



Interdisciplinary training in graduate schools at the University of Connecticut

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Interdisciplinary practice

- “Interdisciplinary practice involves the interaction and collaboration of professionals from more than one discipline with the goal of improving the quality of assessment and treatment for people with disabilities”

(AUCD, 2007)

- Interdisciplinary practice should also be **family-centered**

Interdisciplinary training

- Interdisciplinary training refers to an integrated education program that involves the “interdependent contributions of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and methods of collaborating disciplines.”
- Teaches students their role amongst other disciplines

(AUCD, 2001)

Why interdisciplinary practice?

- Communication and collaboration among professionals to make treatment more efficient and effective
- Intervention for people with developmental disabilities
- Reduce burden on families to manage and understand care

(Bruder, 1996)

Why *not* interdisciplinary practice?

- Typically not incorporated in school training curricula
- Fragmented service delivery system
- Discipline-specific theoretical formulations about diagnoses and interventions

Multidisciplinary	Interdisciplinary
Each professional completes an independent evaluation of the client.	Formal communication between professionals, usually by a <i>case manager</i> .
Separate set of recommendations reported to family, services provided in isolation.	Coordinated recommendations reported to family, services provided collaboratively.

Barriers to interdisciplinary training

- Cost
- Labor
- Scheduling difficulties
- Lack of faculty support

- “Profession-centrism” (Pecukonis, Doyle, & Bliss, 2008)

Survey

- Inclusion of interdisciplinary training in graduate programs at the University of Connecticut
- Comparison of faculty and student responses

Purpose

- Do graduate programs at UConn include interdisciplinary training in their coursework?
- Do faculty understand and teach interdisciplinary practice?
- Do graduate students report receiving this interdisciplinary training in courses and clinical practicum experiences?
- Do different programs provide more explicit interdisciplinary training and discussion of other disciplines in their programs?

Hypotheses

- Overall low exposure levels to other professions (with exceptions for some disciplines)
- Positive correlation between faculty and student reports of interdisciplinary practice & education about other disciplines

Participants

- Graduate students and faculty members:
 - ❖ Audiology
 - ❖ Human Development & Family Studies
 - ❖ Nursing
 - ❖ Physical Therapy
 - ❖ Public Health
 - ❖ School Psychology
 - ❖ Social Work
 - ❖ Special Education
 - ❖ Speech-language pathology

Current Status

DISCIPLINE	STUDENT	FACULTY
Audiology	11	2
Human Development & Family Studies	15	2
Nursing	8	0
Physical Therapy	14	0
School Psychology	10	1
Special Education	10	2
Speech-language pathology	19	2

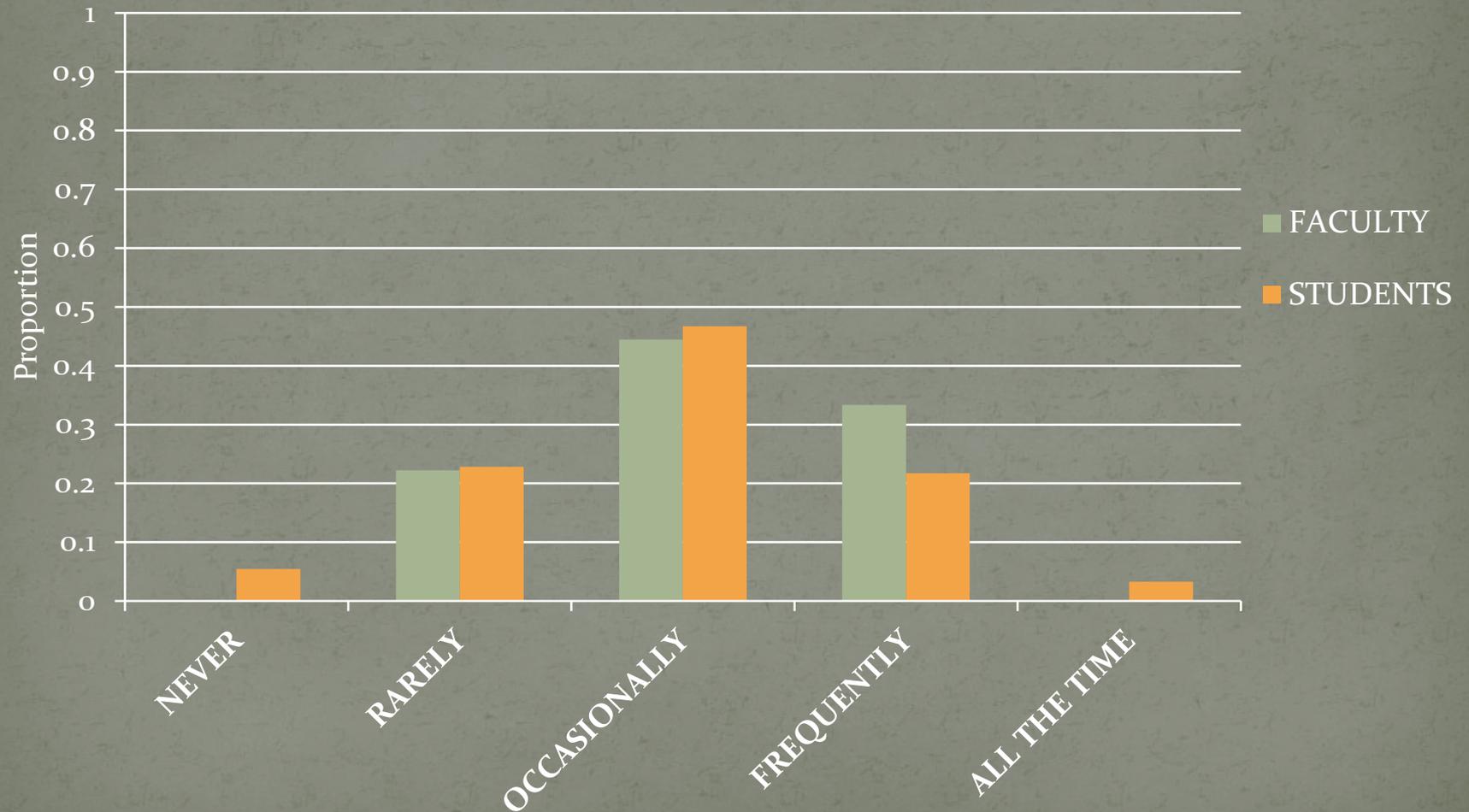
Disciplines who have not filled out the survey:

- *Social Work*
- *Public Health*

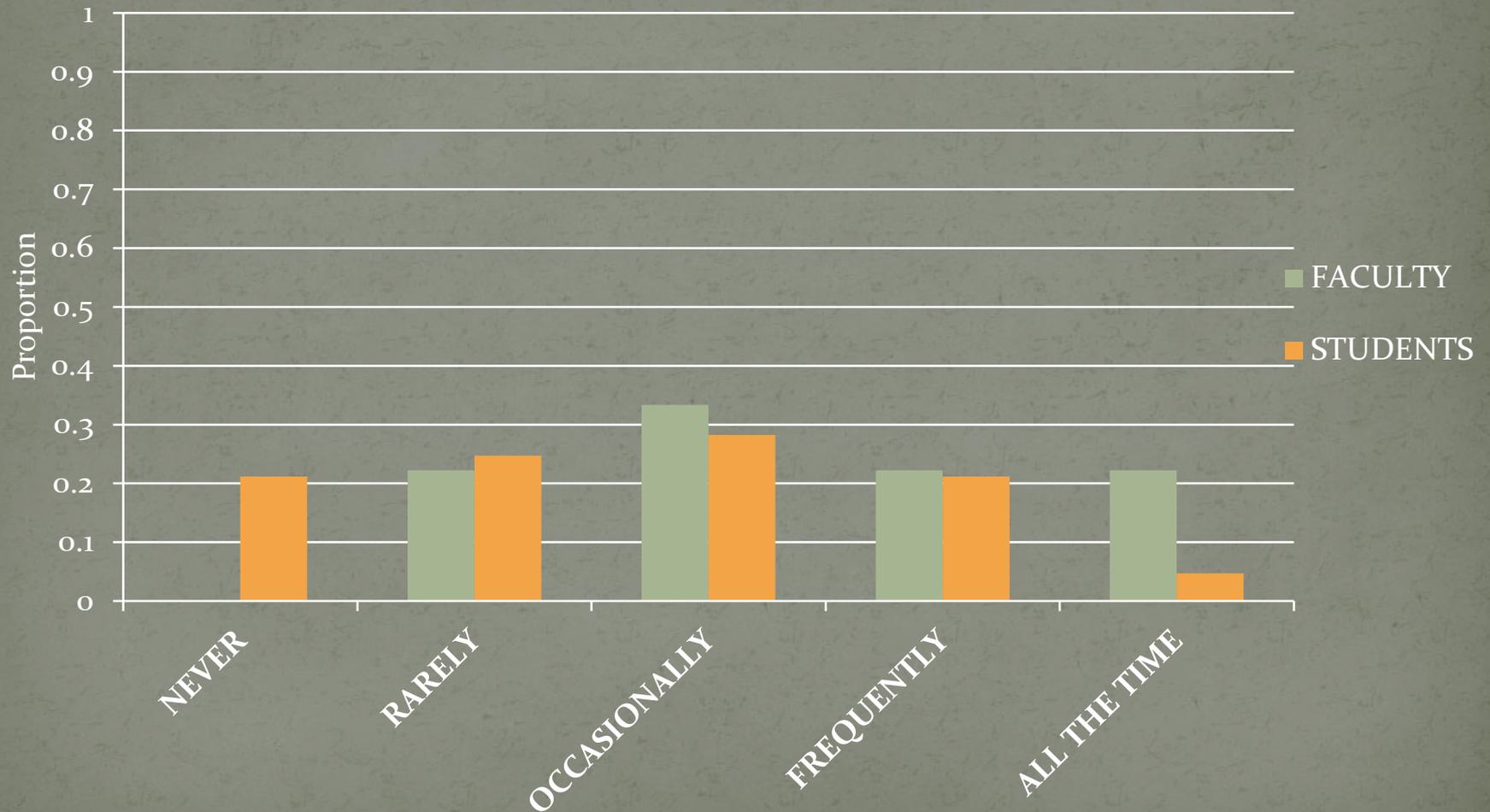
Trends

QUESTION	FACULTY	STUDENT
“Do you think interdisciplinary training is important?”	100% said Yes	100% said Yes

Discussion of other disciplines



Collaboration with other disciplines



Implications

- Provide information to faculty members in the 9 disciplines on the results of the study
- Include recommendations that are:
 1. based on disciplines that reported higher levels of interdisciplinary training
 2. from the programs at other institutions that have implemented interdisciplinary training

References

- Association of University Center Disabilities. (2007, September). *Interdisciplinary Practice*. Retrieved January 25, 2010, from http://www.aucd.org/docs/councils/cis/board_iddef_2007.pdf
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities. (2001). *Interdisciplinary training guide*. Washington, DC: Health Resources and Services Administration.
- Bruder, M. B. (1996). Interdisciplinary collaboration in service delivery. In R. A. McWilliam (Ed.), *Rethinking pull-out services in early intervention* (pp.27-29). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company.
- Pecukonis, E., Doyle, O., & Bliss, D. (2008). Reducing barriers to interprofessional training: Promoting interprofessional cultural competence. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 22, 417-428.

Faculty Survey

(Condensed version)

Which of the following practice models are you familiar with? (*check all that apply*)

- Multidisciplinary Practice
- Interdisciplinary Practice
- Transdisciplinary Practice

How many courses do you currently teach in one school year?

In the courses you teach, how many of those courses do you explicitly discuss the concept of interdisciplinary practice (*as defined above*)?

Faculty Survey

Do you discuss other disciplines in your classes when it is appropriate for the material you are teaching? (*Check one.*)

YES

NO

If yes, how many of your classes address other disciplines: _____

Please check the disciplines that you talk about:

Audiology

Human development & family studies

Nursing

Occupational therapy

Physical therapy

Public health

School psychology

Social work

Special education

Speech-language pathology

Other, please describe:

Faculty Survey

To the best of your knowledge, how often do other courses in your department explicitly teach the concept of interdisciplinary practice? (_____ *Check here if you are not sure*)

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	All the time

How frequently do your students learn about the scope of practice of other disciplines in your classes?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	All the time

How frequently do you collaborate with faculty members from disciplines other than your own?

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	All the time

Faculty Survey

Does your department allow students to take classes outside of your discipline? Check one:

YES NO

If no, why are they not allowed to take classes outside of their discipline?

If yes, in what ways are students encouraged to take classes outside of their discipline? In which departments are students encouraged to take classes? Please list.

Do you think interdisciplinary training is important?

YES NO

a. If no, please explain why you do not think so. If yes, please provide any suggestions you have for your program to improve interdisciplinary training.

Do you think families should be a part of an interdisciplinary team? Check one.

YES NO

Student Survey

(Condensed version)

The following questions rated on this scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	All the time

How frequently have you ...

- 1) been exposed to the concept of interdisciplinary practice in your coursework?
- 2) learned about other disciplines in your classes and on-campus clinical experiences?
- 3) learned about the scope of practice of other in disciplines in your classes and on-campus clinical experiences?
- 4) had training in collaborating with professional from disciplines other than your own to plan assessments?
- 5) had training in collaborating with professionals from disciplines other than your own to develop treatment plans?
- 6) been exposed to interdisciplinary interactions in at least one of your off-campus clinical placements?
- 7) learned about the scope of practice of other disciplines in at least one of your off-campus clinical placements?

Student Survey

Please check the disciplines that you have learned about their scope of practice in your classes and on-campus clinical experiences:

- Audiology
- Human development & family studies
- Nursing
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Public health
- School psychology
- Social work
- Special education
- Speech-language pathology
- Other

(question repeated for off-campus placements)

Student Survey

Does your discipline allow you to take classes outside your discipline? *Check one:*

YES NO

Does your discipline allow flexibility to choose which classes you take outside your discipline? *Check one:*

YES NO

If yes, which courses have you taken from which disciplines? If no, why do you think there is no flexibility?

Do you think interdisciplinary training is important?

YES NO

If yes, please provide any suggestions you have for your program to improve interdisciplinary training. If no, why do you think it is not important?

Do you think families should be a part of an interdisciplinary team? *Check one.*

YES NO