Objective: The purpose of this study is to analyze qualitative data gathered from a survey during a previous study completed by Diezel (2010), who explored recently certified occupational therapists’ perceptions of academic preparation for level II fieldwork. Through qualitative analysis, the researchers hope to find information regarding the perceptions of what is needed to be successful in fieldwork, which academic coursework was most and least helpful during fieldwork experiences, how the attitudes of learning were affected by fieldwork, and what else academic programs could have done to prepare for fieldwork.

Participants: 1,055 recently certified occupational therapists ages 22 to 66 from across the U.S.

Data Analysis: Content analysis was used to code the responses from the open-ended survey questions that were collected through a survey emailed to recently certified occupational therapists across the U.S.

Results: Question 26: What was your greatest learning need in order to progress in your fieldwork placements?
Eight themes were identified: 1. Confidence: was either gained after completing fieldwork or the need for more confidence during their fieldwork placement. 2. Importance of oral and written communication skills: improve professionalism when dealing with a multidisciplinary team and with different types of clients. 3. Learn different treatment strategies to treat clients with a variety of diagnose: felt the need to receive more support from fieldwork supervisors, classmates and professors from their OT department. 4. Needed more support: from fieldwork supervisors, classmates and professors from respondent’s OT department. 5. More hands on practice: creating treatment plans, documenting, writing goals, assessing range of motion and manual muscle testing. 6. Referring: back to textbooks, resources, and research was necessary to progress during their fieldwork. 7. Increase knowledge of protocols: related to billing, insurance, and procedures of the specific fieldwork settings that respondents were placed in. 8. Learning application: evidence-based practice (EBP), theory, and clinical reasoning to practice.

Question 27: What academic coursework was most helpful to you in your fieldwork experiences?
Seven themes were identified: 1. Hands on coursework: labs, hands on classroom activities, clinics and level I fieldwork. 2. Core OT coursework: that includes classes such as pediatrics, neurorehabilitation, physical disabilities, geriatrics, and mental health. 3. Foundational coursework: anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, neuroanatomy, biomechanics, pathology, and development across the lifespan. 4. Evaluation and intervention classes: classes that addressed the evaluation process, intervention planning process, specific assessments and interventions, and documentation. 5. Other OT coursework: EBP, theory, research, culture, and professional concept classes. 6. Specialty coursework: hand therapy, sensory integration, school based OT, splinting, and orthopedic classes. 7. All or None: A few respondents wrote either all or none of the coursework in the OT program was helpful.

Question 28: What academic coursework was least helpful to you in your fieldwork experiences?
Eight Themes were identified: 1. OT core classes: geriatrics, physical disabilities, pediatrics, evaluation, and mental health courses. 2. Introductory courses: introduction to OT, group dynamics, and arts and crafts classes. 3. OT courses: theory, EBP, research, history, occupational science, media, and assistive technology. 4. Professional development: culture, management, ethics, documentation, program development, and advocacy. 5. General education: communication, English, fine arts, business, statistics, and psychology. 6. Science courses: neuroanatomy, kinesiology, physiology, anatomy, chemistry, pharmacology, and human pathology. 7. Level I fieldwork. 8. All or None: A few respondents wrote either all or none of the coursework in the OT program was least helpful.

Question 29: How did your fieldwork experiences affect your attitudes towards learning?
Ten themes were identified:
The following four themes specifically addressed the respondents' attitudes toward learning:
1. **Eager to learn more.** After completing his or her fieldwork experience respondents were eager to continue to learn.
2. **Life long learning and independent learner.** Respondents stated that they after fieldwork they realized that learning is a life-long process and it is important to become an independent learner to become a successful OT.
3. **Positive and negative learning experiences.** Respondents had positive learning experiences during fieldwork; however, a few respondents had negative learning experiences.
4. **No affect on attitudes of learning.** Some respondents stated that their fieldwork experience did not change or affect their attitudes towards learning.

The following six themes did not answer the question and were reflections of his or her fieldwork experience:
1. **Importance of fieldwork.** The fieldwork experience was an essential part of the education process.
2. **Guidance of Supervisor.** The amount of guidance a supervisor provided influenced students’ motivation and attitude.
3. **Positive and Negative Experience with Supervisor.** Respondents stated that they had positive experiences with their supervisors and that they learned a lot during fieldwork.
4. **OT academic preparation for fieldwork.** A few of the respondents felt that their academic program prepared them for fieldwork; however, many others felt unprepared.
5. **Fieldwork influenced future job settings.** Fieldwork experiences influenced the choice of future job settings.
6. **Importance of EBP and research.** Fieldwork reinforced the importance of EBP and research.

**Question 30:** What else could your academic program have done to prepare you for success in your fieldwork placements?
Eleven themes were identified:
1. **More hands on experience.** Respondents stated they would like more hands on experience with clients and intervention strategies.
2. **More support.** There was a need for more support and mentoring from program and fieldwork supervisors during fieldwork.
3. **Learn more about different diagnosis, intervention strategies, different settings, and assessments.**
4. **Learn more about modalities, types of equipment, splinting, and transfers.**
5. **More focus on specific populations and settings.** Respondents stated they would like more focus on specific populations and settings such as geriatrics, mental health, pediatrics, physical disabilities, and neurological deficits incorporated into their program.
6. **Know more about specific medical procedures and precautions for settings.**
7. **Less focus on research, theory, and evidence-based practice.**
8. **More focus on the application of knowledge and skills learned.**
9. **More student input.** More consideration for students’ input regarding fieldwork placements.
10. **More case studies, discussions, and guest speakers.** Respondents suggested that these should be incorporated into classes.
11. **Nothing.** Respondents felt well prepared and there was nothing else that their program could have done to prepare them for level II fieldwork.

**Six overall themes were identified.**
1. Respondents identified a need for more hands on experience throughout the curriculum.
2. Respondents needed more support from their fieldwork supervisors and OT program during their fieldwork experience.
3. Respondents expressed that supervisors greatly influenced whether they had a positive or negative fieldwork experience.
4. Theory, research, and history were found to be unhelpful during fieldwork experience and respondents felt that there should be less focus on these classes in the academic curriculum.
5. Many respondents in this study reflected that they wanted more information and experience with the specific population and setting of their fieldwork placements.
6. Respondents felt that coursework outside of their fieldwork setting was not helpful or relevant.

**Conclusion:** The data provided insight on ways occupational therapy programs could be improved. It is essential for occupational therapy programs to make continuous efforts to re-assess their curriculum to provide quality education and develop competent occupational therapists that will provide clients with quality care.