122040-00007

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology, 3*(2), 77-101.

Brown, T., McKinstry, C. E., & Gustafsson, L. (2015). The need for evidence and new models of practice education to meet the 1000 hour requirement. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal., Advanced online publication. November 26*. doi:10.1111/1440-1630.12239

Campbell-Rempel, M., Leclair, L., & Mendez, L. (2015). The evolution of role-emerging fieldwork: the impact on student fieldwork placements. In *Poster Presentation Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists conference Winnipeg MB.* Poster Presentation, Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists Conference Winnipeg Manitoba.

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. (2012). *Profile of practice of occupational therapists in Canada.* Retrieved from https://www.caot.ca/document/3653/2012otprofile.pdf.

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. (2017). *Academic accreditation standards and self-study guide*. Ottawa, Canada: CAOT Publications ACE.

Carlson, J. A. (2010). Avoiding traps in member checking. *Qualitative Report, 15*(5), 1102-1113.

Casares, G. S., Bradley, K. P., Jaffe, L. E., & Lee, G. P. (2003). Impact of the changing health care environment on fieldwork education. *Journal of allied health, 32*(4), 246-251.

Clarke, C. (2012). *Occupational therapy students' experiences of role-emerging placements and their influence on professional practice.* (Unpublished PhD. Thesis), University of Brighton; Brighton

Clarke, C., Martin, M., de Visser, R., & Sadlo, G. (2015). Sustaining professional identity in practice following role-emerging placements: Opportunities and challenges for occupational therapists. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 78*(1), 42-50. doi:10.1177/0308022614561238

Clarke, C., Martin, M., Sadlo, G., & de-Visser, R. (2014). The development of an authentic professional identity on role-emerging placements. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 77*(5), 222-229. doi:10.4276/030802214x13990455043368

Clarke, C., Martin, M., Sadlo, G., & de-Visser, R. (2015). Facing uncharted waters: Challenges experienced by occupational therapy students undertaking role-emerging placements. *International Journal of Practice-based Learning in Health and Social Care, 3*(1), 30-45.

Connelly, L. M. (2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research.(Understanding Research). *MedSurg Nursing, 25*(6), 435.

Cooper, R., & Raine, R. (2009). Role-emerging placements are an essential risk for the development of the occupational therapy profession: the debate. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 72*(9), 416-418.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry And Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (2nd ed.): Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*: Sage Publications, Incorporated.

Crowe, M. J., & Mackenzie, L. (2002). The influence of fieldwork on the preferred future

    practice areas of final year occupational therapy students. *Australian Occupational*

    Therapy Journal, 49(1), 25-36.

Dancza, K., Warren, A., Copley, J., Rodger, S., Moran, M., McKay, E., & Taylor, A. (2013).

    Learning experiences on role-emerging placements: an exploration from the students'

    perspective. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 60*(6), 427-435.

Duncan, M., & Alsop, A. (2006). Practice and service learning in context. In T. Lorenzo, M.

    Duncan, H. Buchanan, & A. A. (Eds.), *Practice and service learning in occupational*

    therapy: enhancing potential in context. Toronto, Canada: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Fieldhouse, J., & Fedden, T. (2009). Exploring the learning process on a role-emerging practice

    placement: a qualitative study. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 72*(7), 302-307.

Finlay, L. (2002). "Outing" the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity.

    Qualitative health research, 12(4), 531-545.

Fisher, A., & Savin-Baden, M. (2002a). Modernising fieldwork, part 1: realising the potential.

    The British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 65(5), 229-236.

Fisher, A., & Savin-Baden, M. (2002b). Modernising fieldwork, part 2: Realising the new

    agenda. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 65*(6), 275-282.

Fortune, T., Farnworth, L., & McKinstry, C. (2006). Project-focussed fieldwork: Core business

    or fieldwork fillers? *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 53*(3), 233-236.

    doi:10.1111/j.1440-1630.2006.00562.x

Fortune, T., & McKinstry, C. (2012). Project-based fieldwork: perspectives of graduate entry

    students and project sponsors. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 59*(4), 265-275.

Friedland, J., Polatajko, H., & Gage, M. (2001). Expanding the boundaries of occupational therapy practice through student fieldwork experiences: description of a provincially-funded community development project. *Canadian journal of occupational therapy.Revue canadienne d'ergotherapie, 68*(5), 301-309.

Gat, S., & Ratzon, N. Z. (2014). Comparison of occupational therapy students' perceived skills after traditional and nontraditional fieldwork. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy : Official Publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association, 68*(2), e47-54. doi:10.5014/ajot.2014.007732; 10.5014/ajot.2014.007732

Gray, D. E. (2009). *Doing research in the real world / David E. Gray* (2nd ed.. ed.). Los Angeles: Los Angeles : SAGE.

Hachey, R., Duguay, M., Matteau, H., & Page, L. (1979). Enseignement clinique en milieu communautaire: une experience vecue a L'Universite Laval. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 46*(1), 15 -17.

Hamilton, A., Copley, J., Thomas, Y., Edwards, A., Broadbridge, J., Bonassi, M., . . . Newton, J. (2015). Responding to the growing demand for practice education: Are we building sustainable solutions? *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 62*(4), 265-270.

Hanson, D. (2011). Expanding practice borders: the value of nontraditional fieldwork models. *OT Practice, 16*(20), 6.

Hodgetts, S., Hollis, V., Triska, O., Dennis, S., Madill, H., & Taylor, E. (2007). Occupational Therapy Students' and Graduates' Satisfaction with Professional Education and Preparedness for Practice. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 74*(3), 148-160. doi:10.1177/000841740707400303

Holmes, W. M., & Scaffa, M. E. (2009). An exploratory study of competencies for emerging

practice in occupational therapy. *Journal of allied health, 38*(2), 81-90.

Huddleston, R. (1999a). Clinical placements for the professions allied to medicine, Part 1: A

summary. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 62*(5), 213-219.

Huddleston, R. (1999b). Clinical placements for the professions allied to medicine, part 2:

Placement shortages? Two models that can solve the problem. *British Journal of*

Occupational Therapy, 62(7), 295-298.

James, C., & Prigg, A. (2004). A self-directed fieldwork program to provide alternative

occupational health placements for undergraduate occupational therapy students.

Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 51(2), 60-68.

Kearsley, C. (2012). Non-traditional practice placements: a starting point for service

development. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 75*(5), 244-246.

doi:10.4276/030802212x13361458480405

Knightbridge, L. (2014). Experiential learning on an alternative practice education placement:

student reflections on entry-level competency, personal growth, and future practice.

British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 77(9), 438-446.

doi:10.4276/030802214x14098207540956

Ladyshewsky, R., & Healey, E. (1990). *The 2: 1 teaching model in clinical education: A manual*

for clinical instructors: University of Toronto.

Law, M. C., & MacDermid, J. (2008). *Evidence-based rehabilitation: A guide to practice*.

Thorofare, NJ: Slack incorporated.

Mattila, A. M., & Dolhi, C. (2016). Transformative Experience of Master of Occupational

    Therapy Students in a Non-traditional Fieldwork Setting. *Occupational Therapy in*

    Mental Health, 32(1), 16-31.

McAllister, L., Paterson, M., Higgs, J., M.,, & Bithell, C. (2010). *Innovations in allied health*

    fieldwork education: a critical appraisal (Vol. 4). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense

    Publishers.

Mulholland, S., & Derdall, M. (2005). A strategy for supervising occupational therapy students

    at community sites. *Occupational therapy international, 12*(1), 28-43.

Oliver, C. (2012). The relationship between symbolic interactionism and interpretive description.

    Qualitative health research, 22(3), 409-415. doi:10.1177/1049732311421177 [doi]

Overton, A., Clark, M., & Thomas, Y. (2009). A review of non-traditional occupational therapy

    practice placement education: a focus on role-emerging and project placements. *British*

    Journal of Occupational Therapy, 72(7), 294-301.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.. ed.). Thousand Oaks,

    Calif.: Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications.

Prigg, A., & Mackenzie, L. (2002). Project placements for undergraduate occupational therapy

    students: design, implementation and evaluation. *Occupational Therapy International,*

    9(3), 210-236.

Roberts, M. E., Hooper, B. R., Wood, W. H., & King, R. M. (2015). An international systematic

    mapping review of fieldwork education in occupational therapy. *Canadian Journal of*

    Occupational Therapy, 82(2), 106-118. doi:doi.org/10.1177/0008417414552187

Robertson, L. J., & Griffiths, S. (2009). Graduates' Reflections on their Preparation for Practice. *The British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 72*(3), 125-132. doi:10.1177/030802260907200307

Rodger, S., Thomas, Y., Dickson, D., McBryde, C., Broadbridge, J., Hawkins, R., & Edwards, A. (2007). Putting students to work: Valuing fieldwork placements as a mechanism for recruitment and shaping the future occupational therapy workforce. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 54*(SUPPL. 1), S94-S97. doi:10.1111/j.1440-1630.2007.00691.x

Rodger, S., Thomas, Y., Holley, S., Springfield, E., Edwards, A., Broadbridge, J., . . . Hawkins, R. (2009). Increasing the occupational therapy mental health workforce through innovative practice education: a pilot project. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 56*(6), 409-417.

Sandelowski, M. (2000). Focus on research methods-whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in nursing and health, 23*(4), 334-340.

Schmitz, C., Storr, C., & White, C. (2018). How role- emerging placements compare to each other and contribute to occupational therapy practice: A national snapshot. *Occupational Therapy Now, 20*(1), 14-16.

Smith, Y. J., Cornella, E., & Williams, N. (2014). Working with populations from a refugee background: an opportunity to enhance the occupational therapy educational experience. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 61*(1), 20-27.

Solomon, P., & Jung, B. (2006). An interprofessional role-emerging placement in HIV rehabilitation...including commentary by Kennard J. *International Journal of Therapy & Rehabilitation, 13*(2), 59-65.

Sullivan, T., & Bossers, A. (1998). Occupational Therapy Fieldwork Levels. *National, 15*(3).

Sullivan, T., & Finlayson, M. (2000). Role-emerging fieldwork: the University of Manitoba approach. *Occupational Therapy Now, 2*(3), 13-24.

Thew, M., Edwards, M., Baptiste, S., & Molineux, M. (2011). *Role Emerging Occupational Therapy: Maximising Occupation-Focused Practice*. Ames, Iowa USA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Thew, M., Hargreaves, A., & Cronin-Davis, J. (2008). An evaluation of a role-emerging practice placement model for a full cohort of occupational therapy students. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 71*(8), 348-353.

Thew, M., Thomas, Y., & Briggs, M. (2018). The impact of a Role Emerging Placement while a student occupational therapist, on subsequent qualified employability, practice and career path. *Aust Occup Ther J*. doi:10.1111/1440-1630.12463

Thomas, Y., Dickson, D., Broadbridge, J., Hopper, L., Hawkins, R., Edwards, A., & McBryde, C. (2007). Benefits and challenges of supervising occupational therapy fieldwork students: Supervisors' perspectives. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 54*(SUPPL. 1), S2-S12. doi:10.1111/j.1440-1630.2007.00694.x

Thomas, Y., Penman, M., & Williamson, P. (2005). Australian and New Zealand fieldwork: Charting the territory for future practice. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 52*(1), 78-81.

Thomson, N. A., & Thompson, L. (2013). Reflections on a role-emerging fieldwork placement using a collaborative model of supervision. *Occupational Therapy Now, 15*(3), 17-19.

Thorne, S. (2000). Data analysis in qualitative research. *Evidence based nursing, 3*(3), 68-70.

Thorne, S. (2008). *Interpretive description* (Vol. 2). Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, Inc.

Thorne, S., Kirkham, S. R., & MacDonald-Emes, J. (1997). Interpretive description: a noncategorical qualitative alternative for developing nursing knowledge. *Research in nursing & health, 20*(2), 169-177. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1098-240X(199704)20:2<169::AID-NUR9>3.0.CO;2-I [pii]

Thorne, S., Kirkham, S. R., & O'Flynn-Magee, K. (2004). The analytic challenge in interpretive description. *International journal of qualitative methods, 3*(1), 1-11.

Totten, C., & Pratt, J. (2001). Innovation in fieldwork education: Working with members of the homeless population in Glasgow. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 64*(11), 559-563.

Vaisberg, S., Duncan, A., Laing, T., Khosla, B., Stack, R., & Barker, D. (2014). Students creating innovative occupational therapy roles through integration of academic and fieldwork curricula. *Occupational Therapy Now, 16*(1), 11-13.

Velde, B. P., Wittman, P. P., & Mott, V. W. (2007). Hands-on learning in tillery. *Journal of Transformative Education, 5*(1), 79-92.

Warren, A. (2014). *Innovation, personal growth and professional identity: perspectives on role emerging placements in occupational therapy.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Limerick, Ireland.

Wener, P., & Woodgate, R. L. (2013). Use of a qualitative methodological scaffolding process to design robust interprofessional studies. *Journal of Interprofessional Care, 27*(4), 305-312. doi:10.3109/13561820.2013.763775

Wood, A. (2005). Student practice contexts: Changing face, changing place. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 68*(8), 375-378.

World Federation of Occupational Therapists. (2016). *Minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists*. Retrieved from

http://www.wfot.org/ResourceCentre/tabid/132/did/841/Default.aspx.

UNIVERSITY of MANITOBA

P126-770 Bannatyne Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada, R3E 0W3
Telephone : 204-789-3255
Fax: 204-789-3414

Research Ethics - Bannatyne
Office of the Vice-President (Research and International)

HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD (HREB)
CERTIFICATE OF FINAL APPROVAL FOR NEW STUDIES
Delegated Review

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Margaret Anne Campbell-Rempel	INSTITUTION/DEPARTMENT: U of M/Medical Rehabilitation/ Rehabilitation Sciences	ETHICS #: HS20013 (H2016:302)
APPROVAL DATE: August 29, 2016	EXPIRY DATE: August 29, 2017	
STUDENT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SUPERVISOR (If applicable): Dr. Leanne Leclair		

PROTOCOL NUMBER: N/A	PROJECT OR PROTOCOL TITLE: Recently graduated occupational therapists' perspectives on the influence of role-emerging fieldwork on practice
SPONSORING AGENCIES AND/OR COORDINATING GROUPS: NA	

Submission Date of Investigator Documents: August 1 and August 22, 2016	HREB Receipt Date of Documents: August 2 and August 26, 2016

THE FOLLOWING ARE APPROVED FOR USE:

Document Name	Version(if applicable)	Date

Protocol:
Protocol

submitted
August 1, 2016

Revised REB Submission Page 6 submitted August 22, 2016
Consent and Assent Form(s):
Research Participant Information and Consent Form

August 22, 2016

Other:

	Date
Email to Share Information and Study	August 22, 2016
Post or Email to be Shared by Graduate Describing the Research to Classmates	August 22, 2016
Email Blast to be Send Out by the Manitoba Society of Occupational Therapists	August 22, 2016
Email Invitation to Participate	August 22, 2016
Questionnaires/Scales/Instruments Appendix	August 1, 2016

CERTIFICATION
The above named research study/project has been reviewed in a ***delegated manner*** by the University of Manitoba (UM) Health Research Board (HREB) and was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human participants. The study/project and documents listed above was granted final approval by the Chair or Acting Chair, UM HREB.

HREB ATTESTATION
The University of Manitoba (UM) Research Board (HREB) is organized and operates according to Health Canada/ICH Good Clinical Practices, Tri-Council Policy Statement 2, and the applicable laws and regulations of Manitoba. In respect to clinical trials, the HREB complies with the membership requirements for Research Ethics Boards defined in Division 5

- 1 -

of the Food and Drug Regulations of Canada and carries out its functions in a manner consistent with Good Clinical Practices.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The University of Manitoba Research Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from this research study/project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba Policy on the Ethics of Research Involving Humans.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

1. The study is acceptable on scientific and ethical grounds for the ethics of human use only. *For logistics of performing the study, approval must be sought from the relevant institution(s).*
2. This research study/project is to be conducted by the local principal investigator listed on this certificate of approval.
3. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to the research study/project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to governing law.
4. **This approval is valid until the expiry date noted on this certificate of approval.** A **Bannatyne Campus Annual Study Status Report** must be submitted to the HREB within 15-30 days of this expiry date.
5. Any changes of the protocol (including recruitment procedures, etc.), informed consent form(s) or documents must be reported to the HREB for consideration in advance of implementation of such changes on the **Bannatyne Campus Research Amendment Form.**
6. Adverse events and unanticipated problems must be reported to the HREB as per Bannatyne Campus Research Boards Standard Operating procedures.
7. The UM HREB must be notified regarding discontinuation or study/project closure on the **Bannatyne Campus Final Study Status Report**.

Sincerely,

John Arnett, PhD. C. Psych.
Chair, Health Research Ethics Board
Bannatyne Campus

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Health Sciences

EST. 1877

College of Rehabilitation Sciences R106 – 771 McDermot Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R3E 0T6
Phone: (204) 789-3897
Fax: (204) 789-3927

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Recently graduated occupational therapists' perspectives on the influence of role- emerging fieldwork on practice

Principal Investigator: Margaret Anne Campbell-Rempel, R106-771 McDermot Avenue Winnipeg MB R3E 0T6 Telephone: 204-789-3992

Co-Investigators:
Dr Leanne Leclair R 215 - 771 McDermot Ave. Winnipeg MB, R3E 0T6 Telephone: 204-977-5631 Dr Jacquie Ripat R 131- 771 McDermot Ave. Winnipeg MB, R3E 0T6 Telephone: 204-789-3303

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Please take your time to review this consent form and discuss any questions you may have with the principal investigator, Margaret Anne Campbell-Rempel. You may take your time to make your decision about participating in this study and you may discuss it with your friends or family before you make your decision. This consent form may contain words that you do not understand.
Please ask the principal investigator to explain any words or information that you do not clearly understand.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the role-emerging (RE) fieldwork experience from the perspective of recent OT graduates that have practiced OT for at least six months. More specifically the research objectives will include, from the perspective of recent OT graduates who are practicing:

1. To explore individual characteristics that contribute to participation in RE fieldwork
2. To explore how RE fieldwork influences the practice of recent OT graduates
3. To detail how RE fieldwork contributes to graduate OTs preparation for practice
4. To identify how their current practice context influences recent graduates' perspectives of RE fieldwork.
   A total of 8 - 10 participants will participate in this study

Study procedures

This qualitative study will include one in-depth audio taped interview approximately 90 minutes in length focusing on the impact of your role-emerging fieldwork placement on your current occupational therapy practice, and your current perceptions of your role-emerging placement. **This interview may be a telephone or Skype interview.** Once data across all interviews has been synthesized; all participants will be given a copy of the results to review. This will enable participants to verify the accuracy of the results and question and clarify the researcher's interpretation of the interviews.

If you take part in this study, you will have the following procedures:
You will participate in a 90-minute interview at a time and place mutually agreed upon between you and the researcher. This interview may occur over the telephone or via Skype. In this case the interviewer will be in a private room. This interview will be audio taped. At a time following the interview you will be asked to review and comment on synthesized results of all participants. A response will be expected within 2 weeks.

Participation in the study will be until all interviews are completed, the information is synthesized, and participants have provided comments on the synthesized results to the researcher.

You can stop participating at any time. However, if you decide to stop participating in the study, we encourage you to talk to the study staff first.

Risks and Discomforts
This study involves minimal risk.

Benefits
There may or may not be direct benefit to you from participating in this study. Role-emerging placements are used frequently as part of the preparation for OT practice. An understanding of the strengths and limitations of these types of placements will guide future development and structure, increase student knowledge as they consider role-emerging options and inform potential employers of new graduates who completed a role-emerging placement. This information will be useful both nationally and internationally.

Costs
All the procedures, which will be performed as part of this study, are provided at no cost to you.

Payment for participation
You will be given a $25.00 gift card upon termination of your participation in this research study.

Confidentiality

Information gathered in this research study may be published or presented in public forums, however your name and other identifying information will not be used or revealed. All data will be de-identified and a code assigned. The interview audio file will be transcribed by a transcriptionist for review. All audio tapes, paper copies of transcribed interviews and paper copies of field notes will be kept in a locked drawer. Electronic versions of the data will be stored on a password protected external hard drive which will also be stored in a locked drawer. Electronic data will be destroyed 5 years after completion of the study. Transcribed information will only be reviewed by the principal researcher and the co-investigators. Despite efforts to keep your personal information confidential, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Your personal information may be disclosed if required by law.

The University of Manitoba Health Research Ethics Board may review records related to the study for quality assurance purposes.

All records will be kept in a locked secure area and only those persons identified will have access to these records. If any of your research records need to be copied to any of the above, your name and all identifying information will be removed. No information revealing any personal information such as your name, address or telephone number will leave The University of Manitoba.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal from the Study

Your decision to take part in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or you may withdraw from the study at any time. If the study staff feel that it is in your best interest to withdraw you from the study, they will remove you without your consent.

We will tell you about any new information that may affect your health, welfare, or willingness to stay in this study.

Questions

You are free to ask any questions that you may have about your treatment and your rights as a research participant. If any questions come up during or after the study or if you have a research-related injury, contact the study principal investigator: Margaret Anne Campbell-Rempel at 204-789-3992.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact The University of Manitoba, Bannatyne Campus Research Ethics Board Office at (204) 789-3389

Do not sign this consent form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions.

Statement of Consent

I have read this consent form. I have had the opportunity to discuss this research study with Margaret Anne Campbell-Rempel. I have had my questions answered by her in language I understand. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I believe that I have not been unduly influenced by any study team member to participate in the research study by any statements or implied statements. Any relationship (such as employer, supervisor or family member) I may have with the study team has not affected my decision to participate. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form after signing it. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I may choose to withdraw at any time. I freely agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that information regarding my personal identity will be kept confidential, but that confidentiality is not guaranteed. I authorize the inspection of any of my records that relate to this study by The University of Manitoba Research Ethics Board for quality assurance purposes.

By signing this consent form, I have not waived any of the legal rights that I have as a participant in a research study.

_____ I agree to be contacted for future follow-up in relation to this study, Yes _   No _

Participant signature_____Date

_____
(day/month/year) Participant printed name: _____

I, the undersigned, have fully explained the relevant details of this research study to the participant named above and believe that the participant has understood and has knowingly given their consent

Printed Name:_____Date

_____
(day/month/year)

Signature: _____

Role in the study:_____.

Relationship (if any) to study team members: _____

Appendix C: Information Provided to Participants

Interview Protocol

Recently graduated occupational therapists' perspectives on the influence of role-emerging fieldwork on practice

1. **Can you tell me about the kind of employment, volunteering or education that you had prior to entering occupational therapy?**

2. **What made you choose OT as your profession?**

3. **What made you choose to participate in a RE fieldwork placement?**

4. **Can you describe your RE fieldwork experience? What was it like?**

5. **What did you take away from your RE experience?**

6. **How, if at all, did your RE experience influence your job search upon graduation?**

7. **When you think about your current practice, what have been some of the advantages or disadvantages of having completed your RE placement?**

8. **How do you think your RE fieldwork experience contributed to your development as an OT practitioner?**

9. **Ideally, where would you like to be practicing in five years?**

10. **How has your RE experience influenced your practice goals?**

11. **How has your view of your RE placement changed now that you are practising?**

12. **Is there anything you would like to add or tell me about the experience that we have not already covered?**

13. **Is there anyone else that you think I should be speaking to about their RE experience? Would you feel comfortable asking them to participate, or contact me?**

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Recently graduated occupational therapists' perspectives on the influence of role-emerging fieldwork on practice

Demographic Information:

Time and Place of Interview

Participant name, date of convocation, time since graduation, past and current area of OT practice

Setting of RE fieldwork, dates (approximately), level (Intermediate 2 or Advanced)

Confirm the intent of the interview with the participant.

Questions:

1. Can you tell me about the kind of employment, volunteering or education that you had prior to entering occupational therapy?

   Prompt: What types of jobs did you have prior to entering the MOT program?

   What type of volunteering, if any, were you involved in prior to entering the MOT program??

   What degree or education did you have before entering the MOT program?

2. What made you choose OT as your profession?

   Prompt: How did you learn about OT?

   What about OT attracted you to the profession?

3. What made you choose to participate in a RE fieldwork placement?

   Prompt: What made you interested in RE fieldwork?

   What made you want to do a RE fieldwork placement?

Did you come into to the OT program thinking that this would be a potential opportunity?

4. Can you describe your RE fieldwork experience? What was it like?

Prompt: What activities stand out in your memory?

What was the focus of your RE placement?

What was your role in the RE experience?

5. When you think about your current practice, what have been some of the advantages or disadvantages of having completed your RE placement?

Prompt: What experiences did you miss that you would have had on a non-RE placement that would be useful in your current practice?

What experiences did you have that were unique to the RE experience which have been helpful in your current practice?

6. What did you take away from your RE experience?

Prompt: What did you learn from the experience?

How did it shape you as an occupational therapist?

7. How do you think your RE fieldwork experience contributed to your development as an OT practitioner?

Prompt: How did your RE placement impact your ability to manage your OT practice?

How do you think your practice would be different if you had not completed a RE placement?

How did your RE experience effect your perception of the profession of OT?

8. Ideally, where would you like to be practicing in five years?

   Prompt: What are your career goals?

                What is your ideal OT position in the future?

9. How has your RE experience influenced your practice goals?

   Prompt: Would you want a different practice area if you had not completed a RE

                placement?

10. How has your view of your RE placement changed now that you are practising?

Prompt: Would your description of RE be the same or different compared to when

                you graduated?

                Would you recommend a RE placement to a current student? Why or why

                not?

11. Is there anything you would like to add or tell me about the experience that we have not
    already covered?

12. Is there anyone else that you think I should be speaking to about their RE experience?

Thank the participant, answer any outstanding questions.