

Background & Purpose

Background:

- UPMC Rehabilitation Institute (RI) Oakland & South Hills
- UPMC RI provides services to patients across the lifespan with South Hills & Oakland having a high volume of adults who have hand and/or upper extremity injuries



Purpose:

- Develop standardized Level II Fieldwork (FW) guides for UPMC RI to provide a consistent learning framework, ensure comprehensive exposure to hand therapy, and support educators in student development

Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to...

- Identify how the Clinical Resource Guide, FW Guide, and the Certified Hand Therapist (CHT) Pathway Guide supports progressive development of entry-level hand therapy competencies, including clinical reasoning, professional behaviors, and occupation-centered evidence-based interventions.
- Describe the rationale and evidence-based considerations used to design a Level II Fieldwork Clinical Resource Guide, Fieldwork Guide, and CHT Pathway Guide for occupational therapy students in hand therapy placements.

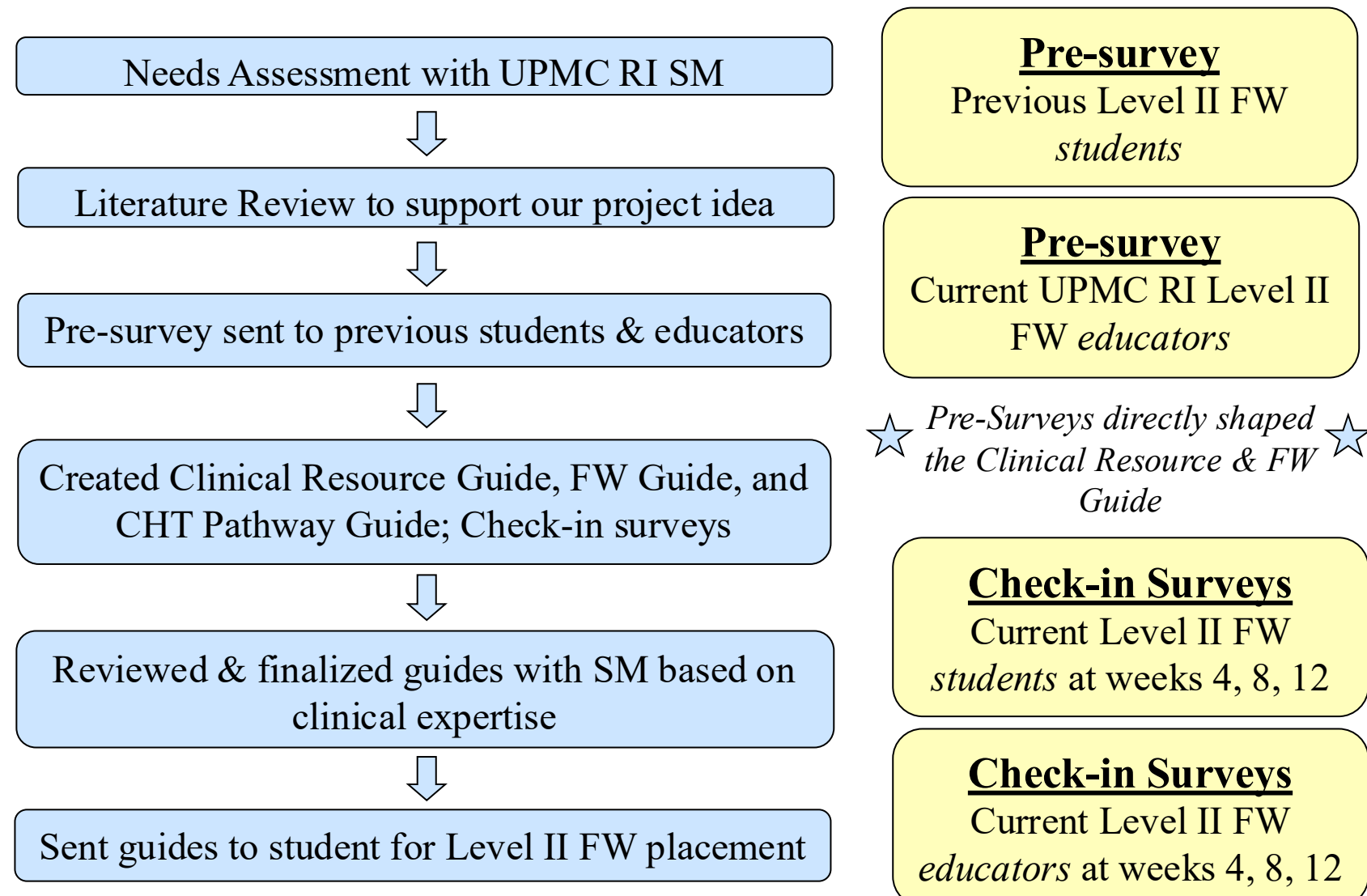
Methods

Participants

- Previous (n=7) & current (n=5) Level II FW Students from the University of Pittsburgh
- UPMC RI FW Educators (n=9)
- UPMC RI site mentors (SM) of Oakland and South Hills RI (n=2)



Process



☆ Pre-Surveys directly shaped the Clinical Resource & FW Guide ☆

Protocol Development

Clinical Resource Guide:

- Upper extremity anatomy
- Nerve supply & nerve cascades
- Common assessments
- Electronic documentation



Fieldwork Guide:

- Starting framework for students
- Modalities
- Common diagnoses
- Splints

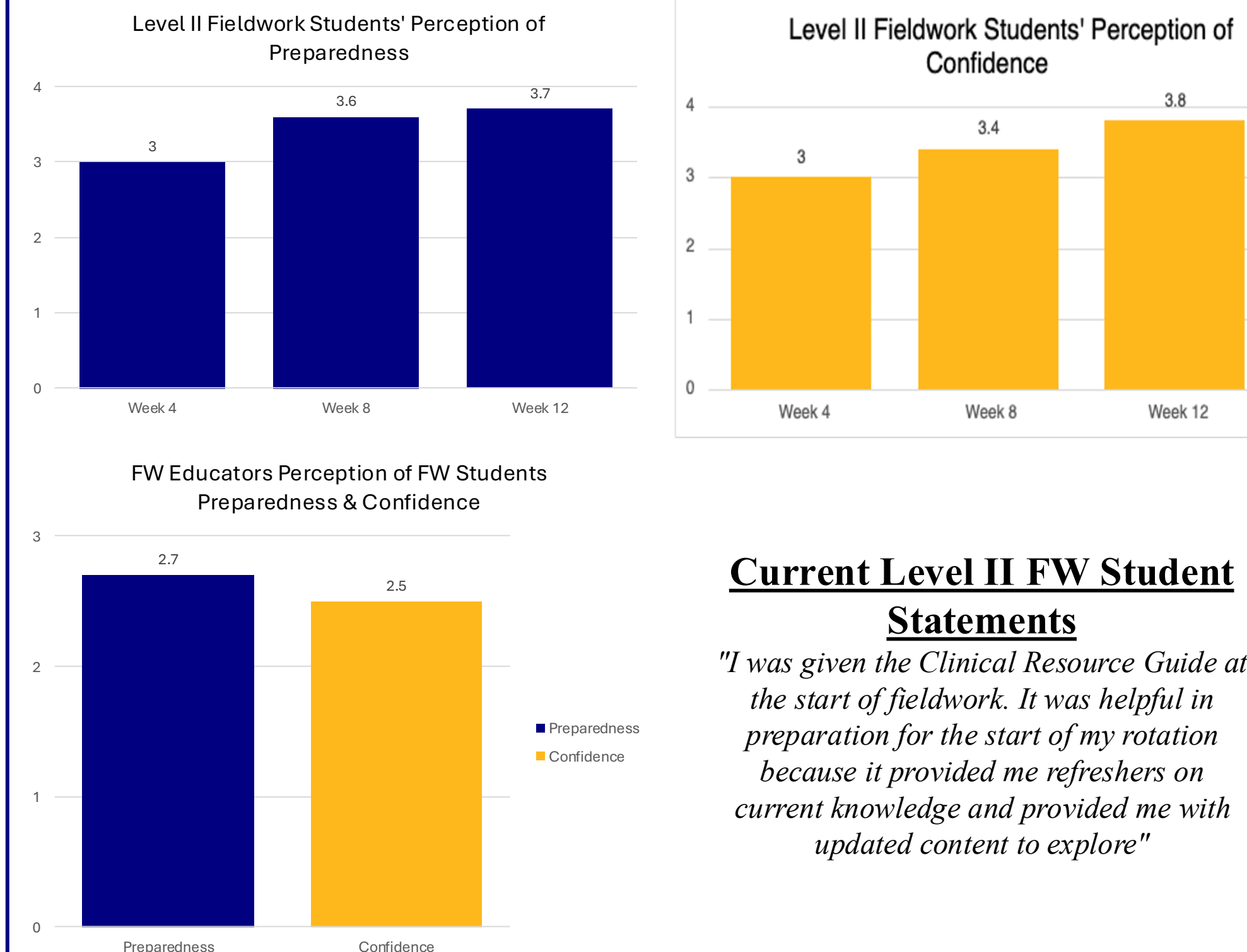


CHT Pathway Guide:

- More advanced information
- Upper extremity anatomy
- Complex Diagnoses
- Specialized tests



Results



Current Level II FW Student Statements

"I was given the Clinical Resource Guide at the start of fieldwork. It was helpful in preparation for the start of my rotation because it provided me refreshers on current knowledge and provided me with updated content to explore"

Discussion

- The development of the Clinical Resource Guide, FW Guide, and CHT Pathway Guide addressed inconsistencies in Level II OT hand therapy placements, particularly in student preparedness and confidence at UPMC RI
- Early feedback suggests that structured, tiered resources may improve clinical reasoning, confidence, and preparedness while supporting both foundational learning and advanced specialization
- Collaboration with students and clinicians enhanced the relevance and usability of the guides, aligning with evidence that structured frameworks improve learner outcomes and educator efficiency

Limitations:

- Small sample size, short implementation period, reliance on self-reported data, inconsistent clinical educator responses

Conclusion

A standardized set of FW guides offers a practical, scalable way to improve consistency, preparedness, and educational quality in Level II OT hand therapy placements at UPMC RI. By combining foundational knowledge, clinical tools, and advanced learning pathways, these guides support both entry-level competency and specialization. This model highlights the value of structured, evidence-informed resources and can be adapted across settings, with ongoing evaluation to further enhance FW education.

Future Directions

- Future capstone students can explore implementation across sites and integrate objective outcome measures, and refine guides through ongoing feedback
- Utilize guides as a bridge for entry level OTs pursuing CHT certification to aid in their studies
- Potential for adaptation across OT practice areas to enhance consistency and quality in fieldwork education
- Further product development is needed to assess long-term impact on student performance and competency

Acknowledgements

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