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# Identifying, Organizing, and Prioritizing Ideas on How to Support the Entangled Relation between Theory and Practice in Occupational Therapy Education: A Group Concept Mapping Study

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## Abstract

Transfer of learning from an academic setting to clinical practice and vice versa represents a challenge. The aim of this study was therefore to identify, organize, and prioritize ideas on how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in occupational therapy (OT) education. To gain broad perspectives on the topic, Group Concept Mapping (GCM) was applied among OT students, lecturers, and fieldwork educators. GCM included six phases: Preparing (formulating a focus prompt), Generating ideas (brainstorming based on focus prompt: "*To support the relation between theoretical and practical elements in the OT program there is a need for...*"), Structuring statements (sorting and rating importance), Analyses (multidimensional scaling analysis and cluster analysis), Interpreting the map (validation meeting), and Utilization (developing a conceptual model). A total of 39 participants generated 123 unique ideas. Next, 30 participants sorted and rated the ideas, resulting in a cluster rating map. At a validation meeting the cluster rating map was discussed and adjusted. The results revealed seven clusters (i.e. themes) with included statements: 1. Collaborative knowledge exchange (n=17), 2. Experience-oriented teaching (n=17), 3. Theory-practice integration in learning (n=20), 4. Integrating clinical practice in education (n=25), 5. Collaboration on the joint task (n=12), 6. Professional development for fieldwork educators (n=17), and 7. Conditions at the fieldwork placement (n= 15). The themes provided the basis for developing a conceptual model on how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in OT education. The model is useful during the process of planning and developing OT education.



## Keywords

Education, fieldwork educators, occupational therapy lecturers, occupational therapy students





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## ABSTRACT

Transfer of learning from an academic setting to clinical practice and vice versa represents a challenge. The aim of this study was therefore to identify, organize, and prioritize ideas on how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in occupational therapy (OT) education. To gain broad perspectives on the topic, Group Concept Mapping (GCM) was applied among OT students, lecturers, and fieldwork educators. GCM included six phases: Preparing (formulating a focus prompt), Generating ideas (brainstorming based on focus prompt: "*To support the relation between theoretical and practical elements in the OT program there is a need for...*"), Structuring statements (sorting and rating importance), Analyses (multidimensional scaling analysis and cluster analysis), Interpreting the map (validation meeting), and Utilization (developing a conceptual model). A total of 39 participants generated 123 unique ideas. Next, 30 participants sorted and rated the ideas, resulting in a cluster rating map. At a validation meeting the cluster rating map was discussed and adjusted. The results revealed seven clusters (i.e. themes) with included statements: 1. Collaborative knowledge exchange (n=17), 2. Experience-oriented teaching (n=17), 3. Theory-practice integration in learning (n=20), 4. Integrating clinical practice in education (n=25), 5. Collaboration on the joint task (n=12), 6. Professional development for fieldwork educators (n=17), and 7. Conditions at the fieldwork placement (n= 15). The themes provided the basis for developing a conceptual model on how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in OT education. The model is useful during the process of planning and developing OT education.

## Introduction

Within occupational therapy (OT) education the relationship between theory and practice and how this relationship is best supported from a didactic perspective has been the subject of discussions, both within research and education (Goldbach & Stella, 2017; Rodger et al., 2011; Towns & Ashby, 2014). These discussions have been justified by the responsibility to educate OT students with the competencies required to meet the professional standards within the health care system (Goldbach & Stella, 2017; Keptner & Klein, 2019; University College of Northern Denmark [UCN], 2024; World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2016) and a need to support OT students in occupation-centered practice based on theoretical knowledge; thus, providing a basis for theory-based practice and for supporting identity and viability of the profession (Main et al., 2021). Literature, however, indicates that the relation between theory and practice represents a challenge (Haastrup et al., 2013; Zahedi & Rowe, 2021).

The theory-practice gap within OT education has recently been addressed due to the well-known challenges related to building bridges between theory and practice, especially during fieldwork placements (Zahedi & Rowe, 2021). For example, students reported that transfer of learning from an academic setting to fieldwork environment and vice versa can be challenging (Zahedi & Rowe, 2021). Further, research has highlighted that OT students may experience a disconnect between the emphasis on certain topics in the classroom and the focus on these in clinical practice. Topics such as evidence-based practice (EBP; Carroll et al., 2017), professional therapeutic behaviors (Hackenberg & Toth-Cohen, 2018), and readiness for fieldwork in general (Goldbach & Stella, 2017), have been identified and discussed as subjects that may challenge the relationship between academic learning and clinical practice in OT education.

This study took place within the context of a Danish Bachelor's program in OT. Like all entry programs, OT students need to acquire profession-related knowledge, skills and competencies that enable them to practice within the OT profession and to act, participate in, and contribute to the development of the profession and society (UCN, 2024). This presupposes supporting the OT students in achieving the ability to link theoretical knowledge with practice reflections as a prerequisite for providing a rationale for relevant actions.

Reflective Practice-based Learning (RPL) is an understanding of learning design and teaching presented by Horn et al. (Horn et al., 2020, 2021). Reflective Practice-based Learning is defined as *'the reflection on/in/with practice using theoretical analyses and practical synthesis'* (Horn et al., 2020, p. 13). The relationship between theory and practice is considered dialectic, meaning that theory and practice are divergent, yet interconnected (Horn et al., 2020). The boundaries between theory and practice are alternating, making them mutually dependent and entangled (Horn et al., 2021). This implies that action and thinking, and theory and practice cannot be considered separately (Elkjær & Wiberg, 2013). Reflective Practice-based Learning aims to facilitate that students acquire the theoretical knowledge, skills and competencies required to act professionally in a changing and developing world. Further, RPL includes six pedagogical principles; 1) The students' own experiences are incorporated into teaching and learning activities; 2) Teaching and learning activities are designed to include appropriate disturbances; 3) Teaching and learning

activities are organised as exploration; 4) The content of the teaching and learning activities is based on the good example; 5) Lecturers and students work together on learning process; and 6) Lectures and students create room for dialogue (Horn et al., 2020).

The entangled relation between theory and practice within an OT program is particularly influenced by three groups of actors: the students, the lecturers, and the fieldwork educators. Therefore, the shared interplay between these three groups of actors may influence the learning that takes place during the education (Ashby et al., 2016; Fortune & Kennedy-Jones, 2014; Tompson & Ryan, 1996). For example, students' understanding and personal interpretation of the relation between theory and practice, as a basis for understanding the professional paradigm, is shaped by their experiences while in training and interacting with members of the profession throughout their education (Ashby et al., 2016). In addition, lecturers and fieldwork educators play a vital role in the students' understanding of the importance of the theory-practice relation when becoming an occupational therapist, whether this takes place in the classroom or in clinical practice (Fortune & Kennedy-Jones, 2014).

Knowledge of factors influencing the entangled relation between theory and practice in OT education, from a shared perspective between students, lecturers, and fieldwork educators, is therefore an important matter when planning the program in accordance with the defined formal learning objectives. Yet, existing research literature on OT education from this shared perspective appears sparse. Hence, the topic remains open for investigation. Accordingly, the aim of this study was to identify, organize and prioritize ideas on how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in a Danish OT program, from the shared perspective of students, lecturers, and fieldwork educators.

## Methodology

To address the aim of the study the methodology of Group Concept Mapping (GCM) was applied. Group Concept Mapping is based on a mixed method participatory approach involving stakeholders in identifying, organizing, and prioritizing ideas on a specific topic. More specifically, participants are involved in several steps of the research process and the results are presented in maps illustrating how ideas on a topic are organized thematically and prioritized (Kane & Trochim, 2007; Rosas & Kane, 2012). The GCM process includes six steps: 1) Preparing; 2) Generating ideas (brainstorming); 3) Structuring statements (sorting and rating); 4) GCM analysis; 5) Interpreting the map (validation); and 6) Utilization (developing a conceptual model; Kane & Trochim, 2007). During several of the steps the specialized GCM software; Groupwisdom$^{tm}$ (Concept Systems Incorporated, 2019) is applied. The six steps serve as a structure for describing the GCM process of the present study. The details are presented below.

### Participants

All participants were recruited from the University College of Northern Denmark (UCN). To ensure a diverse sample of relevant participants experienced in both clinical practice and theoretical approaches, the following were invited to participate: all OT students, who were in fieldwork placement at their fifth semester (n=26); all

the fieldwork educators connected to this student group (n=11); and all lecturers and senior lecturers teaching at the OT program (n=10) not being involved in conducting the present study.

## Data Collection

The GCM process may involve data collection based on face-to-face group sessions, online participation, or both (Kane & Trochim, 2007). In this study both face-to-face and online data collection were conducted.

Demographic data for all participants (e.g. age, gender, number of years as occupational therapist, further education, years in current position, working area/fieldwork area, primary client group, location of OT session, typical length of OT process, primary teaching area) were collected using the online program Survey Xact (Rambøl Management Consulting, 2013). The ideas were generated face-to-face at two different occasions at UCN in September 2022; the first with lecturers and senior lecturers during a professional meeting and second with students and fieldwork educators at a joint theme day.

## Procedures

### *1. Preparing for GCM*

Before initiating the data collection, a focus prompt was formulated. A focus prompt is a clear question that encourages input on a specific topic (Kane & Trochim, 2007). A first version of the focus prompt was formulated by the authors and then piloted with one person from each of the three participant groups (OT students, lecturers, fieldwork educators) as well as with a researcher experienced in applying GCM. The piloting was performed by e-mail and led to some minor changes. The changes were related to the composition of the focus prompt. The final version of the focus prompt was: “To support the relation between theoretical and practical elements in the OT program there is a need for...”.

### *2. Generating the Ideas (Brainstorming)*

At the two face-to-face sessions, the authors first presented and informed about the study and then they served as facilitators. Initially, all participants were instructed to complete an online demographic questionnaire based on Survey Xact. Next, the participants were instructed to think broadly and generate as many ideas as possible in response to the focus prompt within 30 minutes. This was conducted individually and the participants were reminded to write their answers shortly containing only one meaning in each sentence. Participants were allowed to discuss possible answers with each other, but they were encouraged not to judge or discuss the legitimacy of each other's answers during the brainstorming process. The participants typed their answers in a joint Microsoft Excel (Microsoft® Excel® for Microsoft 365 MSO, n.d.) document and were able to see answers provided by others.

To prepare for the next step, all ideas were reviewed and consolidated by the authors. That is, each author individually identified redundant ideas, ideas that were unclear, or ideas representing more than one meaning. Next, the authors met and discussed their findings. Redundant ideas were removed, and minor clarifying

linguistic adjustments were made based on consensus. All remaining ideas (now termed statements) were then imported into Groupwisdom$^{tm}$ (Concept Systems Incorporated, 2019). The maximum number of statements that can be imported into Groupwisdom$^{tm}$ is 125 (Kane & Trochim, 2007).

### *3. Structuring the Statements (Sorting and Rating)*

All participants were invited to participate in the phase of online sorting and rating. That is, all participants received an e-mail with instructions related to sorting and rating and a link to the Groupwisdom$^{tm}$ (Concept Systems Incorporated, 2019). All the statements were presented to the participants, and they were then asked to individually organize the statements into piles (i.e. clusters) in any way that made sense to them. The only two rules were a) there must be more than one group, and b) there must be fewer piles than the total number of statements. Next, each participant was asked to label each pile of statements. This was to capture the theme of each pile.

Based on the focus prompt, each participant then rated the importance of each statement. A four-point ordinal scale was used for the rating (1=not at all important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, and 4=very important). Based on a pooled analysis of GCM studies, Rosas and Kane (2012) revealed high reliability estimates for sorting and rating processes, and high representational validity.

### *4. GCM Analysis*

**Demographic Data.** Demographic data of the participants (e.g. age, gender, number of years as occupational therapist, further education, years in current position, working area/fieldwork area, primary client group, location of OT session, typical length of OT process, primary teaching area) were analysed using Microsoft Excel (Microsoft® Excel® for Microsoft 365 MSO, n.d.). Nominal data were reported as number and percentage. Data on age, years as occupational therapist and years in current position were presented based on median and range due to lack of normal distribution.

**GCM Data.** Based on the sorting and ratings, maps were computed through a multidimensional scaling analysis, and cluster analyses were performed in which related statements were grouped into clusters (Kane & Trochim, 2007). These analyses were performed in accordance with the CGM methodology by use of the Groupwisdom$^{tm}$ (Concept Systems Incorporated, 2019).

To ensure the quality of the overall sorting and rating data, single participant data from step 3 were included in the cluster analysis if both sorting and rating were initiated, more than 75% of the statements were sorted (Kane & Trochim, 2007), and less than five statements were unrated. A stress value was calculated reflecting the goodness of fit of the final representation and the original input. A stress value < 0.39 indicates congruence between raw data and processed data (Rosas & Kane, 2012).

During the process of the cluster analyses, several cluster solutions were generated. The cluster solution that illustrated sufficient details on the topic being investigated was then used to generate a cluster rating map. The cluster rating map illustrated the number of clusters and suggested cluster labels. Clusters placed close together

were more related and clusters placed further apart were less related. The height of the clusters reflected importance; clusters with more layers contained statements with higher importance. Finally, median importance ratings for each statement were presented for each of the three participant groups.

### *5. Interpreting the Maps (Validation)*

To interpret and validate the results the author group invited a total of nine participants representing both OT students (n=3), fieldwork educators (n=3) and lecturers (n=3). As analyses were based on all the participants' sorting and rating data, representatives from each of the three participant groups were considered sufficient for the validating meeting.

Initially, the Cluster Rating Map was presented to the participants. Next, the participants individually a) determined whether each statement was placed in the right cluster, b) considered the number of clusters, and c) considered whether the cluster labels captured the theme of the cluster. Following this individual task, reflections and suggestions were discussed among the participants to obtain consensus. Statements fitting into more than one cluster remained in their designated cluster and only statements clearly misplaced were moved.

### *6. Utilization (Developing a Conceptual Model)*

Based on the results of the validation meeting, the author group participated in two face-to-face meetings to discuss utilization and communication of the results. At the first meeting, especially the themes and the dynamics between the themes were discussed, resulting in creating the first version of the conceptual model on how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in OT education. At the next meeting, especially the lay out of the conceptual model was discussed and finally, consensus was reached on the final version of the conceptual model.

## Ethical Considerations

The study complied in all aspects with the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) at UCN. Participants received written information prior to the data collection sessions. At the data collection sessions (brainstorming), informed consent was obtained through Survey Xact. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw from the study without any consequences and that data would be anonymised and treated confidentially. During the process of online sorting and rating, informed consent was obtained through GroupWisdom$^{tm}$ (Concept Systems Incorporated, 2019).

# Results

## Demographic Data

The demographic data of the participants at steps 2, 3, and 5 of the study is presented in Table 1. Overall, the 39 participants who generated the ideas had an age range of 21-59 years. They also had variation in years in current position, primary client group, and working, fieldwork or teaching area. Women were highly represented (87-100%). With regards to step 3, online structuring of the statements, 30 participants accepted to take part: 10 OT students and one fieldwork educator declined to participate (for unknown reasons), and two lecturers who were not able to participate in step 2, took part. Nine representatives from the three groups accepted to participate in the face-to-face validation meeting. However, one of the fieldwork educators had to cancel (for unknown reasons) the day of the meeting.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Data of the Participants*

| | **2. Generating the ideas** (Face to face brainstorming) Total sample (n=39) | | | **3. Structuring the statements** (On-line sorting and rating) Total sample (n=30) | | | **5. Interpretation** (Face to face validation meeting) Total sample (n= 8) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | OT students (n = 23) | OT lecturers (n = 8) | Fieldwork educators (n= 8) | OT students* (n =13) | OT lecturers (n= 10) | Fieldwork educators (n= 7) | OT students (n =3) | OT lecturers (n =3) | Fieldwork educators (n= 2) |
| Women, n (%) | 20 (87%) | 7 (87.5%) | 8 (100%) | 11 (91.5%) | 9 (90%) | 7 (100%) | 3 (100%) | 3 (100%) | 2 (100%) |
| Age in years, median[a] (range) | 24 (21-49) | 47 (31-59) | 39.5 (29-48) | 24.5 (22-49) | 47 (31-59) | 39 (29-48) | 25 (22-49) | 47 (46-47) | 42 (36-48) |
| Years as occupational therapist, median[a] (range) | | 22 (5-32) | 10.5 (5-25) | | 22 (5-32) | 10 (5-25) | | 22 (17-23) | 16.5 (10-23) |
| Further education, n (%) | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Yes | | 8 (100%) | 5 (62.5%) | | 10 (100%) | 4 (57%) | | 3 (100 %) | 2 (50%) |
| 2. No | | 0 (0%) | 3 (37.5%) | | 0 (0%) | 3 (43%) | | | |
| Years in current position, median (range) | | 8.25 (0.17-20) | 6.5 (2-22) | | 9.75 (0.17-20) | 5 (2-22) | | 12 (0.17-13) | 8 (3-13) |
| Working area/field work area, n (%) | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Somatic hospital | 7 (30.5%) | | 2 (25%) | 3 (25%) | | 2 (28.5%) | 2 (66.6%) | | 2 (100%) |
| 2. Social psychiatry | 4 (17.5%) | | 2 (25%) | 3 (25%) | | 2 (28.5%) | 1 (33.3%) | | |
| 3. Rehabilitation (municipality/region) | 6 (26%) | | 2 (25%) | 3 (25%) | | 2 (28.5%) | | | |
| 4. Assistive technology application | 6 (26%) | | 2 (25%) | 3 (25%) | | 1 (14.5%) | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary client group, n (%) | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Psychiatric | 4 (17.5%) | | 2 (25%) | 3 (25%) | | 2 (28.5%) | 1 (33.3%) | |
| 2. Neurologic | 6 (26%) | | 2 (25%) | 2 (16.5%) | | 2 (28.5%) | 1 (33.3%) | 1 (50%) |
| 3. Medical | 5 (21.5%) | | 2 (25% | 2 (16.5%) | | 2 (28.5%) | 1 (33.3%) | 1 (50%) |
| 4. Geriatric | 8 (35%) | | 1 (12.5%) | 5 (42%) | | 1 (14.5%) | | |
| 5. All client groups | | | 1 (12.5%) | | | | | |
| Location of OT sessions, n (%) | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Client's home | 12 (52%) | | 4 (50%) | 5 (42%) | | 3 (43%) | | |
| 2. Hospital ward | 7 (30.5%) | | 2 (25%) | 3 (25%) | | 2 (28.5%) | 2 (66.6%) | |
| 3. Rehabilitation center | 4 (17.5%) | | 2 (25%) | 4 (33%) | | 1 (14.5%) | 1 (33.3%) | 2 (100%) |
| Typical length of OT process, n (%) | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Short (< two weeks) | 12 (52%) | | 3 (37.5%) | 5 (42%) | | 2 (28.5%) | 2 (66.6%) | 2 (100%) |
| 2. Medium (three to six weeks) | 3 (13%) | | 3 (37.5%) | 3 (25%) | | 2 (28.5%) | | |
| 3. Long (> seven weeks) | 8 (35%) | | 2 (25%) | 4 (33%) | | 3 (43%) | 1 (33.35) | |
| Primary teaching area[b] | | | | | | | | |
| 1. OT theory/models) | | 8 (33.5%) | | | 10 (34.5%) | | | |
| 2. Occupational science | | 2 (8.5%) | | | 2 (7%) | | 1 (12.5%) | |
| 3. Assistive/welfare technology | | 3 (12.5%) | | | 4 (13.5%) | | 1 (12.5%) | |
| 4. Fieldwork | | 1 (4%) | | | 1 (3.5%) | | 1 (12.5%) | |
| 5. Study technic | | 1 (4%) | | | 1 (3.5%) | | 1 (12.5%) | |
| 6. Related knowledge | | 2 (8.5%) | | | 4 (13.5%) | | 2 (25%) | |
| 7. Vocational rehabilitation | | 1 (4%) | | | 1 (3.5%) | | | |
| 8. Neurorehabilitation | | 1 (4%) | | | 1 (3.5%) | | 1 (12.5%) | |
| 9. Working environment | | 2 (8.5%) | | | 2 (7%) | | | |
| 10. Communication | | 1 (4%) | | | 1 (3.5%) | | | |
| 11. Supervision (projects and courses) | | 2 (8.5%) | | | 2 (7%) | | 1 (12.5%) | |

[a] Based on median and range due to lack of normal distribution in data.

[b] Each lecturer has listed two to three of their most typical teaching areas

[*] Demographic data was missing for one OT student

**GCM Data**

A total of 187 ideas were generated: 60 by OT students, 60 by fieldwork educators, and 67 by the lecturers. After removing redundant ideas and making minor linguistic adjustments, 123 unique statements remained. These 123 statements (out of the maximum of 125) were then imported into GroupWisdom™ (Concept Systems Incorporated, 2019) for sorting and rating (step 3). During the import process, all the statements were numbered from 1-123.

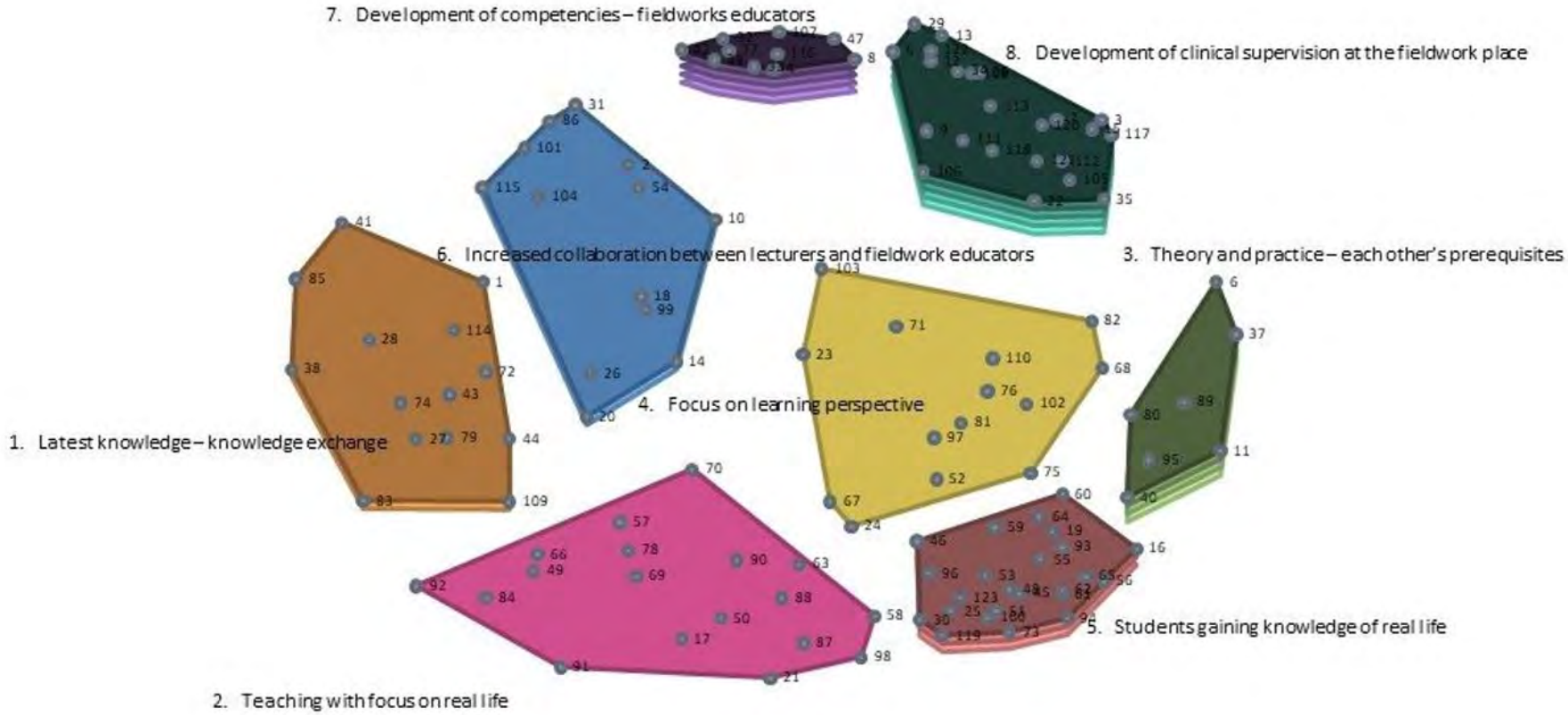
At step 3, one participant was excluded as the person only had initiated rating and not sorting. Further, three (n=3, 10%) participants left respectively seven (6%), 13 (11%) and 30 (24%) statements unsorted and two (n=2, 6%) participants left one statement unrated. As the proportion of unsorted and unrated statements were below the predefined criteria (initiation of both sorting and rating, more than 75% sorted statements, and less than five unrated statements), these data were included in the analyses. The participants sorted the statements into between three and 26 clusters.

The cluster rating map was generated at step 4. A cluster solution with eight clusters was chosen as this solution matched the data and provided a sufficient level of details related to the topic. The included clusters are presented in a cluster rating map (see Figure 1). Each cluster in the cluster rating map contained between seven and 24 statements (illustrated by dots and statement numbers) with varying importance depicted by the height of the specific clusters. The most important statements were included in cluster seven and eight. Different colors illustrate the different clusters.

Multidimensional scaling analyses involved 11 iterations and revealed a low stress-value of 0.30 indicating congruence between raw and processed data.

**Figure 1**

*Cluster Rating Map*



Based on discussions at the validation meeting, the participants agreed on the location of the majority of the statements (n=101, 82%). Still, the discussions also led to several changes related to the cluster rating map. The participants decided to move 22 statements (18%) from one cluster to another as these were not found to be placed in the right cluster. As all statements in cluster three were moved to other clusters, the number of clusters was reduced to a total of seven. Cluster names were changed/adjusted, thus resulting in a total of seven clusters with the following labels and number of statements included: 1. Collaborative knowledge exchange (n=17), 2. Experience-oriented teaching (n=17), 3. Theory-practice integration in learning (n=20), 4. Integrating clinical practice in education (n=25), 5. Collaboration on the joint task (n=12), 6. Professional development for fieldwork educators (n=17), and 7. Conditions at the fieldwork placement (n= 15). The final clusters and the statements included in each cluster are presented in the Appendix. In the following section each of the seven clusters will be presented with examples of statements.

The cluster **Collaborative knowledge exchange** concerns knowledge sharing and knowledge exchange between fieldwork educators, lecturers, and students; for example, with regards to being updated on the development in clinical practice or on specific practice skills. Examples of included statements are: *"...a theme day/professional exchange of knowledge between fieldwork educators and ALL lecturers at the OT program concerning theory and practice*" and *"...job rotation between lecturers at the OT program and OTs in practice."* The cluster also included statements concerning knowledge sharing between students such as *"...spending allocated time with a study partner to prepare for the fieldwork placement."* Further, the cluster contains suggestions related to students taking responsibility for their learning and for developing personal goals based on the learning objectives.

The cluster **Experience-oriented teaching** includes statements related to incorporating practice experiences and skills training into the teaching. Examples of included statements are *"...teaching organized by the students based on own experiences,"* and *"...that the students use their own examples from their fieldwork placement more in the OT program subsequently e.g. use of logbooks from the fieldwork period."* Other statements pertain to the development of therapeutic skills, setting personal boundaries, how to reflect on the relation between own experiences and theory and how to *"...practice in unexpected situations."*

In the cluster **Theory-practice integration in learning***,* the statements focus on how the relation between theory and practice can be addressed both by lecturers and fieldwork educators. Included statement are for example *"...more focus on how to apply intervention process models in practice"* or *"...that you during fieldwork placement, clarify and visualize where you are in the intervention process model."* Furthermore, the cluster includes a *"...focus on that theory and practice are not each other's opposites but each other's prerequisites."* At the same time, there are statements suggesting a focus on creating learning situations where students feel encouraged to be curious, to wonder, and to dare to make mistakes.

In the cluster **Integrating clinical practice in education** the statements concern how to incorporate practice situations into the learning situations: *"...that simulation training is applied," "...more case examples developed by practice"* or *"...that*

*lecturers during teaching make the students reflect on the application of theory in practice."* Moreover, the cluster includes ideas for using "real persons" instead of fictitious cases in teaching, encouraging lecturers to use examples from their own practical experience, and incorporating online connections with relevant practices as a part of the teaching.

The cluster **Collaboration on the joint task** contains statements of how to promote or support collaboration between the actors involved in the OT education such as *"...close collaboration between fieldwork educators and lecturers at the department to ensure support and promote dialogue about what is important and difficult"* or *"...more focus on learning outcomes and how these are achieved in practice."* There are ideas of fieldwork educators being present during teaching at the OT education and lecturers participating in the clinical practice. In addition, the cluster contains wishes e.g. *"...prolonged fieldwork placement"* and *"...more fieldwork placement."*

In the cluster **Professional development for fieldwork educators** the statements reflect the importance of fieldwork educators having the possibilities of being fully up to date on e.g. latest theories and how to support and challenge the students: *"...that the fieldwork educators have an opportunity to attend courses and further education," "...that the fieldwork educator in collaboration with the student, applies theory to unfold practice situations,"* and *"...that the fieldwork educator challenges you in theory and its connection to practice."* The included statements further reflect a need for a forum to discuss theoretical issues and thereby support the entangled relation between theory and practice.

The cluster **Conditions at the fieldwork placement** concerns e.g. support and opportunities at the setting of the fieldwork placement: *"...good conditions at the fieldwork placements to support the students setting and time for immersion"* or *"...that colleagues at the workplace support the students' fieldwork placement e.g. by willingness to share their experiences"* and supporting the fieldwork educator in prioritizing spending time with the students. Furthermore, that a safe environment is important and *"...that it is possible to prepare before meeting the citizen/patient, so that you have processed the theory you want to apply in advance."*

Median importance ratings of each of the 123 statements for each of the three participant groups are presented in the Appendix. Participant ratings revealed that the three participant groups rated several of the statements to be very important (median of 4); OT students: n=52 (42%) statements, fieldwork educators: n=32 (26%) statements, and lecturers/senior lecturers: n=29 (24%) statements. The only group who had median importance ratings of 1 (not at all important) was the fieldwork educator (n=4, 3% statements). The three participant groups agreed on the median ratings of 46 (37%) statements across median ratings of 2, 3, and 4.

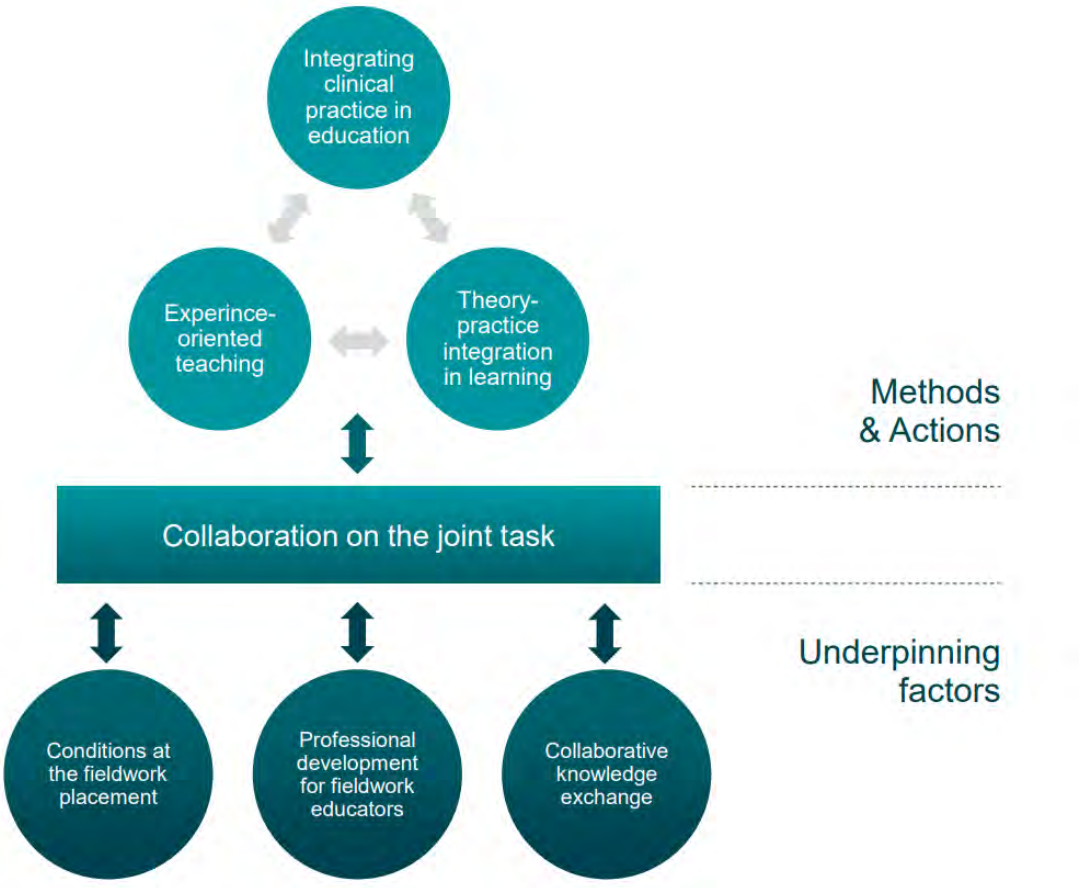
The final seven clusters served as basis for developing the conceptual model (Figure 2). The conceptual model depicts the themes and the dynamics that are essential when aiming to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in OT education. The three circles at the bottom illustrate a domain related to factors underpinning the process of collaborating on the joint task (horizontal ellipse in the center) and the three circles at the top represent a domain related to actions and methods. None of the three themes related to actions and methods are more

important than the others; the arrows illustrate ‘juggling’ the themes and that all themes are to be considered when aiming to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in an OT program. The actions and methods are considered output of the domain related to collaboration on the joint task.

The conceptual model illustrates the seven themes and guiding principles essential when supporting the relation between theory and practice in an OT program, and their mutual relations. Still, to gain detailed insights about the content of each theme, the model should be utilized in combination with the list of clusters and included statements and importance ratings (see Appendix).

**Figure 2**

*Conceptual Model of How to Support the Entangled Relation Between Theory and Practice in an OT Program*



## Discussion

The aim of this study was to identify, organize, and prioritize ideas on how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in a Danish OT program. Overall, the findings of this study revealed complexity with regards to the relation between theory and practice, which is also described in the literature. The relation between theory and practice is described as both heterogeneous (Carr, 1986, 2015; Dau & Nielsen, 2011) and dialectic (Horn et al., 2020) with theory and practice being different but mutually dependent in their entanglement. The conceptual model developed in this study illustrates this complexity and indicates that the complexity is characterized by mutual relations between the domains of Methods & actions, Collaboration on the joint task, and Underpinning factors. The domains emerged based on statements both representing very broad and overarching ideas as well as very specific ideas.

This study revealed statements related to Methods & actions to apply within OT education to support the entangled relation between theory and practice; for example, to involve students in the planning of teaching, to visualize the OT intervention process during fieldwork placement, and to use simulation training or inclusion of real-life cases at the OT program. A similar connection between method and action has been tested in a study by Calabrese (2023) where traditional lecturing was compared to active learning of Master of Science students in OT. Both methods increased the students' knowledge of the current topic, but the active learning was perceived by the students as increasing the level of engagement and maintaining the attention to a larger degree. Zahedi and Rowe (2021) also found a request for reflection on method and action when evaluating an educational initiative consisting of university days for the students during fieldwork placement. The students reported that the provided time and space to reflect while sharing experiences with their peers enabled them to process and consolidate their learning from the fieldwork placement setting. Likewise, a study by Goldback and Stella (2017) focused on a course prompting reflection in preparation to fieldwork before entering the fieldwork placement. The course prepared and engaged the students in clinical reasoning through collaboration with clients connected to the entire OT intervention process within the course.

From the perspective of RPL, "methods" refer to fundamental and cohesive pedagogical ways of creating a framework for RPL and "techniques" (actions) refer to specific ways to plan and organise teaching and learning activities with a view to creating the framework for RPL (Horn et al., 2020). Both methods and techniques are based on the RPL approach which leads to the six fundamental principles. These principles are obvious to integrate in the forthcoming teaching in combination with the specific statements that appeared in the domain of Methods and actions in this study. Together they can reinforce RPL by supporting the students in connecting their practical experiences, following reflexive thinking and relevant action.

The domain related to Collaboration on the joint task reflects the fact that OT education involves both students, lecturers, and fieldwork educators (Ashby et al., 2016; Fortune & Kennedy-Jones, 2014; Tompson & Ryan, 1996). Thus, the included statements reflect that all three actors have tasks and responsibility when it comes to supporting the entangled relation between theory and practice in the OT education.

For example, several statements concerned working with the learning objectives of the semesters and educational tools such as individual study plan and the use of logbooks for all three groups.

When looking into the ideas generated by the three groups, both unique and redundant ideas were identified across the participant groups. Regarding the importance of the statements, all three groups generally provided high importance ratings and agreed on the importance of many of the statements. However, the OT students almost rated half of the statements to be very important, whereas the fieldwork educators and the lecturers only rated one fourth of the statements to be very important. One reason for this could be that the fieldwork educators and lecturers considered what could be important to support the relation between theory and practice in general and for several students, whereas the students may have related the statements to themselves and their personal priorities. The different priorities emphasize the importance of integrating perspectives from all three actors within OT education. Hooper et al. (2020) also highlighted the importance of integrating students as active members of the learning process and combining the elements of curriculum and concepts of theory in the practice context to support their relationship. To support the importance of this, Ashby et al. (2016) found that the development of a professional identity for OT students depended on a meaningful relation between professional socialisation, curricula content and practice education, in which students appreciated the inclusion of theoretical elements such as occupation-focused models and occupational science as cornerstones.

The domain related to underpinning factors comprise statements related to Collaborative knowledge exchange, Professional development for fieldwork educators, and Conditions at the fieldwork placement. The included statements reflect factors affecting the entangled relation between theory and practice by either supporting or limiting learning. Such factors are also described in the Didactical Relationship Model developed by Hiim and Hippe (2007). The Didactical Relationship Model illustrates six interrelated elements in a teaching/learning situation: Goals, Content, Learning process, Assessment, Learning conditions and Setting. According to Hiim and Hippe the setting comprises factors such as legislation, rules, culture, time, and facilities. Thus, several of the statements included in the domain related to underpinning factors are comparable to setting as described by Hiim and Hippe.

This study indicated that participants formulated ideas based on the fundamental elements of RPL, entailing that learning should be based on experience, thinking, and action, combined with reflective thinking to support students in their learning process (Horn et al., 2020). That is, the first four clusters contain many concrete suggestions related to teaching content and these suggestions encapsulate the essence of what is referred to as the pedagogical principles of RPL (Horn et al., 2020). In total, there are six fundamental principles in RPL. These principles are assumed to create favorable conditions for RPL. Below are examples of how the fundamental principles of RPL relates to the specific suggestions. While multiple principles could be interpreted within a specific suggestion, only one principle is highlighted here for clarity and conciseness.

Cluster 1: Collaborative knowledge exchange involves knowledge sharing and exchange among fieldwork supervisors, lecturers, and students. An example of a specific statement might be: "...that you during your fieldwork placement, clarify and visualize where you are in the intervention process model". Here, the RPL Fundamental Principle No. 1, incorporating students' own experiences into teaching and learning activities (Horn et al., 2020), can be highlighted as the foundation for this suggestion. The student uses their own experiences and relates them to the intervention process model in close collaboration with the clinical supervisor.

Cluster 2: Experience-oriented teaching includes statements about integrating practical experience and skills training into the teaching. An example of a specific statement is: "...that members/citizens/clients are willing to participate and contribute with their body (or mind) in the students' assignments/interventions/interviews". RPL Fundamental Principle No. 4 applies here: concerning teaching and learning activities based on good examples (Horn et al., 2020). In this case, the good example is a specific representative and ‘real’ citizen/patient.

Cluster 3: Theory-practice integration in learning; the statements focus on how the relation between theory and practice can be integrated into teaching, both by lecturers at the educational institution and in fieldwork placement. An example of a specific statement could be: "...that students are allowed to 'make mistakes' in a safe environment—learning by doing, as it is said". The related principle is RPL Fundamental Principle No. 3: Teaching and learning activities are organized as exploration (Horn et al., 2020). Students can be allowed to explore a specific topic or skill based on e.g. simulation, where making mistakes will not have consequences for real patients.

Cluster 4: Integrating clinical practice in education; an example of a statement is provided here: "...getting a citizen from practice to visit the OT program, enabling the student to practice ADL observation in the kitchen". Related to this cluster is RPL Fundamental Principle No. 2: Teaching and learning activities are designed to include appropriate disturbances (Horn et al., 2020). Here, the appropriate disturbance may involve engaging with the citizen/patient, as students learn to observe and recognize that real individuals do not always act and react as expected.

The remaining clusters are related: Cluster 5: Collaboration on the joint task; Cluster 6: Professional development for fieldwork educators; and Cluster 7: Conditions at the fieldwork placement address statements that support the conditions for lecturers, fieldwork educators, and OT students to have the necessary prerequisites, competencies, and environments so that they are capable of working with RPL’s fundamental principles. These conditions are also highlighted in Hiim and Hippe's didactic relational model (Hiim & Hippe, (2007).

In summary, it can be asserted that the pedagogical RPL principles can be identified in the study findings and further concretized in certain statements that contain specific suggestions for teaching. The statements within the clusters can help clarify and detail how these pedagogical principles can be implemented and tested in practical learning scenarios, where students, lecturers, and fieldwork educators are actively involved in developing the OT program’s integration of the entangled theory and practice.

### Methodological Considerations and Limitations

Overall, the use of GCM is considered a strength. This, as GCM methodology has a mixed method approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methods: a statistically generated cluster rating map with qualitative categorization and conceptualization (Jackson & Trochim, 2002). Another strength is the involvement of both OT students, fieldwork educators and lecturers, providing broad and relevant perspectives on the topic (data generation). Their involvement in the research phases related to analyses and validation of results also represented a strength. In addition, a thorough pilot test of the focus prompt was conducted, which included both an OT student, a fieldwork educator, a lecturer and an experienced researcher within GCM. This further enhanced the internal validity of the study.

The relatively small sample size could be considered a limitation. However, despite this, several redundant ideas were identified suggesting some degree of data saturation and thereby a sufficient number of participants. Further, ten participants are considered minimum to perform valid statistical analyses (Kane & Trochim, 2007) and the participant number in the present study exceeded that. Still, the relatively small sample size limits generalization of the results.

### Further Research

As the GCM methodology generates clusters based on single words and short sentences, in-depth explanatory knowledge is not produced. Future research investigating the statements included in the seven clusters may therefore be relevant to fully understand how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in OT education and to help further unfold and complement the conceptual model. Furthermore, in-depth explanatory knowledge could also clarify if the identified ideas are absent from the OT program or if they are present and functioning.

## Implications for Occupational Therapy Education

The relationship between theory and practice within OT education, including the gap between theory and practice has been discussed for years. This study serves as an example of how to identify ideas on how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice, from the perspectives of the persons involved in the learning process: the OT students, the fieldwork educators, and the lecturers. This study has revealed both broad and specific ideas on how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice. This study also illustrated the importance of integrating the perspectives from all three groups. That is, results revealed that the three groups rated the importance of the ideas differently.

All the identified ideas were organized in themes and the themes are depicted in the conceptual model of how to support the entangled relation between theory and practice in an OT program. This model and the identified ideas can be used during the process of developing and designing OT programs.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the ideas generated by students, fieldwork educators and lecturers in this study revealed the complexity related to supporting the entangled relation between theory and practice in OT education. Some ideas were very broad and overarching others were more specific. The ideas were organized in seven clusters (i.e. themes): 1. Collaborative knowledge exchange, 2. Experience-oriented teaching, 3. Theory-practice integration in learning, 4. Integrating clinical practice in education, 5. Collaboration on the joint task, 6. Professional development for fieldwork educators, and 7. Conditions at the fieldwork placement. The seven themes were related to three different domains: a) methods and actions, b) collaboration on the joint task, and c) underpinning factors. The themes and domains were illustrated in a conceptual model on how to support the entangled relationship between theory and practice in OT education. The conceptual model can be used by OT students, lecturers, and fieldwork educators to communicate about, plan, design and develop OT education.

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## Appendix

### Clusters, Included Statements, and Median Ratings of Importance

| | **Prompt:** To support the relation between theoretical and practical elements in the OT program there is a need for... | | **OT students** | **Fieldwork educators** | **Lectures/ senior lectures** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cluster number and name** | **Statement number** | **Statement** | **Median** | **Median** | **Median** |
| 1. Collaborative knowledge exchange (n=17) | 1 | … a theme day/ professional exchange of knowledge between fieldwork educators and ALL lecturers at the OT program concerning theory and practice. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 27 | …job functions with half employment in practice and half employment at the OT program. | 3 | 2 | 1.5 |
| | 28 | …that the student gets an appropriate and preferably large degree of freedom for learning. | 3 | 3 | 2.5 |
| | 38 | …that the student takes responsibility for his/her theoretical learning to improve the starting point for discussion in the fieldwork placement. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 41 | …that the student understands the learning objectives from the description of the semester and has developed a personal goal based on these. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | 43 | …job rotation between lecturers at the OT program and OTs in practice. | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| | 44 | …that lecturers continuously acquire insights about "trends" in professional forums, not only in research environments, but also forums where development and practical knowledge are exchanged. | 3 | 3 | 3 |

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| | 57 | …that lecturers monitor the development of practice e.g., by visiting practice to see what is going on and to see what is in the center of attention. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 66 | …that lecturers get the opportunity to follow the megatrends of a professional area - in order to anticipate relevant teaching topics for the future. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 72 | …that lecturers keep up with new knowledge and development within a given area and are able to articulate the developmental potential of the area. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | 74 | …continuous sharing of knowledge - what is going on in practice? | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| | 78 | …that lecturers maintain their practical skills by having the opportunity to apply the skills when teaching. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | 79 | …keeping up with the times and be open to changes in practice. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 83 | …that students are able to critically relate to practice and ask wondering questions concerning practice. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 85 | …dialogues with students concerning well-being and development. | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| | 109 | …spending allocated time with a study partner to prepare for the fieldwork placement. | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| | 114 | …that alle three actors (fieldwork educators, students, and lecturers) keep up to date on the latest theory. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 2. Experience-oriented teaching (n=17) | 11 | …that members/citizens/clients are willing to participate and contribute with their body (or mind) in the students' assignments/interventions/interviews. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | 17 | …a café at the OT program that is managed/coordinated by students (with support from a lecturer) with e.g. professional and social activities (meditation, psychoeducation, teaching about pain, arthritis, fatigue after stress and illness, philosophical topics, reading club, | 2 | 3 | 2 |

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| | etc.). | | | |
| 21 | …that the students use their own examples from their fieldwork placement more in the OT program e.g. by use of logbooks from the fieldwork period. | 3 | 3 | 3.5 |
| 49 | …focus on the students' therapeutic competences. | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| 58 | …teaching organized by the students based on own experiences. | 2 | 2 | 2.5 |
| 63 | …joint teaching with colleagues and other professions, to make it more like the real world. | 3 | 3 | 2.5 |
| 69 | …more collaboration with practice sites that are not necessarily fieldwork placement sites. | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| 70 | …more opportunities for the students to go out there and collaborate with practice sites. | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 84 | … that the students continuously work with and reflect on their experiences in relation to theoretical elements. | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| 87 | …continuous collaboration between e.g. practice, the OT program, clients, and students on preparation of cases. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 88 | …permanent, systematic involvement of students in the planning of teaching with a specific focus on transfer. | 3 | 3 | 2.5 |
| 89 | …explicit dissemination assignments where the students describe the link between a given experience and a specific theory. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 90 | …continuous detection and inclusion of infield practice sites that are pioneers in various fields and thereby can illustrate professional relevance in various ways. | 3 | 3 | 2.5 |
| 91 | …practice in and learning about own boundaries prior to fieldwork placement. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 92 | …learning about own therapeutic style. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 95 | …practice in unexpected situations. | 3 | 3 | 3 |

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| | 98 | …several days at the OT school, where first semester students can meet with students from 5th, 6th, or 7th semester being in charge of the teaching or narrating about practice. | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Theory-practice integration in learning (n=20) | 6 | …that the students get the opportunity to "make mistakes" in a safe environment - learning by burning, as you say. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | 10 | …that the students are active in their fieldwork placements, regardless of whether it meets their expectations or not. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 23 | …taking into account the increasing 'fear of practice' experienced among students in acute practice. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 24 | …literature that informs about practice. | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| | 37 | …a learning setting supporting the student in daring to be curious and wondering. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 52 | …clinical reasoning in practice (not only during fieldwork placement but that you as a student practice clinical reasoning). | 4 | 4 | 3.5 |
| | 55 | …opportunity to work more project oriented/based. | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| | 67 | …letting the students work with argumentation for the field of practice. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 68 | …that the fieldwork educators can record a short video presentation of their workplace and primary tasks, which can provide substance to the otherwise theoretical themes. | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| | 71 | …letting the students work with theory/methods/elements in collaboration with practice. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 75 | …follow-up on the students' experiences from practice. | 3 | 4 | 3.5 |
| | 76 | …focus on that theory and practice are not each other's opposites but each other's prerequisites. | 4 | 3 | 4 |

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| | 80 | …providing examples of why theory is needed to become a good "practitioner". | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| | 81 | …that we do not only make the students good at evaluation - they must also know what to do with regards to intervention. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 82 | …teaching days during fieldwork placements where students are at campus, virtually or physically. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| | 97 | …that students at earlier semesters can follow students from 5th and 6th semester during their fieldwork placement for a day or two, to get an understanding of what you do in practice. | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| | 102 | …more focus on how to apply intervention process models in practice. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 103 | …a visiting day at the fieldwork placement site before starting. | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | 106 | …that you during fieldwork placement, clarify and visualize where you are in the intervention process model. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 110 | …teaching targeting the specific fieldwork placement site. | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 4. Integrating clinical practice in education (n=25) | 16 | …getting a citizen from practice to visit at OT program to make the student able to practice ADL observation in the kitchen. | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| | 19 | …inviting and using fieldwork educators as guest lecturers. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | 25 | …more cases early in the OT program broadly addressing the practice to be encountered in the fieldwork. Placement | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 30 | …that cases at the OT program to a large degree reflects the complexity in practice. | 4 | 3 | 3.5 |
| | 40 | …video clinics including an intervention where the students link theory to their choices and get feedback from others. | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| | 45 | …that guest lecturers provide images of occupational practice. | 4 | 3 | 3.5 |

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| 46 | …that lectures during teaching make the students reflect on the application of theory in practice. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 48 | …inclusion of practice-relevant examples during teaching. | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| 50 | …more focus on developing skills in relation to technology. | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| 51 | …use of "skills training" during teaching. | 3 | 3 | 3.5 |
| 53 | …inclusion of the students' experiences from fieldwork placements in theoretical courses (not only in evaluations of fieldwork placements). | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| 56 | …that simulation training is applied. | 2 | 3 | 3.5 |
| 59 | …that practice continuously is involved in the teaching via short (e.g. 20 minutes) virtual meetings with the classes. | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| 60 | …that the students also get images of practices they do necessarily meet during their fieldwork placements. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 61 | …that cases, as close to reality as possible, are included in the teaching. E.g. clients attending classes, video cases, a picture of a citizen, medical record information. | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| 62 | … an occupational therapy laboratory where the students work with e.g. occupational therapy evaluation (teaching, trying out themselves, summing up). | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| 64 | …that the teaching occasionally is moved out, so that it takes place in practice - for example in meeting rooms at the practice site. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 65 | …more case examples developed by practice. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 73 | …that the students have the opportunity to practice on citizens during teaching. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 93 | …teaching that provides insight into reality - connecting theory to practice during teaching. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 94 | …more short courses with "real" persons instead of cases. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 96 | …that the lecturers connect more client stories of their own to the | 4 | 3 | 3 |

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| | | theory they teach. | | | |
| | 100 | …real-life case examples illustrating the difference between theory and practice or the similarity between these. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | 119 | …visits from relatives/persons to create an understanding for the areas you do not necessarily meet during fieldwork placement. | 3 | 2 | 3.5 |
| | 123 | …that there is a need to connect more practice situations/images of practice into the teaching. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 5. Collaboration on the joint task (n=12) | 2 | … that fieldwork educators can join some of the teaching at UCN as a 'fly on the wall' - especially the theoretical occupational therapy topics. | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| | 14 | …input from UCN on what they expect and wish for to ensure super conditions for the students. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 18 | …prolonged fieldwork placement. | 2 | 2 | 1.5 |
| | 20 | …that lecturers come along into practice and occasionally visit / follow practice for half or a full day. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 26 | …exchange of experience between the OT program and practice. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 31 | …that learning objectives are integrated into the guidance. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 54 | …close collaboration between fieldwork educators and lecturers at the department to ensure support and promote dialogue about what is important and difficult. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 86 | …use of an individual study plan. | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| | 99 | …more fieldwork placement. | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| | 101 | …that the learning objectives are specified and operationalized based on the practice in question. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | 104 | …more focus on learning objectives and how these are achieved in practice. | 3 | 3 | 2.5 |

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| | 115 | …that the site of fieldwork placement and UCN specify the learning objectives, so that they are achievable for students. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 6. Professional development for fieldwork educators (n=17) | 4 | …that the fieldwork educator has an easy, transparent, and accessible opportunity to check up on the theory the students have had prior to their fieldwork placement. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | 5 | …that the fieldwork educator can facilitate the students' reflection and not just provide answers or solutions. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 12 | …that the fieldwork educator can support the students in connecting theory and professional terms to experiences/actions/observations, etc. | 4 | 4 | 3.5 |
| | 32 | …that the fieldwork educators have the opportunity to attend courses and further education. | 3 | 3 | 3.5 |
| | 33 | …that fieldwork educators have close collaboration and feedback/supervision with other fieldwork educators from similar areas of practice. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 34 | …that the fieldwork educator supports the student in reflecting on when and why practice deviates from the theory. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 35 | …that the fieldwork educator provides examples from practice. | 3 | 3 | 3.5 |
| | 36 | …that the fieldwork educator supports the student in connecting theory to the choices they make in relation to their client. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 39 | …that there is a forum for the fieldwork educators to discuss theoretical subjects and how they can support transfer. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 42 | …that the fieldwork educator understands the learning objective and has ideas on how to support the students in working with this. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 47 | …fieldwork educators who have a good insight into occupational therapy theory. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | 77 | …continuously updating of the fieldwork educators' knowledge about | 3 | 3 | 3 |

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| | | educational process and content - so that they can bring this into play when having students in fieldwork placement. | | | |
| | 107 | …that fieldwork educators are updated on the latest theories used in the education. | 4 | 3 | 2.5 |
| | 108 | …that the fieldwork educator challenges you on theory and its connection to practice. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 113 | …that the fieldwork educator in collaboration with the student, applies theory to unfold practice situations. | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| | 116 | …that the fieldwork educator, prior to the fieldwork placement, specifies learning objectives based on their practice. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | 122 | …that the fieldwork educator challenges the students at their current level (based on whether you are at 4th, 5th, or 6th semester). | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 7. Conditions at the fieldwork placement (n=15) | 3 | …good conditions at the fieldwork placements to support the students' opportunities for immersion. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | 7 | …that colleagues at the workplace support the students' fieldwork placement e.g. by willingness to share their experiences. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | 8 | …that there is an understanding of guidance as a MUST DO - task, even on a busy workday. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | 9 | …that the employees at the fieldwork placement site agree on being a place of education and therefore we should align with latest knowledge and acquire knowledge about new intervention process models, interview tools etc. | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| | 13 | …that the fieldwork educator gets more time in practice to plan and manage the guidance of the students. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 15 | …time during fieldwork placement to use the methods and assessments taught at the OT program. | 3 | 3 | 3 |

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| 22 | …that the students arrive at the fieldwork placement a day before they start to better be able to prepare the individual study plan and goals for the fieldwork placement. | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| 29 | …that fieldwork educators have support from the management to prioritize time for working with the students. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 105 | …that it is possible to prepare before meeting the citizen/patient, so that you have processed the theory you want to apply in advance. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 111 | …that there is opportunity for discussion with a study partner and / or fieldwork educator during the intervention process. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 112 | …that the fieldwork placement provides a setting for applying relevant theory. | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| 117 | …that the fieldwork placement can offer processes with citizens/patients having sufficient occupational therapy potential depending on one's level. | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| 118 | …supervision with several occupational therapists during fieldwork placement to get a broader image of practice, methods, and theory. | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 120 | …that a safe environment is supported at the fieldwork placement with good opportunities for supervision with colleagues. | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 121 | …that the fieldwork placement encourages the use of relevant theory from the OT program - direct connection between practice and theory. | 4 | 4 | 4 |