

## Title Page

### Project Title:

Engaging occupational therapy students on Level II fieldwork through the use of synchronous online discussion groups.

### Project Abstract:

Is real time face to face discussion with classmates and faculty members of value to students learning during Level II fieldwork? The purpose of this project is to explore the usefulness of Google Hangout as an online synchronous video discussion tool. The investigators hope to enhance student learning during fieldwork experiences and foster community, critical thinking, and self-reflection skills. This project would provide a direct assessment of critical thinking and reflection which are key outcomes that are in alignment with the Department of Occupational Therapy's program goals. Project activities will include creation of a synchronous video based discussion group for students while on Level II Fieldwork with a faculty mentor, assessment of faculty and student participation, as well as analysis of learning outcomes and feedback from surveys and focus groups. The results of this project will contribute to best practices for the use of technology in occupational therapy education and other health related professions in generating and deepening reflection and critical thinking in students while participating in clinical experiences.

### Contact Information:

(Primary Investigators)

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### Project Background:

Each summer over 100 students embark on clinical fieldwork experiences across the country, which removes them from the face to face interactions and live support they've grown accustomed to in the didactic setting. Students have multiple assignments that they must complete, one of which is an online discussion board posting. Students are organized into discussion board groups based on the practice setting that they are assigned to for a Level II fieldwork experience. Four weeks into the twelve week fieldwork, students are asked to select and answer 2 questions from the question bank within their given discussion board group. Students are also required to respond to at least one peer during the assigned week. The discussion boards have been facilitated by clinical education faculty members. During the summer of 2012, the clinical education team requested participation from all occupational therapy faculty in the discussion board postings. The students and faculty expressed positive interactions online with their peers and faculty members.

The summer of 2013, we are proposing a further enhancement beyond faculty participation in the online discussion board. We would propose incorporating a synchronous video discussion group through the use of Google Hangout. In our review of the literature, limited studies were available that addressed the use of synchronous discussion groups during clinical experiences to enhance student learning.

### Project Purpose:

The purpose of this project is to explore the use of Google Hangout as a tool for enhanced online student learning. "[The] collaborative acquisition of knowledge is one key to the success of creating an online learning environment. Activities that require student interaction and encourage a sharing of ideas promote a deeper level of thought" <sup>1</sup>. Previous tools used to encourage communication and critical thinking are adequate for introductory participation in an online discussion board. The investigators are interested in exploring the use of a live, discussion format to determine if it contributes to a student's sense of wellbeing, community, and value during a clinical experience. In addition, the investigators are interested in noting if this type of technology translates to a student's critical thinking and clinical skills, which is in alignment with the Department of Occupational Therapy's program goals.

Project Design: Project activities will include: generation and submission of an IRB proposal, training of students and faculty involved in the project, discussion group delineation, and implementation of discussion groups, followed by completion of peer and self-assessment rubrics. Furthermore, a faculty survey and student focus group will be completed and all data will be analyzed for themes and trends. The investigators will produce scholarship in the form of at least one presentation of initial findings along with future plans for additional peer-reviewed articles and professional presentations regarding data collected and analyzed from this pilot study.

### Project Timeline:

Activity	Outcome	Date of Completion
Generate IRB proposal for	Submit IRB proposal for approval	March 2013

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<sup>1</sup> Conrad, R. & Donaldson, J. (2004). *Engaging the online learner: Activities and resources for creative instruction*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

submission		
Facilitate faculty and student training on Google Hangout	All participants will be familiar with setup and use of Google Hangout	April 2013
Faculty and Students assigned to discussion groups	Faculty and students are assigned to practice setting groups and are aware of assignment guidelines for participation in Google Hangout discussion	May 2013
Initial findings report	Project report provided to AEA	May 2013
Participate in Google Hangout discussion groups	All groups complete discussion assignment with use of Google Hangout	June 2013
Distribute faculty survey	Faculty complete survey	June 2013
Distribute student assessments	Students complete self and peer assessment rubrics	June 2013
Focus Group	16 students will participate in designated focus groups via Google Hangout	July 2013
Data Analysis of initial results	Analyzing themes and trends based on data collected	August 2013
Present Initial Findings	Initial results shared at eLearning conference	Spring 2014

Expected Products: This project will provide additional and direct information for curriculum development and explore best practices for the use of technology in clinical education.

Project Sustainability: If the project is proven effective, it will remain a piece of the Level II fieldwork experience/curriculum. It may also provide the investigators with a starting point for further research on the use of technology in occupational therapy clinical education. Additionally, the project results can be shared and replicated in other health sciences professional programs.

Budget Information:

Line Item	Amount	Description and Justification
Student Stipend	\$1,000	Student researcher assistant for focus group transcription, literature review, data entry at rate of \$10/hour.
Dissemination of Findings	\$60	Poster development and printing for dissemination at AEA presentation and other conferences.
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,060</b>	