Internal Review of the RHB Doctoral Program
Spring, 2009

In preparation for external review of the RHB program, we conducted a series of focus groups with both faculty and students. For both groups, the goals were: (1) to prepare for external review of the RHB doctoral program; (2) to align the RHB doctoral program goals with required coursework; and, (3) to develop an assessment plan for the RHB doctoral program that measures student learning outcomes.

A single faculty-centered focus group was completed and facilitated but the College Assessment Officer (Dr. Rena Murphy). To begin, the goals were enumerated and ground rules were established (respect for others’ opinions, confidentiality, etc.). Two questions were posted to the faculty: (1) What should graduates of the Rehabilitation Sciences Ph.D. program know or be able to do? This question was followed with (2) What does that mean? What would that look like? How would you describe that?

Notes from the focus group were compiled and the following list of skills and abilities emerged from the faculty discussion:

**Conduct independent research**
- Design research – actively participating/developing
- Have comprehensive knowledge of literature in field/area
- Value all forms of research
- Demonstrate a focused content area
- Understand data analysis methods
- Adapt to a variety of work settings
- Have comprehensive knowledge of human subjects review board
- Support the research of colleagues
- Mentoring/advising students in research
- Participate in grant development and submission
- Be eligible for post-doctoral experiences

**Dissemination of research findings**
- In peer reviewed journals
- Through presentations at conferences
- By writing publishable/quality manuscripts
- By applying new evidence to their profession/area of specialization

**Teaching/Academia**
- Mentoring/advising students (formative and summative)
- Design, develop, deliver appropriate course content
- Conduct appropriate student assessments
- Curriculum development
- Lab management
- Understanding three part load of academia (teaching, research, service)
- Articulate teaching philosophy
- Integrating students into line of research
Leadership/citizenship
- Knowledge of public policy and legislation
- Advocacy and lobbying
- Knowledge of health and social systems
- Independent action/motivation/passion/enjoyment
- Focus area of knowledge/specialization

Interprofessionalism
- Mediate collaboration of ideas
- Collegiality
- Understand interdisciplinary knowledge base
- Organizational citizenship behavior
- Patient centered service delivery
- Use theory to guide research
- Communication, negotiation, debate

Knowledge and Integration of Ethical Practices
- Content knowledge around ethical practice
- Practical application through problem solving and observations

Important topics more difficult to measure or assess
- Sustainability/life balance
- Professional ethics in practice
- Passion/enjoyment
- Being a change agent/facilitating change
- Communication/negotiation/mediation skills
- Appreciation for Interprofessionalism

Other questions
- What indices of accomplishment should students have?
- Possible minimums
  - Research
    - Manuscript
    - Book chapter
    - Grant proposal
  - Teaching
    - Apprenticeship/teaching experience
    - Syllabus creation/revision
  - Presentations
    - National/regional conferences
- What happens when a student doesn’t meet the established expectations?

We have shared this information with RHB faculty and students and have reviewed all of the syllabi of the RHB curriculum, to determine where each of these outcomes are being addressed in our core curriculum. We were also interested in determining how mastery of these skills and abilities were being measured. (This additional information is available upon request).
For the student focus groups, we chose to conduct two sessions: a faculty facilitated session (Drs. Mattacola and Capilouto) and a student facilitated session (English, Dwyer, Kleinhans and Malkawi). Because of the number of students involved, some grouping was necessary. Students were divided into two groups, a priori, so that each group had participants at varying places in the program (new students and students about to graduate), represented all four disciplines (PT, OT, CSD and AT), contained both full time and part time students as well as distance and local students. These considerations allowed us more in depth interpretation of the results of the focus groups.

At the start of the faculty facilitated session, a script (attached) was followed that detailed the goals of the focus group, issues relative to respect and confidentiality as well as knowledge that the session was being audio recorded. Students were made aware of their right to request that recording stop at any point in the session. We then proceeded to ask the following questions about each class in the core curriculum:

a. Class by class (60 Minutes)
   i. What were the strengths of the class?
   ii. How can the class be improved?
   iii. For those of you who have not taken the class- What do you expect to learn in the class
   iv. For those who have taken the class- Did you have any expectations for the course that were not met?

b. Please describe your mentoring experiences thus far in the program. (20 minutes)
   i. What experiences are particularly useful?
   ii. How can mentoring be improved?

For the students-facilitated groups, currently students were led by two students ready for graduation (one local, one distance for both groups). These sessions were not audio recorded but student facilitators were asked to take notes so we could incorporate as much of the information shared as possible. Again, these sessions began with the reading of a series of ground rules (attached). The following questions were asked:

a. Which core course has had the most positive impact on your preparation as a doctoral candidate? Why?

b. For those of you who have taken summer courses:
   i. Did you find the content useful? Why or why not?
   ii. Did you find the logistics of the courses (structure, time frame) useful? Why or why not?

c. Most of you are considering pursuing a career in academia. If you were given a magic wand, what would you change add or revise; i.e. what overall suggestions to you have for the program?

Results from these groups were orthographically transcribed and checked for transcription reliability; if there was disagreement – a third person listened to the recording and a decision was made. The transcriptions were then truncated into themes by two independent evaluators. The major themes and the comments associated with those themes have been compiled below. This information has been shared with the students and they will have an opportunity to review these comments and confirm/deny the accuracy of the information via the RHB blog.
Teaching Apprenticeship

- Consider the sequence- Pedagogy course should precede TA
- Inconsistency across advisors- some people had tailored TAs that took into account their previous teaching experience; others did not have that experience
- Not enough mentorship in the TA- advisor not around
- Had incredible mentorship- taught an entire course independently
- I did not get student feedback like others- this needs to be consistent
- I am doing 75% of a class- videotaped to go o0ver with my professor
- Reflecting on teaching is a valuable experience- helped me with my teaching apprenticeship
- Seems people at UK get closer mentoring than distance students- structure this better and make it consistent across students- preceptor at distance site?
- Good mentoring required to learn necessary skills

[Bottom line: great deal of variation in requirements for the TA; inconsistency in level of mentorship (both within and at a distance); sequence is an issue]

Issues in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

- Remedial for students with history of teaching in higher education
- These should be classes NOT seminars; word seminar is obsolete- these should be 3 hour courses; want a transcript that says I took course not seminars; teaching is part of the RHB mission- therefore should be a full blown course; presentation-receiver as it stands NOT a discussion like the title seminar implies
- Not challenging for those who have teaching experience- TOO challenging with not enough mentoring for those who are new to teaching
- Too much work for not enough credit- consider variable credit-
- Amount of work kept growing
- Maybe there should be a teaching track- seems the emphasis is all on research
- Allot of lectures felt rushed- activities felt rushed- now presentations are rushed; some if this used to be groups activities- now individual- [comment about the change instructor not being a good one]
- Journaling questioned- not my style- should be alternative ways to reflect- also- we are supposed to be journaling about teaching- what if we are not teaching???
- Class too textbook dependent- maybe have experts in different theory come in an talk about the way they approach a class- better than just reading about theories and going from there
- Consider an education cognate if you plan to emphasize teaching versus research- I did that because I needed more help with the teaching part and I was not going to get that from the rehab science program
- A PHD is a research degree- find a balance
- Dr. C: we need to do a better job of showing you how you can we use your knowledge of research to evaluate your teaching?
- Very practical assignments.
- Good experience that allowed me to re-think teaching in general.
- We should have gone over what was required for the reading.
Distance students felt the old class was GREAT as it made them feel like they were there with the online discussion etc.

Presentation should be changed. Instead of presenting a mock lecture to the students either a) instead of pretending to be students the class should give feedback as colleagues OR b) the presentation should be of teaching theories used in personal teaching philosophies.

Amount of time given for the lecture was insufficient.

FEEDBACK and communication need to be improved.

The old course was philosophical and doctoral level.

There was not enough theory in the course.

[Bottom line: needs to be a traditional course; too much work for number of credits]

Surviving and Thriving

More open discussion very helpful; project useful; true seminar; not good as a first course- too much instructor assumption;

Favorite of most, an actual seminar in that there was a free flow of ideas, concepts and stretching of the mind.

Very well organized and useful assignments.

Instructors where outstanding.

If instructors are changed, make sure the past instructors share their course materials

The instructors should have taught more vs. the students teaching the class. The instructors are too bright in their field to require the students to teach the topics.

The panel was a highlight for most.

Introduction to Grant Writing

This was the hardest class…but very valuable

Have someone [a researcher] come in and talk on applicability of what we are learning in this class- we get caught up in the course work/assignments- bringing in experts (not students!) from our own College- so we don’t just brush through things in the class

Would be nice if we could build up over the semester so we had an actual grant by the end

Needs to be later in the lineup so you have a research idea and its not all over your head

A pretend grant is not a useful exercise- especially when it is written to an agency you’ll never be applying to for money [NIDRR]

Sequencing is a problem- this class did nothing but overwhelm me- made me want to drop out of the doc program

Should be a course NOT a seminar

Need to have the flexibility to tailor towards our own particular interest [personnel preparation grants should be an option]; design our own experience with a mentor

This should be offered later in the sequence.

A strength was the students were able to write a real grant.

Negative was that the grant one group was required to write was obsolete and yet they were required to find the forms etc.
• The grant’s officer was a key piece to the course.
• Class was great in structure and assignments.
• FEEDBACK! Feedback was held until the very end.
• Assignments were unequally distributed throughout the semester.
• The reviewing a grant assignment should be given first instead of after the student is required to write their own grant.
• The credit hours should be increased for the workload required.
• Potentially the course could be broken into two seminars, one where grant writing is reviewed and the second where a grant is written.
• Course instructor did not know where the students were in their sequence and some were penalized for what the instructor felt they should have known but where never taught.

ProSems 5/6

• Lost the idea of faculty presenting their research to students with a true seminar forma-
With a one page reflective statement following each class
• Students presenting to students has not been beneficial
• Too many people with too little time to present.
• Not enough time for FEEDBACK!; Inconsistent FEEDBACK given to the students from the instructor AND given very late; Potentially ask the class to take notes on each presenter and give it to the presenter at the end of the course to increase the amount of feedback given.
• For distance it is great because they can videotape themselves and watch it back.
• Can the first year/first semester students take it for ZERO credits first and then after that take it for one credit? This way they do not take up time for presentations but are required to sit in and learn from the other students and faculty.
• Everyone should be required to take it their first year.
• Some communication issues involved with expectations.

Rehab Theories Class

• This should be the first class people take-maybe offer every fall; but if you only have 2-3 people probably not as good an experience
• Some theories were not cross disciplinary- and others were left out [pain, motor control]-too much on psychosocial and psychology theory- course needs to include ALL four disciplines- why theories on death and dying in RS?
• Have people come in a give real life application of some of these theories rather than one person from one profession/discipline driving the discussion
• This course involved so much student research and presentation and so it is not fair to have us evaluate the instructor’s teaching; also is a bit scary when studying for comps-how do we know what the student shared is the best information?
• Content and assignments were good.
• Was a great transformational learning experience.
• Enabling America book was outdated, should not be required for students to read.
• More on how the ICF can be clinically incorporated.
Introduction to Research

- We had to bring in an article and then discuss it- if you had no research knowledge you were clueless and then got slammed
- ‘participation’ was tallied without the distance students knowing- this became for the inc class students a case of commenting on something so we’d get our points- didn’t matter what you said; we were never told that participation was being graded
- Deer in headlights experience
- Students asked to present their ‘research question’ when they just started- got grilled for 20 minutes and felt like an idiot
- Very influential because we went over so many designs.
- Students should have taken at least 570 prior to taking the course. If the student has not had basic stats, they will not be able to understand crucial pieces of information.
- A strength of the course was the experts coming in and talking about their respective areas.
- FEEDBACK! The feedback came at the end of the course when the students had already turned in assignments that were in-correct.
- Potentially this course should be offered every year and on-line. This way the students could take it whenever they were ready for it.
- There should be a piece involving how the research question drove the design. This was missing in the course.
- The assignment involving the three questions posed at the beginning of the course needs to be tied in more to the course. These questions were forgotten after the first week until the last week.
- An analysis piece should be added to the course.
- The professor should select an article for each of the designs and should give this article to the students to help them a) understand the design and b)find a similar article for the assignment.
- Faculty should come in and present their research designs.
- There needs to be more active learning.
- Students should be asked to go into their own disciplines literature and find these designs.
- The Portney and Watkins text should be required.

RESEARCH DESIGN IN REHAB SCIENCES (Carl asked the students to tell him what they would expect from a course with this title):

- Overview of different research designs.
- How to review research articles.
- Analysis piece.
- Faculty in the rehab sciences program come in and present their research.
- Data analysis and statistics in rehab sciences. UK stats is too parametric based and there needs to be more insight on what will be used in student projects.
Course sequencing was a theme that repeated throughout the entire conversation - seems this is a particular issue for distance students since only certain courses are offered distance. (This was also repeated in Carl’s group)
The idea of a course vs. a seminar was also repeated and needs to be considered across the core.

Consider alternative/additional assessments for those courses where student to student instruction predominates

New students do not understand the fact that the program of study is THEIR design - maybe include an orientation class that goes over info we get during colloquium - this idea was also followed by the suggestion of a formal student mentorship program instead

Thinking like a doc student - the students hear this but feel it is in conflict with the prescriptive nature of when they can complete core course requirements

Need to do a better job mentoring students

Reevaluate how we grade for ‘participation’ of distance learners - difficult to ‘buzz in’

Have a 9 or 12 research credit rather than the odd 10

Buddy system?

Mentor experience very different across students both within institution and within versus distance - also across disciplines

Can more of the classes be offered bi-weekly like Teaching and ProSem? Potentially mimic the 671/672 courses?

Instructors should know their students better, where they are in the sequence or where they are in their classes etc.

Program used to be a glorified advanced masters course, things are improving but there are still more areas for improvement.

Need to spend more time on the teaching side of the degree. Potentially a teaching certificate is required? A teaching cognate is required?

Courses in general are too product oriented.

Disciplines should be required to meet together and a) go over their current research as a group and b) find out what the students are doing in order to ensure everyone is being used to their fullest extent. Also, this should serve as a time for the students to go over what is being done in their field in general.
Issues with summer courses: students are forced into them regardless if it will fit in their program, not enough student input into the courses, every discipline does not get the opportunity to take a summer course.

Numerous issues regarding advising and developing a program of study. Some of which RHB can’t fix (ie. The UK system for looking up classes is not good) but some they can fix like what they should take etc.

Distance clinicians get their work schedules month in advance, some professors do not work with them on when they can come to campus to present and automatically sign them up for presentation dates and times.