International Students and Clinical Placement

Susan Jackson
Occupational Therapy Practice Placement Co-ordinator
University of Bradford
Outline

• Context

• Challenges

• Potential solutions
Definitions

**International students**

Those students who ‘travel to a country different from their own for the purpose of higher education’ (Coles & Swami 2012:87)

**Clinical educators**

Clinicians (Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Nurses, Midwives, Radiographers) in a clinical environment responsible for supporting and assessing students undertaking placement.
• Increasing numbers of International Students (IS) studying in the UK (Verbik & Lasanowski 2007, UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) 2016)

• Internationalisation deemed as a priority strategy across the Higher Education Institute Sector (HM Government 2013, de Wit et al 2015)

• IS’s account for 18% of students studying in UK HEI’s, with the UK being the second most popular destination after the USA (UKCISA 2016)

• University of Bradford (UOB) had 1,746 IS from 139 countries studying on campus in 2016/17 (UOB 2016a).

• Thirty nine students, mainly from Hong Kong, China and Malaysia, studying in the Division of Allied Health Professions and Sport in 2016/17
Clinical placements are a mandatory element of all courses leading to registration on a professional register (Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), British Association of Sport Rehabilitators and Trainers (BASRaT)).

Anecdotal evidence from clinical educators suggests that International Students struggle more with some elements of placement compared to their home peers.
1. Language - context

- Entry level Occupational Therapist’s should be able to, ‘Build effective therapeutic relationships as the foundation for occupational therapy’ (COT 2014: 7).

- Professional communication leads to higher levels of patient satisfaction and co-operation with treatment (Betancourt et al 2003, Wanzer et al, 2004)

- BSc. (Hons) Occupational Therapy programme requires an International English Language Test System (ILETS) of 6.5, with no element lower than 6 for entry to the programme (UOB 2016b)

- Language difficulties associated with academic studies are well documented (Andrade 2006, Wu & Hammond 2011)
Cummins model of language acquisition (1984)

1. Basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS)

What’s everyone eating for tea tonight?

Development at this level is based on the premise that students will interact socially with peers from the host environment.
2. Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)

Developed through exposure to situations demanding higher levels of cognitive function such as clinical placement and interactive academic situations such as group work.

Clinical reasoning inextricably linked to CALP

Five to seven years
So……

We require students to…..

Achieve an ILETS of 6.5 before they are accepted on to the programme

Then….

We expect them to be able to converse with their fellow students in a colloquial manner ……….

And ……..

Understand, speak and write in ‘academic’ English

And……

Begin to use profession specific language (Wook et al. 2016)

wikiHow (no date)

Thoughtful Minds Web Services PVT Ltd. (2017)

California State University (2017)
We send them on placement and expect them to ........

Talk to service users in a non-condescending, yet professional manner using terminology that they will understand and which will help develop a therapeutic relationship........

Greetings Madam. Please describe your independence in activities of daily living?

Who’s thee callin’ Madam? What’s thee on abaht?

- Fear of conversation
- Understanding service users
- Selecting the ‘correct’ words in response
- Wait time (Ladyshewsky 1996)
- Selecting topics of conversation
- Speed of conversation
- Local accents, colloquialisms & metaphors

Converse in a professional manner using clinical terminology with the multi-disciplinary team and clinical educator……..

- Profession specific terminology

Fred is an elderly with a dodgy leg

Is it surprising that difficulties may arise?!
2. Culture

Confucian philosophy

The idea of a set of ‘norms’ for behaviour

Relationships with specific roles and responsibility

Respect and deference to authority figures

Influence on interpersonal and societal relationships

Concept of mianzi (‘face’) (Wang et al. 2005)

‘Ruling by man’ (Wang et al. 2005)

‘Insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ (Wang & Greenwood 2015)

Diligence and application of self (Starr 2012)
Strategies - University

- Identification of ‘at risk’ students with sign posting to support services (O’Reilly & Milner 2015, Chan et al. 2016)

- Buddying or mentoring schemes involving home students and ‘senior’ International Students (Boughton et al. 2010, Jeong et al. 2011, O’Reilly & Milner 2015)

- Specific placement preparation (Harvey et al. 2013)

- Immersion in the local community (Crawford & Candlin 2013)

- Language support programmes
  - role play (Abu–Arab & Parry 2015)
  - videos and scenarios (San Miguel et al. 2006)
  - practical application of communication skills (O’Reilly & Milner, 2015) including specific technical language and colloquialisms (Chan et al. 2016)
  - clinical communication strategies replicating clinical tasks, i.e. note writing (Choi 2005).
• Sharing of basic information in relation to language and cultural issues with clinical educators during initial educator training and updates

• Identification of educator needs in relation to teaching a diverse student population (Yoder 1996)

• Events to share understanding of cultures between students, clinical educators and faculty staff (Edgecombe et al. 2013)

• Designated staff to support International Students within the university and whilst on placement (O’Reilly & Milner 2015)

• Regular supportive supervision, early and clear settings of expectations and smaller caseloads (Hansen & Beaver 2012)

• Structured induction, time for orientation and time for reflection (Mikkonen et al. 2016)
Conclusion

- Issues of culture discussed in this presentation relate to students from Hong Kong, China and Malaysia

- Care must be taken not to generalise issues to all International Students – the notion of the ‘Chinese Learner’ (Clark and Gieve 2006, Signorini 2009)

- Many of the issues relating to communication and culture could relate equally to ‘home’ students from diverse backgrounds

- Identify the specific needs of your students and educators and formulate targeted support strategies
MSc. Dissertation working title….

‘A retrospective, cross-sectional study examining the relationship between duration of residency in the United Kingdom (UK), academic achievement (including clinical placement) and support mechanisms utilised by Occupational Therapy (OT) students studying in a UK Higher Education Institute (HEI).’

Thank you
Any questions?
References


References


Thoughtful Minds Web Services PVT Ltd. (2017) *Academic writing word cloud* [Image] [https://www.thoughtfulminds.org/academic-writing](https://www.thoughtfulminds.org/academic-writing) Accessed 16 August 2017


Susan Jackson
Occupational Therapy Lecturer and Practice Placement Tutor
Faculty of Health Studies
University of Bradford
Richmond Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD7 1DP

s.jackson13@bradford.ac.uk

01274 235124