Abstract
The purpose of this project was to create a resource for San Jose State University occupational therapy students who intend to, currently are, or have studied abroad in Australia at the University of Western Sydney. To accomplish this, a website was created. A survey of students, consultation with experts, and personal experiences were all synthesized using the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework to categorize the information to be included in the website. The website provides information on education and fieldwork in Australia, social support, helpful tips, resources and links to information related to all other aspects of studying abroad.

Purpose and Significance
San Jose State University (SJSU) Occupational Therapy (OT) department has an emerging program for students to study abroad (SA) in Australia at the University of Western Sydney (UWS). In the spring and fall of 2010 we were among the first OT students to embark on this SA program. While away and upon our return from this academic year abroad, we noticed gaps in the information provided in regards to different aspects of the program. The purpose of this project is to provide a resource for students in the OT department at SJSU. This resource will provide assistance with pre-departure processes, practical information about living in a new country, and social, emotional, technical and academic support throughout the SA experience.

This resource is vitally needed for students in the OT program at SJSU. Students need more information, more support and better resources to promote success of the student and SA programs in general. When students are given the opportunity to go outside of their comfort zone and experience different ways of living and working they become more culturally competent, globally minded people and better employees, clinicians and citizens. These benefits can be reaped by all professions, OT included. The creation of this resource will contribute to the development of such individuals thus creating a better, more understanding work place and world.

Literature
• Students who SA have been shown to have a greater change in intercultural communication skills, increased cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and employability.
• Having multiple support systems in place, such as academic, professional, personal, emotional and social support, will help students to remain engaged and enjoy the SA experience.
• Academic growth, achievement and curiosity were found to be positive outcomes of studying abroad.
• Many benefits are rendered when students are involved in international fieldwork including clinical reasoning in planning, intervention and evaluation of clients and working in an interdisciplinary team.
• Obstacles to SA include financial matters, information overload or lack of adequate information, fear of the unknown and feelings of unpreparedness.
• The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) has created an International Fieldwork ad hoc Committee for the Commission of Education
IFAHCCE), who recently presented at the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) conference in Santiago, Chile on the needs of international fieldwork.

- An useful and relevant option is to create a website specific to the population targeted with all relevant information in one place and students can also participate in the creation of resources for studying abroad

**Objectives**
The project objectives are intended to focus and direct the researchers to ensure that the project benefits the intended population, SJSU OT students studying abroad at UWS. The following objectives will be met by the creation of a website. The objectives for this project are:

- to support and prepare students with pre-departure processes.
- to support students and provide useful resources while abroad.
- to facilitate and support students to readjust to life back in their home country

**Methods**
From our personal experiences while abroad, we concluded that a resource was necessary to assist future students intending to complete the SJSU OT SA program. A literature review was conducted to obtain information in regards to SA, its benefits, its detriments, international fieldwork and program planning. The research affirmed our assumptions that a resource can benefit the SA student. To develop the resource we contacted coordinators, past and present students, and other leaders in the field. We also reviewed information provided by the institutions in regards to preparation for SA, including course manuals and participant guides. We collected relevant information from reliable internet resources. While abroad, we collected information that we synthesised for the project. The OTPF was used as a guideline for organizing the information collected

**Outcomes**
The final product of this project is a website which has a compilation of SA students’ knowledge and resources to allow future students to be successful in the process. The website can be accessed at [http://sjsuot-studyabroad.webs.com/](http://sjsuot-studyabroad.webs.com/). The website contains 14 sub-pages to guide students through the information. These include: a home page, UWS, Fieldwork, Lifestyle, Australian Culture, Having fun while abroad, Resources, News, Members, Forums, Calendar of Events, a Photo Gallery, a Welcome Home page and a Reference Page

**Discussion**

- This project is immediately applicable to OT students at SJSU who are studying abroad, are interested in studying abroad or have previously studied abroad with the program at UWS.
- This product hopes to encourage more OT students to SA.
- SA programs will promote professional networks and information exchange among occupational therapists in different countries.
- Limitations include a narrow audience. Also the information is highly based on personal experience and will need to be continually updated.
- Current research, survey data and personal experience has indicated that further research is needed in regards to studying abroad at the graduate level, OT specific SA related to academics and fieldwork, and transitioning back to studies at the students’ home university