Interprofessional Care for the 21st Century: Redefining Education and Practice

Poster 6: Education
Preparing Occupational and Physical Therapists for Careers in Early Intervention

Saturday, March 13, 2010

Shelley L. Wallock, Thomas Jefferson University, Pennsylvania; Marcia Levinson, Thomas Jefferson University, Pennsylvania

This interprofessional training program provides occupational (OT) and physical therapy (PT) students with specialization in early intervention (EI) and school-based (SB) practice, integrated into the core curriculum of each program.

There are documented shortages of OTs and PTs for employment in these settings. Moyer (2005) discusses both the barriers and the lack of opportunities to interact with others in more traditional educational programs. Those opportunities that are available to OTs and PTs often remain limited to traditional rehabilitation teams and lack opportunities for substantial training in EI and SB therapy intervention.

OT and PT students, 12 each year, will be prepared to practice in EI/SB settings by completing a 3-year specialty program which emphasizes a set of core competencies and is structured to provide interprofessional coursework, practical experiences, and a culminating shared internship. Trainees participate in seminars, blended on-line study modules, interactive examinations, mentoring, shadowing opportunities, presentations, leadership programs and research opportunities.

Evaluation measures will be summarized for each student individually and for the trainees as a group to provide both summative and formative evaluation of the project’s effectiveness. Trainees will be followed post-graduation through the School of Health Profession’s ongoing Longitudinal Study and through the two departments so that trainees obtain employment in EI/SB settings.

This is an innovative strategy to integrate specialized interprofessional education into current curriculum. This program will assist in providing well-trained, potential leaders in this field upon graduation thus able to fill shortages of OT and PT employment in EI/SB settings. It will provide enhanced training which focuses on natural environments, family centered practice, and inclusive school based intervention. Trainees will be effective interprofessional team members with knowledge based on evidence and core competencies in this field.