Occupational Therapy Students' Perspectives on Interprofessional Education

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Land Acknowledgement

We would like to begin by acknowledging that we meet on the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations, and within the lands protected by the "Dish with One Spoon" wampum agreement.

Agenda

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Background

Interprofessional Education (IPE)

What is IPE?
"When students from two or more professions learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes"

What are the goals of IPE?
- Foster mutual respect
- Enable healthcare professionals to utilize each member's expertise
- Improve patient outcomes

(Spaulding et al., 2021; WHO, 2010)

IPE in Education

How is IPE implemented?
- Variety of educational approaches
- Includes students from various health disciplines

When should IPE be included?
- Throughout students' education and into practice

What are the benefits of IPE?
- Increased knowledge acquisition
- Enhanced skills
- Positive attitudes about collaborative teamwork

(Guraya & Barr, 2018; Janes et al., 2022; Olson & Bialocerkowski, 2014)
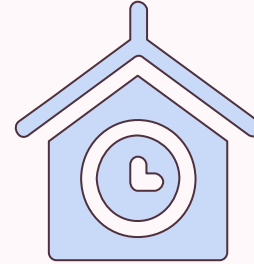
IPE in Occupational Therapy (OT)

University of Toronto

- Centre for Advancing Collaborative Healthcare & Education
- IPE within curriculum and practice settings

McMaster University

- IPE is a core principle
- Faculty of Health Sciences promote IPE and competencies

(McMaster University, 2025; University of Toronto, 2025)

Current Gaps in Literature

Limited IPE knowledge within OT

Focus on short-term perceptions

Impacts of IPE in clinical settings

(Raveendrakumar et al., 2021)

Current Study

Purpose

To determine McMaster University's Masters of Science in OT (MSc(OT)) students' readiness, perceptions, attitudes towards IPE

Objectives

To understand McMaster University's MSc(OT) students' IPE perceptions:
1. At program entry
2. At partial program completion
3. To compare the two timepoints

Methods

Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS)

- Self-administered questionnaire
- Rated on a 5-point Likert Scale
- Higher scores indicate a higher level of IPE readiness

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

(McFadyen et al., 2005; Oliveira et al., 2023; Parsell & Bligh, 1999; Reid et al., 2006)

RIPLS Questionnaire Subscales

Teamwork & Collaboration (T&C)

- **Purpose:** The value students place on working cooperatively with others and their appreciation for learning together
- **Items:** 1-9
- **Example:** "Learning with other students will make me a more effective member of a healthcare team"

Roles & Responsibilities (R&R)

- **Purpose:** The understanding and acceptance of the distinct roles and responsibilities of each healthcare profession within a collaborative setting
- **Items:** 17-19
- **Example:** "I am not sure what my professional role will be"
- **Reverse Coded**

(McFadyen et al., 2005)

RIPLS Questionnaire Subscales

Negative Professional Identity (NPI)

- **Purpose:** The extent to which students are resistant to learning with other healthcare professions
- **Items:** 10-12
- **Example:** "I don't want to waste time learning with other health care students"
- **Reverse Coded**

Positive Professional Identity (PPI)

- **Purpose:** The extent to which students feel confident in their own professional identity and believe collaborative learning can enhance their professional development
- **Items:** 13-16
- **Example:** "Shared learning with other health care students will help me to communicate better with patients and other professionals"

(McFadyen et al., 2005)

Part 1: Retrospective Data 2019–2024

Participants
- Incoming MSc(OT) students from 2019-2024
- Invited via PIPER initiative

Survey Components
- Demographic information
- RIPLS
- Previous IPE experiences

Data Analysis
- RIPLS data: ANOVA
- Significant pairwise comparisons: Bonferroni corrections
- RIPLS compared across three timepoints

Part 2: Current MSc(OT) Students' Perceptions

Participants
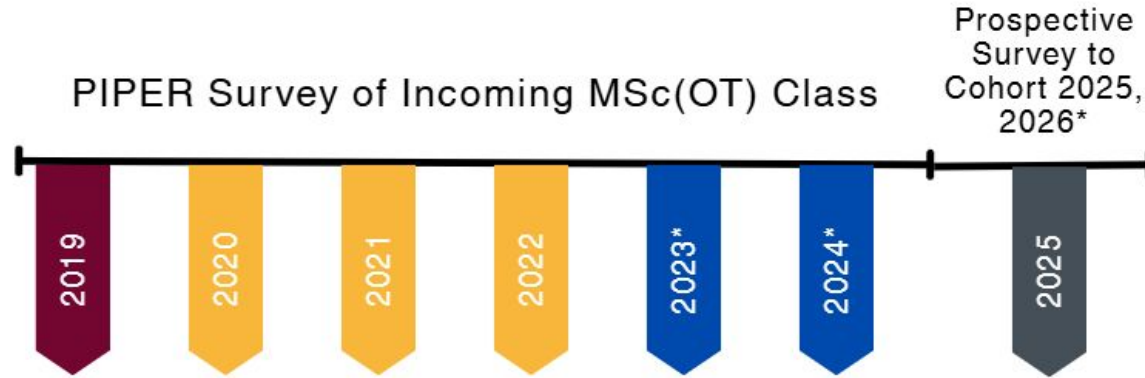- Current MSc(OT) students (cohorts 2025, 2026)
- Completed PIPER survey at program entry

Survey Components
- Demographic information
- RIPLS
- Open-text questions on IPE experiences

Data Analysis
- RIPLS data: Two-Sample t-Tests
- RIPLS compared at program entry vs partial completion
- Summative feedback of open-text responses

Timeline of Surveys

PIPER Survey of Incoming MSc(OT) Class

Prospective Survey to Cohort 2025, 2026*

2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023* | 2024* | 2025

Legend:
PIPER Survey Pre-COVID
PIPER Survey COVID
PIPER Survey Post-COVID
Prospective Survey

Results

Demographics Table

| Academic Year for Incoming MSc(OT) Students	Enrolled Cohort	Sample Size n (%)	Gender		Mean age years (SD)
			Woman (%)	Others* (%)	
2019	64	41 (64.1%)	10 (24.4%)	31 (75.6%)	23.7 (2.1)
2020	64	54 (84.4%)	50 (92.6%)	4 (7.4%)	24.0 (2.4)
2021	58	24 (41.4%)	21 (87.5%)	3 (12.5%)	23.9 (1.2)
2022	67	31 (46.3%)	28 (90.3%)	3 (9.7%)	24.2 (4.0)
2023	72	49 (68.1%)	44 (89.8%)	5 (10.2%)	24.7 (3.2)
2024	70	21 (30.0%)	21 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	25.5 (4.7)
Total	**395**	**220 (55.7%)**	**174 (79.1%)**	**46 (20.9%)**	**24.2 ± 3.0**
Cohort 2025	70	38 (54.3%)	35 (92.1%)	3 (7.9%)	25.9 (2.0)
Cohort 2026	67	22 (32.8%)	21 (95.5%)	1 (4.5%)	25.8 (3.9)
Total	**137**	**60 (43.8%)**	**56 (93.3%)**	**4 (6.7%)**	**25.9 (2.8)**

Part 1: Retrospective Data 2019-2024
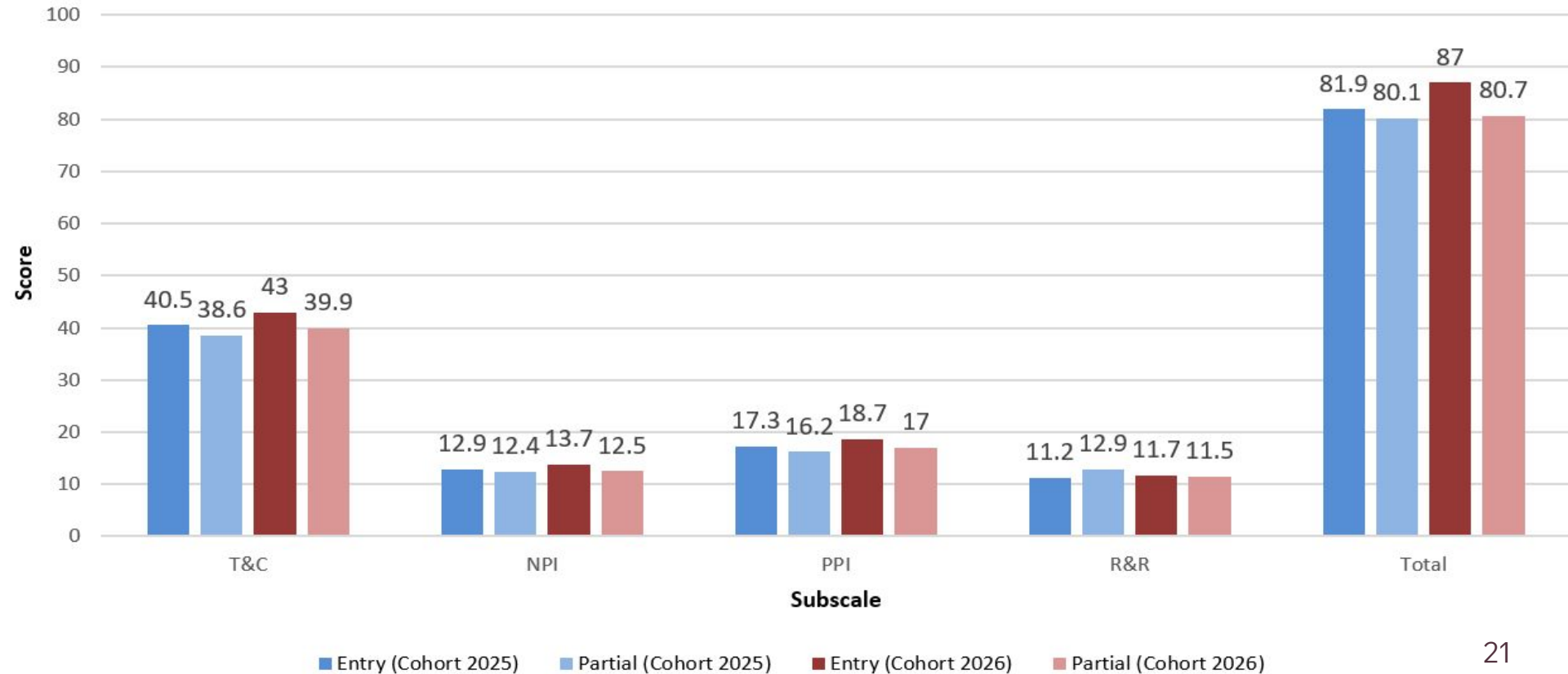
RIPLS at Program Entry
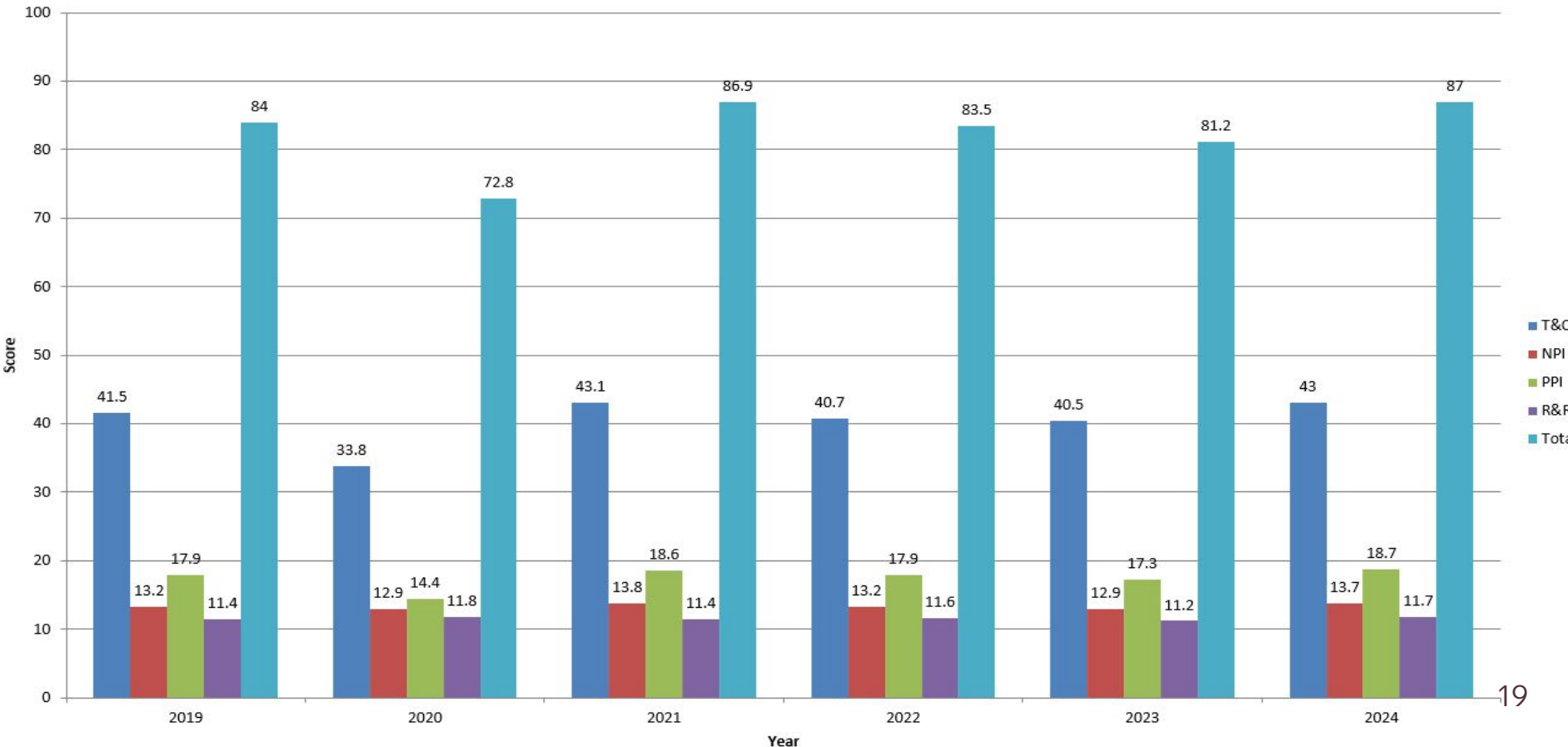
Part 1: Retrospective Data 2019–2024
RIPLS Across COVID
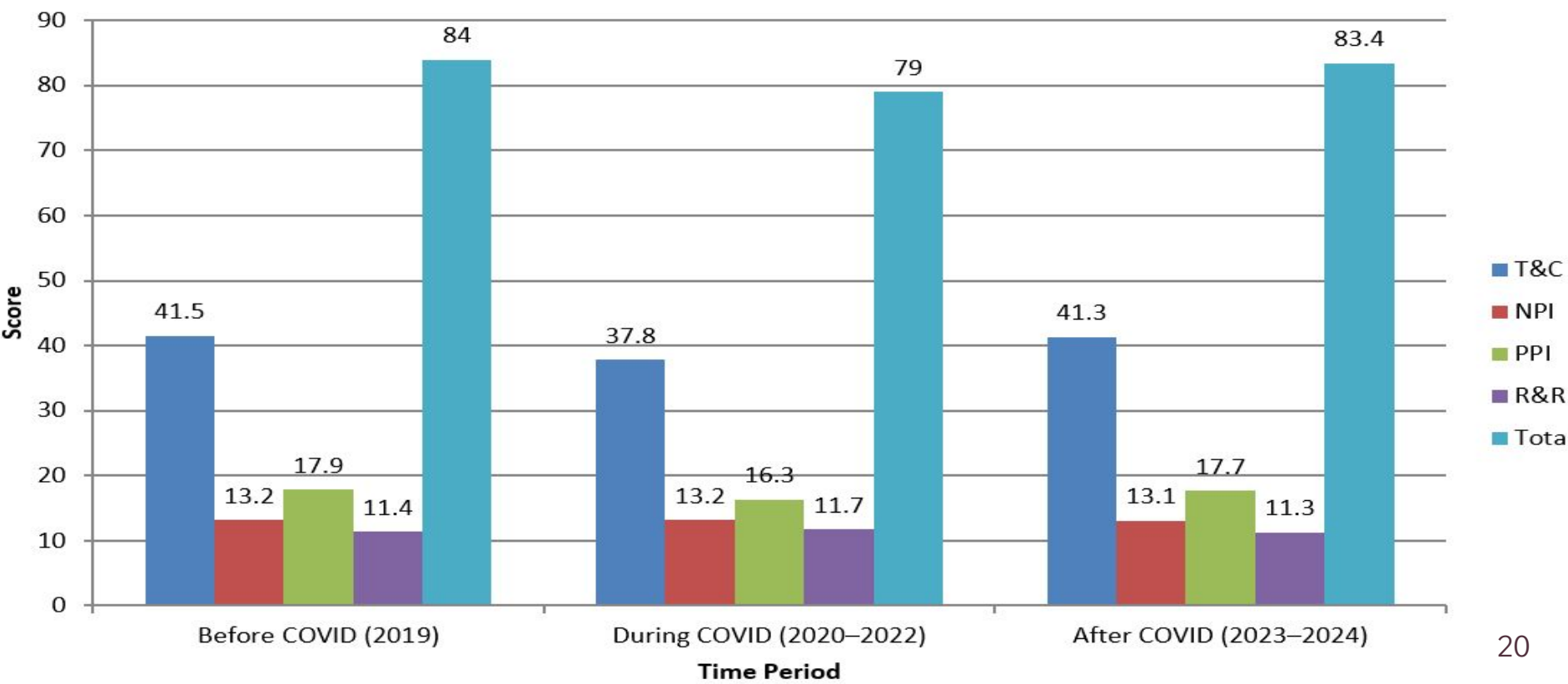
Part 2: Current MSc(OT) Students' Perceptions
RIPLS at Partial Program Completion

Part 2: Current MSc(OT) Students' Perceptions
Summary of Open Responses

Common Concepts	Facilitators	Barriers
Timing	- Self-paced and flexible - Frequent and short sessions	- Time constraints - Scheduling conflicts
Session Structure	- Minimal preparatory work - Integrates multiple disciplines	- Online sessions - Lack of organization
Previous Experience	- Clinical placement opportunities - Past education or work	- Limited opportunities - Variation in roles depending on setting
Peer Learning	- Connecting with peers - Learning from other disciplines	- Limited engagement or participation - Use of jargon
Institutional Initiatives	- Emails on IPE courses - Problem based tutorials	- Limited exposure early in program - Lack of cohesion
Skills	- Mutual respect and understanding - Eagerness to learn	- Knowledge differentials - Relevance to interests

Discussion

Overall RIPLS Trends

Mean Entry Score → **83.4 (SD=6.7)**

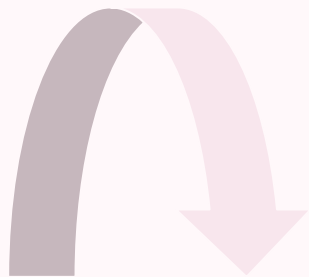**Highest Subscale Scores** → **Teamwork & Collaboration and Positive Professional Identity**

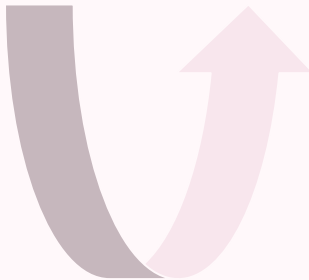**Highest Mean Scores** → **Classes of 2021 and 2024**

Lowest Mean Scores → **Class of 2020**

Total RIPLS Trends

2020 Dip
Reflects COVID-related disruptions (e.g., remote learning, social disconnection)

Recovery
Stronger scores in 2024 suggests adaptation to new IPE formats

Key Point:
2020 RIPLS scores differed from all other incoming classes

(Oliveira et al., 2023; Xyrichis et al., 2023; Zheng et al., 2021)

RIPLS Subscale Trends

Teamwork & Collaboration

Highest scores overall, but dropped most during COVID

Positive Professional Identity

Fluctuated with experiential learning access
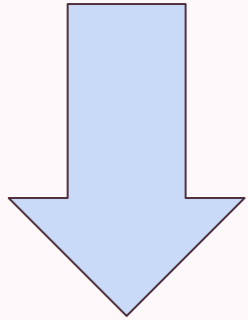
Negative Professional Identity

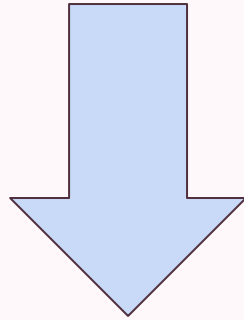Consistently low and stable across years

Roles & Responsibilities

Stable across years, least affected by disruptions

Key Point: Different domains may react differently to external disruptions

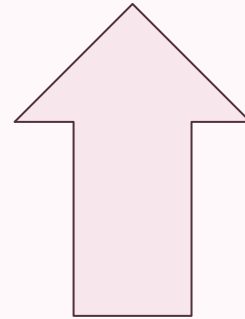(McFadyen et al., 2005; Xyrichis et al., 2023)

RIPLS Trends from Entry to Partial Program Completion

Decline from Entry to Partial Program Completion in Overall RIPLS

Largest drops in T&C and PPI

R&R increased or remained stable

Why?
- Fewer structured IPE experiences, unmet expectations and limited integration
- Reflects a common IPE enthusiasm dip

(Coster et al., 2008)

Alignment with Other OT IPE Research

Similar trends in other programs has been identified in the literature

Strong T&C scores have been noted by researchers

Common barriers
- Resources
- Scheduling
- Integration

Confirms a shared need for more **structured and immersive** IPE

Supports for IPE

Faculty buy-in, funding, and interdisciplinary collaborations

(Gee et al., 2016; Huebner et al., 2020; Hughes et al., 2019; Leipzig et al., 2002)

Implications for Practice, Education, Policy and Future Research

For Practice: Leverage high entry readiness → embed longitudinal IPE

For Education: Move beyond single day→ team-based, experiential learning

For Policy: Improve institutional support, scheduling, and relevance

For Research: Investigate the long-term effects post-graduation, develop a more sensitive tool beyond RIPLS, and consider how demographics shape IPE perceptions

(Azzam et al., 2022; Gee et al., 2016; Leipzig et al., 2002; Raveendrakumar et al., 2021; Torsvik et al., 2021)

Strengths & Limitations

Strengths

- Longitudinal Data Set
- Retrospective and Prospective Design
- Use of a Validated Measure
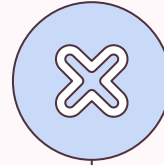
Limitations

- Tool Sensitivity
- Survey Response Rate
- Demographic Skew
- Single Site Study

Conclusion

This study provides many important insights into McMaster University's MSc(OT) students' readiness for IPE across multiple classes

We see..
- Consistently high readiness at program entry
- The need for consistent ongoing IPE to address IPE enthusiasm dip
- The need to incorporate meaningful, integrated, accessible IPE and address scheduling barriers
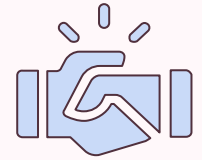
Overall, this points to the value of **embedding experiential, longitudinal IPE** into OT curricula

As healthcare moves towards **team-based, patient-centered care**, preparing students through strong IPE is essential

(WHO, 2010)

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Thank you!

What questions do you have for us?

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