



Level II Fieldwork in Sensory Integration:

Utilizing a Structured Fieldwork Program to Promote Competency

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Introduction

South Shore Therapies, Inc. (SST) is a sensory integration clinic located on the south shore of Massachusetts. Sensory integration intervention encompasses key features that are utilized at SST. Through a structured Level II fieldwork program, SST ensures that students gain knowledge and competency in several of these features (Parham et al., 2007), including:

- Establishing therapeutic rapport
- Ensuring physical safety for all clients
- Presenting opportunities for sensory exploration and engagement
- Helping children reach regulated states
- Targeting postural, ocular, oral, and bilateral motor control/coordination
- Challenging motor planning skills
- Utilizing a child-led approach
- Finding the just-right challenge to promote success and engagement
- Supporting play and fun

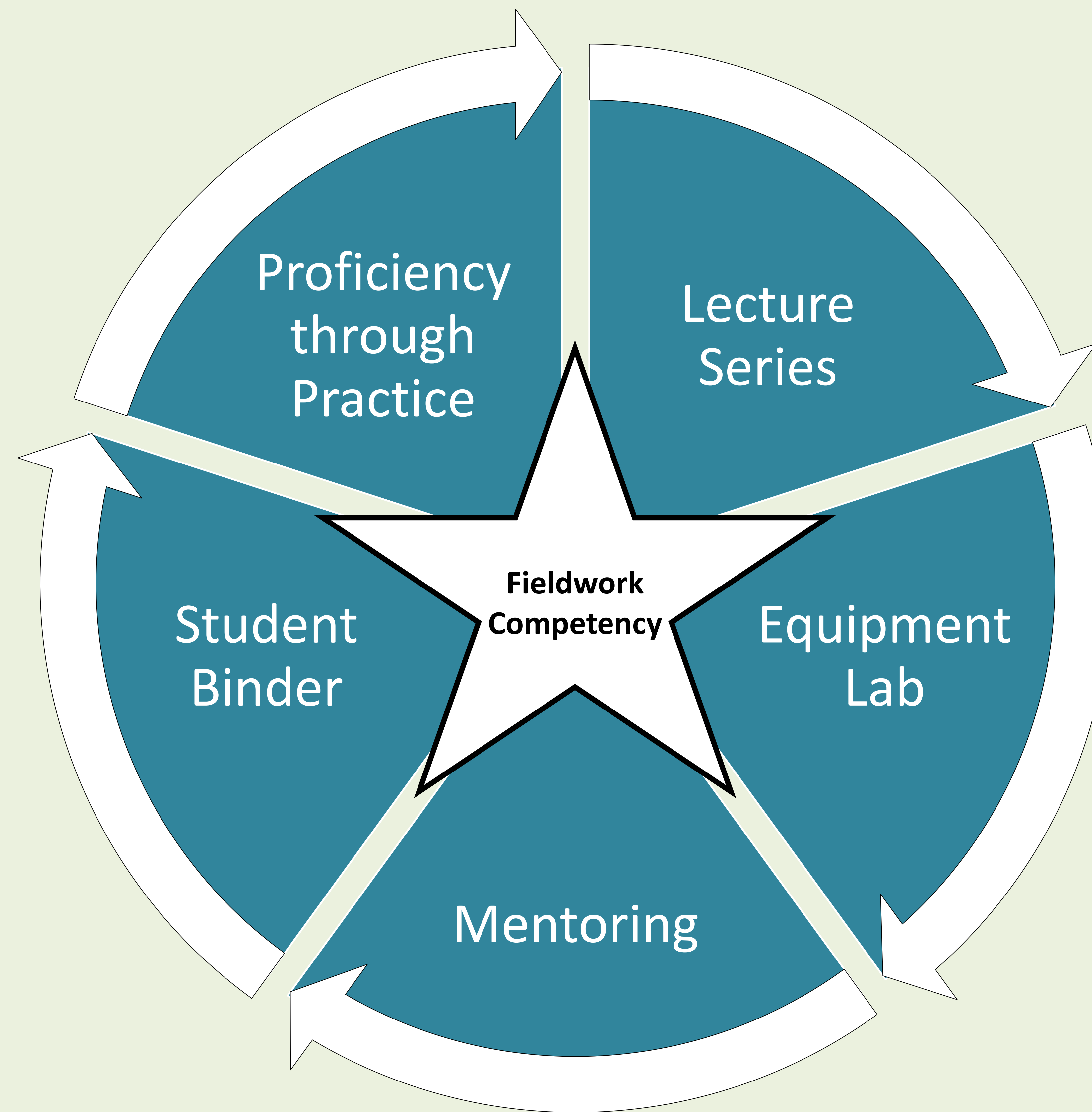
Student Binder

The student binder is provided on the first day of Level II fieldwork training at SST. It contains readings and materials that serve as a basic guide to building competency in a specialized setting. There are tabs on the following areas:

- Documentation
- Assessment
- OT Framework
- SI Theory
- Sensory Diet
- Complementary Therapies
- Information on Typical Development
- Intervention Planning

Mentoring

Daily mentoring is provided throughout all twelve weeks of the fieldwork experience in order to ensure that students are developing an understanding of sensory terminology, safety considerations, and intervention techniques. Specific feedback is provided at the conclusion of each week, with an emphasis on the student's areas of strength, opportunities for growth, and concrete goals for the upcoming week. Evaluations are conducted in accordance with AOTA fieldwork guidelines at the midterm and final.



Lecture Series

All students attend a series of lectures during the first three weeks of their fieldwork experience. Each lecture is designed to directly relate to the student's weekly goal areas and provide specific education on various components of sensory integration. The lectures are presented by an experienced clinician and are supplemented with specific readings and discussion questions.

Lectures Topics/Timeline:

- Week 1: Overview of Ayres' Sensory Integration (ASI®)
- Week 1: Intervention Planning for Sensory Modulation & Discrimination
- Week 2: Grading the Adaptive Response
- Week 2: Facilitating Praxis Abilities
- Week 3: "Nuts & Bolts of Neuro"
- Week 3: The Art of Therapy

Equipment Lab

All level II students are given an equipment binder and participate in a lab to learn about suspended equipment, specific to the specialized sensory integration environment at SST.

The Equipment Lab consists of:

1. Binder with safety features, set-up procedures, and activity ideas for all suspended equipment, including pictures
2. 1-hour session with supervisor to learn about and practice hanging up equipment, in addition to ways to utilize equipment in order to promote sensory integration

Student Testimonials

"I really enjoyed the student lectures and extra time and attention my supervisors and the other OTs gave to help with my learning process."

"I liked how organized the student program was and felt like the lectures were really beneficial. They furthered my understanding of the more complex sensory concepts which weren't covered as much in school."

"I loved being at SST for my Level II because of the structure, specifically how each week built upon the previous ones to set me up for success. My supervisors, along with the lectures, labs, mentoring, and observations, allowed me to feel confident in such a complex and specialized setting."

"I really liked the outline of what was expected from me each week and the binder filled with resources. I had a lot more resources here to teach me about sensory integration than I did about anything at my other placements."

References

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2002a). AOTA Fieldwork Performance Evaluation for the Occupational Therapy Student. AOTA: Bethesda, MD.

Parham, L. D., Cohn, E. S., Spitzer, S., Koomar, J. A., Miller, L. J., Burke, J. P., et al. (2007). Fidelity in sensory integration intervention research. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 61, 216–227.

Parham, L. D., Roley, S. S., May-Benson, T. A., Koomar, J., Brett-Green, B., Burke, J. P., et al. (2011). Development of a fidelity measure for research on the effectiveness of the Ayres Sensory Integration intervention. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 65, 133–142. doi: 10.5014/ajot.2011.000745

Week 1: Observe sensory modulation; Attend student lecture; Read binder; Complete Equipment Lab

Week 2: Observe discrimination and the art of therapy; Carry out 1 modulation treatment activity; Attend lectures

Week 3: Implement intervention plans for 2-4 clients; Write daily therapy notes for 2-4 clients; Attend lectures

Weeks 4 & 5: Continue intervention planning and implementation for 5-10 clients

Weeks 6 & 7: Provide intervention for 75% of entry-level therapist caseload

Weeks 8-11: Provide intervention for entire caseload; Administer, score, and write up an evaluation

Week 12: Fieldwork Competency ★