

Contributors to best practice when two educators co- supervise one student on placement in occupational therapy

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Introduction

- In occupational therapy placement is 1000 hours of the program
- Challenged to source quantity of student placements as there is no extrinsic reward for taking student but intrinsic benefits are reported in the literature
- This has resulted in many new non traditional models
- One model increasingly favoured in Ireland is the co-supervision mode



Characteristics of co-supervision model

- A team of two or more clinical educators supervise a single student or a team of two or more students
- Clinical educators may have a different practice focus or even different workplace (inter-agency)
- Can combine a more traditional placement setting with a project placement or role-emerging placement experience



Benefits of co-supervision : Student

- Benefits for the student includes gaining clinical and supervisory experience from more than one therapist and experiencing more client contact (Copley, Nelson and Salama, 2010)



Benefits of co supervision: Educator

- This co-supervision model enables part time practice educators to take a full- time student and has the potential to relieve the burden of having a student (Graves and Hanson, 2014).
- Also can benefit a novice educator working with a more experienced one
- Enables support and reduced isolation, especially if student is underperforming
- Shares the student workload, prevents burnout
- Spreads the student workload



Challenges of co-supervision: Student

Challenges of co-supervision include the educator's perception that it can be difficult for a student to manage the potential inconsistencies between educators including giving individualised feedback. However, practice educators perceived that the benefits to themselves, the students, the service outweighed the challenges (Nelson,. Copley and Salama. 2010).



Challenges to co supervision: Educator

- **Balancing responsibilities, needs and demands**
- **Balancing task and maintenance roles**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Coordination and communication between co-supervisors**
- **Extra dimensions in games students/supervisors play**
- **Maintain transparency of co-supervision practice**
- **Sharing the supervisory role equally**



Incidence

- Not new in OT practice
- Little written in the area of OT practice



The aim: to explore and define best practice strategies used when co-supervising a student on placement

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- **Methods:** Educators experienced in co-supervision were invited to participate in a focus group which utilised the nominal group technique (NGT) (Delbecq & Van de Van, 1971).
- The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) allows participants to create their own categories about the topic of concern rather than the researcher deciding the categories, (Lennon et al. 2012).
- As is it non-hierarchical all participants' views are equal, preferable to a focus group where group dynamics can influence the outcome
- Focus groups allow multiple perspectives to be gathered
- Member checking takes place within the session also but the researcher will send out the data collected to all members of the focus group to further verify accuracy.
- NUI Galway ethics Board for approval
- Areas of Practice: Community: Rehabilitation (Outstanding): Mental Health



Nominal Group Technique

1. What constitutes best practice when two educators supervise one student?

Silent reflection: (5 mins)

2. Round robin: (10 mins)

3. Clarification: (5 mins)

4. Ranking of statements: (15 mins)

5. Focus Reflection: (10 mins)

6. Collation of marks and Ranking of Statements:



1) Planning before placement to communicate to students to know who is doing what

- A working alliance between co-supervisors results from negotiating an agreement on roles and approaches to the supervision process.
- Equal commitment by the co-supervisors to the student and their learning as a key to successful co-supervision



2) Setting clear expectations for the student and providing good feedback to the student and to each other

- Developing clear, open and equal communication enables these channels to work effectively between all parties.
- Communication also involves giving and receiving regular feedback to each other as co-supervisors. For example ‘What did we do well?’ and ‘What could we have done differently’
- Developing clear, open and equal communication enables these channels to work effectively.



3) The two educators get on professionally

- Ask the question: ‘Can I work well with this person?’
- Is there reciprocal understanding of strengths and weaknesses
- Is their trust? The establishment of mutual trust and respect between the co- supervisors
- Trusting each other to respond appropriately to unpredictable events.
- Consider the importance of mutuality, equality and rapport in peer relationships.



Discussion

- This type of placement requires significant planning and communication between the two educators and for this to be successful the two educators should have a pre-existing professional relationship.
- Issues such as one experienced educator mentoring a less experienced educator through co-supervision was not raised as best practice.
- Whilst more research is indicated from both educators and students' perspectives the results informs those promoting or implementing a co-supervision model of practice education.



Plan

- Development of a co-supervision preparation pack
 - Analyse focus group data
 - Checklist for preparation
 - Roll out research in different settings



Disadvantages of NGT

- Requires preparation.
- Is regimented and lends itself only to a single-purpose, single-topic meeting.
- Minimizes discussion, and thus does not allow for the full development of ideas, and therefore can be a less stimulating group process than other techniques.
- advantageous for use where peer leaders may have an exaggerated effect over group decisions, or in meetings of collaboratives, where established leaders tend to dominate the discussion).



Advantages of NGT

- Generates a greater number of ideas than traditional group discussions.
- Balances the influence of individuals by limiting the power of opinion makers
- Diminishes competition and pressure to conform, based on status within the group.
- Encourages participants to confront issues through constructive problem solving.
- Allows the group to prioritize ideas democratically.
- Typically provides a greater sense of closure than can be obtained through group discussion (Evaluation Brief, 2006)



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