



MISERICORDIA  
UNIVERSITY

# **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SCHOLARLY SYMPOSIUM 2018**

## **PELM Research Posters and Doctoral Students Capstone Presentations**



**SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 2018**

**5:15 – 8:05 P.M.**

**SANDY AND MARLENE INSALACO HALL**

**ROOMS 216, 217, 218**

*Research is an organized method for keeping you  
reasonably dissatisfied with what you have.*

— Charles F. Kettering

*In meditation we research the field without time and space and activity,  
and yet produce a useful effect while conducting the research.*

— Maharshi Mahesh Yogi

*When I can't do something, this always impels me to study it!*

— Theodore Sturgeon

## PROGRAM

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5:15 – 5:30	<b>Weekend and Weekday Program Class Photographs</b>
5:30 – 5:35	<b>Words from the VPAA</b> Dr. David Rehm
5:35 – 5:50	<b>Welcome</b> Dr. Lori Charney, Chair, Occupational Therapy Department  <b>Presentation of Pins</b> Occupational Therapy Faculty
5:50 – 5:55	<b>Research Presentation Opening Remarks</b> Dr. Lalit J. Shah, Professor and Research Coordinator, OT Department
5:55 – 6:00	<b>Doctoral Capstone Opening Remarks</b> Dr. Ellen McLaughlin, Director, Occupational Therapy Doctoral Program
6:00 – 8:00	<b>Open Hors-d'oeuvres Table</b> Everyone eats and views posters at the same time
6:00 – 7:00	<b>Research Posters (8)</b>
7:00 – 8:00	<b>Research Posters (7)</b>
6:00 – 8:00	<b>Concurrent OTD Capstone Presentations</b>
8:00 – 8:05	<b>Final Wrap Up</b>

## **Research Posters- Session I: 6:00-7:00**

### **Poster # 1**

**Title:** Student and Facilitator Experiences with a Student-Led, Collaborative Occupational Therapy Classroom

**Researchers:** Rachel Holochuck, OTS, Kassy Kozel, OTS, Julie Millhouse, OTS, Brittany Morgan, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Elaina Dalomba, Ph.D., OTR/L, MSW

**Reader:** Patricia Thatcher, Ph.D.

#### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to explore student and facilitator experiences with a Constructivist Learning (CL) model in an OT classroom. A CL format was used to enhance knowledge of the nature of occupation. MSOT students ( $n=50$ ) researched occupations of their choice, found one scholarly article to analyze and compare with constructs in the OTPF III, and presented their findings in a format of their choice to construct new knowledge with peers about the value of the occupation. A CL survey used pre/post trial showed 5% increase in perceived enhancement of knowledge within CL format. Focus groups exploring overall effectiveness of the CL experience revealed student themes of tension, development of creativity, and enhanced self-expression. Facilitator themes of tension and developing OT collegiality with the students emerged from field notes. Recommendations for further CL educational methods and research are offered.

### **Poster # 2**

**Title:** The Impact of University Faculty-Led Level I Psychosocial Fieldwork Placements on Students' Understanding of Psychosocial Factors

**Researchers:** Mollie Robinson, OTS; Julianne Roth, OTS; Karen Spehalski, OTS; Mariah Thomas, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Kathleen Hughes-Butcher, MS, OTR/L

**Reader:** Joseph Cipriani, Ed. D., OTR/L

#### **Abstract:**

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to investigate differences between faculty-led fieldwork placements (FLP) and non-faculty-led fieldwork placements (NFLP) influence on students' understanding of psychosocial factors. **Study design:** Mixed methodology was utilized to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Survey questionnaires gathered quantitative data, while interviews further investigated participants' fieldwork experiences and contributed qualitative data. **Population:** Study participants include occupational therapy students in academic cohorts of 2017, 2018, and 2019 who completed a level I pediatric psychosocial fieldwork placement. **Measures:** To gather quantitative and qualitative data, both a survey and interviews were utilized. **Results:** Students at FLP had increased understandings of the impact of psychosocial factors on occupation. **Conclusion:** Developing psychosocial FLP may be an alternative to traditional level I fieldwork placements, in addition to providing a possible solution to academic institutions experiencing shortages in fieldwork placements.

### **Poster # 3**

**Title:** A Scoping Review of School-Based Suicide Prevention Programs

**Researchers:** Dawn Evans, OTD, OTR/L, Caitlin Chappell, OTS, Maura Chiumento, OTS, Georgia Cleary, OTS, Caroline Clee, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dawn Evans, OTD, OTR/L

**Reader:** Grace Fisher, Ed. D., OTR/L

#### **Abstract:**

According to the Pennsylvania law Act 71, every school is required to “(1) adopt a youth suicide awareness and prevention policy; and (2) provide ongoing professional development in youth suicide awareness and prevention for professional educators in buildings serving students in grades 6-12” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, n.d.). According to Gibbons & Studer (2011), youth suicides greatly impact school policy and personnel; “statistics reveal that for every suicide there are six other people profoundly affected by the suicide” (p. 4). While many schools report that they recognize the importance of having a prevention program in place, most schools do not actually have a program (Gibbons & Studer, 2011). The purpose of this scoping review is to review and discuss literature regarding school-based suicide prevention programs, the implications for occupational therapy practice, and the guidance of future research to support the need for an increase of current evidence.

### **Poster # 4**

**Title:** Using Goal Attainment Scaling to Measure Improvement in Social Participation in Children with ASD

**Student Researchers:** Jenna Aimes, OTS; Nicole Cotta, OTS; Casey Kearney, OTS; Ashley Redmond, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Lori Charney, OTD, OTR/L

**Reader:** Jennifer Dessoie, OTD, OTR/L

#### **Abstract:**

**OBJECTIVE.** The purpose of this study was to determine if pairing sensory based activity with social skills training in a group setting would improve social participation in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

**METHOD.** This study utilized a single-subject design, with Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) as a measurement tool, to determine participants’ progress in social participation. Each participant was assigned 3 goals by the lead researcher based on the Social Skills Rating Form.

**RESULTS.** Improvements in social participation were recognized in each participant at the conclusion of intervention. However, GAS outcome measures demonstrated certain scores were more significant than others.

CONCLUSION. The findings contribute to the limited research available. The study encourages the conduction of more research to further confirm the influence of sensory- based techniques and social skills training in a group setting on social participation in children with ASD.

#### **Poster # 5**

**Title:** Exploring the Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine in Occupational Therapy: Perspectives from Fieldwork Educators

**Researchers:** Kayleigh Elser, OTS, Jessica Gardiner, OTS, Kaili Higgins, OTS, Jillian Robinson, OTS.

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Gwen Bartolacci, OTD, OTR/L

**Reader:** Dr. Grace Fisher, Ed. D, OTR/L

**Abstract:**

Objectives: The purpose of this study was to (a) identify types of complementary and alternative methods being used by OTs, (b) identify the diagnoses and clients being treated with these methods, (c) identify how often complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies were used, (d) determine if there is a need for students to become knowledgeable about CAM therapies prior to starting Level II fieldwork.

Methods: The researchers used qualitative methodologies to identify the use of CAM therapies among fieldwork educators. Methods of data collection included self-administered questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and phone interviews.

Results: There were 150 questionnaires mailed out, 17 questionnaires were returned, and 3 phone interviews were completed. Respondents identified “reimbursement” as a barrier to using CAM therapies. However, the respondents were open to using complementary and alternative methods in practice.

Conclusion: The results of this study indicated that there was limited knowledge and use of CAM therapies across all practice areas. Respondents were open to learning more about CAM therapies and incorporating them into practice if more research becomes available supporting their effectiveness. The respondents agreed that CAM therapies can be a good adjunct to treatment, however concerns with reimbursement discourages occupational therapists from utilizing CAM in practice.

#### **Poster # 6**

**Title:** The Role of Occupational Therapy in Multiple Sclerosis Management: A Webinar  
Misericordia University

**Researchers:** Amanda Darling, OTS; Elise Rizzo OTS; Lauren Schlegel, OTS; Kayla Stolins, OTS,

**Research Committee Chair:** Grace Fisher, Ed. D., OTR/L

**Reader:** Gwen Bartolacci, OTD, OTR/L

**Abstract:**

Purpose: The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of an online educational webinar for individuals with multiple sclerosis (MS). The educational webinar was presented through the Can Do MS society webinar platform.

Method: Participants in this study were individuals with MS who were recruited by the CanDo MS

society. They participated in an online one-hour educational webinar about symptom management and occupational adaptations designed by the research team. Participants received a post-program survey via email to give feedback on the effectiveness of the education provided.

**Results:** A majority of the participants expressed positive feedback concerning the information presented about learning to live with MS. They expressed gains in knowledge of fatigue management, adaptive equipment, and the use of cognitive exercises.

**Conclusion:** Results concluded the educational management webinar for persons with multiple sclerosis is beneficial in educating about benefits of occupational therapy with symptom management.

### **Poster # 7**

**Title:** Challenges within Occupational Therapy as Perceived by Practitioners in an Ever-Changing Healthcare Landscape

**Researchers:** Steven Beecher, OTS; Kristin Cantwell, OTS; Joseph Nabholz, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Grace Fisher, Ed. D., OTR/L

**Reader:** Gwen Bartolacci, OTD, OTR/L

**Abstract:**

**PURPOSE.** This research study explored how occupational therapists working in physical disabilities perceive their current work environment.

**METHOD.** The researchers interviewed 11 practicing occupational therapists who were employed in physical disabilities settings.

**RESULTS.** This research identified themes that may help inform future occupational therapy (OT) practitioners of the dynamic of the current professional atmosphere. The PEO model was used to frame the three emergent themes: Impact of Personal Characteristics; Impact of Work Environment; and Providing Quality Care.

**DISCUSSION.** Despite challenges such as reimbursement and high caseloads, the therapists reported a commitment to client-centered care and had a positive outlook on the profession.

**CONCLUSION.** Suggestions for strengthening the OT profession include interprofessional understanding of OT, advocacy for reasonable reimbursement and productivity policies, and continue research to monitor and examine the ongoing state of the occupational therapist in the workplace as the profession evolves.

### **Poster # 8**

**Title:** Perception of Service Needs in Adolescents with Visual Impairment

**Researchers:** Samantha Fuss, OTS; Megan Hunt, OTS; Lindsay Kreusel, OTS; Rebecca McMahon, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Leamor Kahanov, Ed. D., ATC, LAT

**Reader:** Grace Fisher, Ed. D., OTR/L

**Abstract:**

The phenomenological study examined participation of adolescents with visual impairments (AVI)s in daily activities within various contexts and environments to assess needs and potential barriers.

Data was collected via individual semi-structured interviews of 13 AVI. Parents/ guardians completed demographic data. Participants equally distributed in gender, with 7 males and 6 females. Four themes identified from the data: use of AT, both in school and community; typical teenage hobbies; social participation; and services. Driving was embedded in the themes. Participants indicated mostly independence in morning routines. Participant responses indicate reduced social participation and loneliness, aligned with the literature. Adolescents participated in a variety of hobbies during leisure time including sports, organization involvement, and videogames, contradicting the literature. Approximately 85% of participants used AT, indicating great improvement to national data. Participants expressed a desire to work but reported limited access to programs/services to assist. Literature suggests vocational/volunteer programs provide skills training and exposure to worker expectations, which may prove especially beneficial to AVI that already face decreased range of employment opportunities. Health care professionals (HCP) working with AVI should address hobbies and interests of client/student/patient, monitor for potential signs of depression.

### **Doctoral Capstone Presentations**

6:00-6:20 Maria Baldino "Doctoral Experience: AOTA Fellowship & Doctoral Projects"

6:30-6:50 Christina Tucci "LEAP: Learning, Educating, and Advocating for Parents"

### **Research Posters- Session II: 7:00-8:00**

#### **Poster # 1**

**Title:** The Impact of Touch Screen Tablet Apps on Visual Motor, Fine Motor, and Handwriting Skills of Neurotypical Kindergartners

**Researchers:** Mansi Patel, OTS; Elizabeth Pfisterer, OTS; Brianna Swayser, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Jennifer Dessoie MS OTR/L, CLA

**Reader:** Dr. Lori Charney MS OTR/L

#### **Abstract:**

In recent years, children are often interacting using variety of electronic devices, for educational and social purposes. This study compares the effects a structured touch screen tablet application (TSTA) program has on visual motor, fine motor, and handwriting skills of a classroom to a classroom that does not utilize TSTA in their academic curriculum. This study is not comparing the different handwriting curriculum, instead, it is looking at how the use of technology can impact handwriting and visual motor skills in neurotypical kindergartners. The study incorporated a non-randomized, pre-test/post-test, quasi-experimental design with two kindergarten classes. The program consisted of a 12-week design where the experimental group received the TSTA intervention for 24 minutes a day, and the control group received no TSTA intervention. This study will allow practitioners to determine the effectiveness of TSTA to improve visual motor, fine motor, and handwriting skills as technology becomes more prevalent.

## **Poster # 2**

**Title:** Role of School-Based Occupational Therapy: Bullying Prevention and Intervention

**Researchers:** Alexandra Kintz, OTS; Samantha Presti, OTS; Jacqueline Sheldon, OTS; Brendan Walker, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Dr. Andrea Collins OTD OTR/L

**Reader:** Dr. Elaina Dalomba, PhD, OTR/L, MSW

### **Abstract:**

The role of school-based occupational therapists (OTs) within bullying prevention and intervention has become an emerging area of practice. Studies on school bullying are rather limited, particularly in regard to occupational therapy (OT) intervention, creating a need for further research on the topic. This study was designed to explore the professional opinions and experiences of school-based OTs regarding bullying intervention. The goal of the study was to discover the school-based OT perspective and experience on (1) if/how they intervene with bullying in the school setting, (2) how their school(s) deal with bullying, and (3) the potential for bullying intervention to be addressed through OT. This study was conducted through an online survey. Fifteen participants responded to the survey yielding various results. Survey respondents offered brief insight into the role of bullying intervention of school-based OTs. The results indicated that OTs can play a critical role in addressing bullying situations, however more research is required to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this emerging practice area.

## **Poster # 3**

**Title:** Vision Impairment: An Assessment of Adult Client Needs in a Non-Urban Region

**Researchers** Jennifer Koons, OTS; Melody Henderson, OTS.

**Research Committee Chair:** Leamor Kahanov Ed. D., ATC/LAT

**Reader:** Dr. Grace Fisher MS OTR/L

### **Abstract:**

Vision impairment is a rising health problem that presents a significant individual and public health burden. The expected rapid increase in the prevalence of adult visual impairment requires a multidimensional approach to vision health access and rehabilitative services. We examined the current perceived service needs for the visually impaired population to identify shifting services available as a critical component of supporting functional independence in the visually impaired population. A total of 104 individuals participated in the study by completing a “client needs assessment” created by an Association in northeastern United States (Association). Volunteer data collectors completed a 35-question survey instrument for the visually impaired by phone, reading each question to the participant and then entering the participant answers into a web-based survey instrument. The data was analyzed through SPSS version 24. Quality of life items reported as most impacted by visual impairment were independent travel, independence, and hobbies. Results suggested a desire to participate in events which are not being met by current services. Results

indicated that the needs of the visually impaired are primarily dependent on age and life context. The ability to travel independently and participate in social events is essential to maintaining psychosocial health and preventing depression. The needs and wants of adults with vision impairment are unique to life context and must be addressed accordingly. Providers should support engagement in meaningful occupations and know the available services for referral or intervention and should also identify the unique barriers and needs present at different ages for the visually impaired and assist accordingly.

#### **Poster # 4**

**Title:** Sounds of Home

**Researchers:** Allison Cover, OTS, Sarah Cremins, OTS, Kayla Daugherty, OTS, Ryan Horne, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Denis Anson MS, OTR

**Reader:** Lalit Shah, Ed. D., OTR/L

#### **Abstract:**

Patients diagnosed with moderate to severe Alzheimer's frequently experience anxiety resulting from their decreased ability to orient to their environment. Acute hospitalizations of these individuals are particularly challenging, as they suddenly find themselves in an unfamiliar environment with few, if any, orienting cues. This transition may result in an increase in anxious behaviors and agitation, potentially leading to falls or increased burden of care. Familiar sounds from the home may provide an interesting solution due to its connections to the limbic system and its additive quality to the environment without becoming overly distracting. This ongoing study seeks to explore the possibility of using a familiar sound environment to reduce these anxious behaviors. Data collection is currently in progress through the Gino J. Merli Veterans Center in Scranton, PA.

#### **Poster # 5**

**Title:** Effectiveness of Sensory Social Group Intervention Protocols on Social Participation for Children with ASD via Single Subject Design

**Researchers:** Lauren Apgar, OTS; Alexa, Buday, OTS; Naomi Calverley, OTS; Tyler Spires, OTS, Amanda Salak, OTR/L

**Research Committee Chair:** Lori Charney, OTD, OTR/L

**Reader:** Jennifer Dessoie, OTD, OTR/L, CLA

#### **Abstract:**

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is characterized by difficulty with communication, social skills, behavior management, and often sensory dysfunction. This study aimed to improve behavior and attention in children with ASD through sensory-based activities (SBAs) to ultimately improve learning potential for acquisition of pro-social behaviors and social competency. An A-B single-subject design analyzed 6 participants with ASD following 15, two-hour treatment sessions involving SBAs and social skills training. Social skills were tracked using the Social Skills Rating Form, based upon the Social Participation frame of reference. Participants were expected to better interpret their sensory environment, improving attention to social skills training, and acquisition of age-appropriate social skills. Visual analysis revealed positive trends for four participants and the

split-middle line test and binomial test revealed statistical significance for three participants. This study implies SBAs can be an effective treatment method for improving social skills in children with ASD.

#### **Poster # 6**

**Title:** The Use of an Embedded Librarian to Enhance Evidence Based Practice and Information Literacy Skills in Occupational Therapy Students

**Researchers:** Samantha O'Neill, OTS; Kaitlin Sauder, OTS; Kyle Soldevilla, OTS; Melanie Watson, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Elaina DaLomba, PhD, OTR/L, MSW; Elizabeth Kavanaugh, MSLIS, MSHCI, AHIP

**Reader:** Jennifer Luksa

#### **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** This study measured the impact of an embedded librarian protocol on occupational therapy students' IL/EBP skills and overall course grade via frequency data, correlation tests, and performance on a pre and post-intervention assessments of IL skills.

**Methods:** A sample (n=46) of students were given numerical identifiers to blind instructors and protect student confidentiality. IL skills were assessed through the modified Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (SAILS). Student perception of their IL skills was measured using the Student Perception of Information Literacy-Q (SPIL-Q) questionnaire. A two-question survey measured student perception of embedded librarian implementation was included.

**Results:** Frequency data from the EL data tracking revealed students' information seeking patterns. Pearson *r* correlations showed moderate positive correlation between those who made in person inquiries to the EL related to IL standard 1 and course grade. The students perceived an overall gain of 31% in IL skills on the SPIL-Q. The two-question survey revealed most students found the EL's knowledge of search terms to be most helpful, and noted limited office hours and perceptions of not needing assistance as the primary reasons they did not access the EL.

#### **Poster # 7**

**Title:** The Effect of Sensory Based Strategies and Social Skill Training on the Development of Social Skills Among Preschool Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

**Researchers:** Lori Charney, OTD, OTR/L; Heather Bennett, OTS; Molly Betz, OTS; Kelly Byrne, OTS; James Duffy, OTS

**Research Committee Chair:** Orley Templeton, OTD, OTR/L

**Reader:** Ellen McLaughlin, Ed. D., OTR/L, FAOTA

**Abstract:** A multiple single subject design research study was completed to determine the benefits of sensory regulation strategies combined with social skills training on the development of social skills among preschool aged children with autism spectrum disorder and sensory processing impairments. Two groups of two participants attended four baseline and seven intervention sessions lasting one hour, once per week. The Social Skills Rating Form was administered by the researchers during each session to rate the participants on five social skills: initiating behaviors, responding behaviors, emotional regulation, self-regulation and peer interactions. Using visual analysis and the

binomial test, three of the four participants demonstrated significant improvements in peer interactions and responding behaviors. Two out of the four participants demonstrated a significant increase in initiating behaviors and peer interactions. Understanding the effectiveness of occupational therapy intervention can guide development of future intervention for preschool children diagnosed with ASD. Future studies should include more intervention sessions and participants of similar functional levels.

### **Doctoral Capstone Presentations**

7:00-7:20 Michele Bartlett "Developing a Classroom Yoga Program to Influence Psychological and Physical Health for Elementary Schoolchildren"

7:30-7:50 Tricia La Cour "ADVENTure Zone Program Development and Analysis"

### **8:00 – 8:05**

**Closing Remarks** – Dr. Shah



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