



MISERICORDIA
UNIVERSITY.

*College of Health Sciences
Department of Occupational Therapy*

**Weekday and Weekend Classes of 2016
Graduate Research Presentations**

Saturday, April 16, 2016
5:15 – 8:05 pm

Sandy and Marlene Insalaco Hall
Rooms 216, 217, 218

“Intellectual growth should commence at birth
and cease only at death.”

—Albert Einstein

“Research shows that you begin learning in the womb
and go right on learning until the moment you pass on.
Your brain has a capacity for learning that is virtually limitless,
which makes every human a potential genius.”

—Michael J. Gelb

“If we knew what it was we were doing,
it would not be called research, would it?”

—Albert Einstein

PROGRAM

- 5:15 – 5:30 pm** **Weekend and Weekday Program Class Photographs**
- 5:30 – 5:35 pm** **“Words from the Dean”**
Dr. Leamor Kahanov, College of Health Sciences
- 5:35 – 5:50 pm** **Welcome**
Dr. Grace S. Fisher, Chair, Occupational Therapy Department
- Presentation of Pins**
Occupational Therapy Faculty
- 5:50 – 5:55 pm** **Research Presentation Opening Remarks**
Dr. Lalit Shah, Professor and Research Coordinator,
Occupational Therapy Department
- 6:00 – 8:00 pm** **Open hors-d’oeuvres table**
Everyone eats and views posters at the same time
- 6:00 – 7:00 pm** **Research Posters (7)**
- 7:00 – 8:00 pm** **Research Posters (6)**
- 8:00 – 8:05 pm** **Final Wrap Up**

RESEARCH POSTERS SESSION I: 6:00 – 7:00 pm

POSTER 1

The Impact of a Client-Centered “OT Friendly Visitor” Program for Older Adults

Student Researchers: Neetu Bector, OTS; Alyssa Pomerico, OTS; and Lauren Rauch OTS

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

Research Reader: Gwen Bartolacci, OTD, OTR/L

Abstract:

This study aimed to determine whether one-on-one client-centered engagement in meaningful occupations would increase the life satisfaction of older adults living in a personal care facility. A second objective was to determine how participants would feel about this individualized “OT friendly visitor” program. Three female residents participated in this mixed method qualitative and quantitative study. Eligibility was determined by the Mini-Mental Status Exam. Study methods included preliminary and final interviews, completion of a pre and post-test Life Satisfaction Survey, and the participants’ one-on-one sessions with their friendly visitors. Examination of pre and post-test survey scores showed a slight overall trend toward improvement in life satisfaction. Case narratives further illustrated participant responses to the program which culminated in the importance of one-on-one client centered interaction. Cross case analysis showed that the client centered individual and group nature of the program had many positive benefits including performance characteristics and behavioral commonalities.

Key Words:

friendly visitor, client-centered, life satisfaction, older adults

POSTER 2

A Qualitative Study of Life Experiences of the Oldest-Old

Student Researchers: Kellie Campbell, OTS; Emily Iseminger, OTS; Jenna Pendleton, OTS, and Christine Tietsworth, OTS

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

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

Abstract:

Objective: This study explored the lived experiences of the “oldest old;” individuals over age eighty. Research questions included: a) what is life like for the oldest-old?; b) what challenges do these individuals encounter on a day-to-day basis?; c) for what aspects of life do they rely on others?; d) how do they cope with obstacle?; and e) how is their life satisfaction?

Method:

Qualitative semi-structured interviews were audio recorded with a convenience sample in supervised senior living environments.

Results:

Content analysis illustrated values and occupations. Values were: happy childhood produces fond memories, marriages are vital, families are essential for life fulfillment, and religion and spirituality often provide inner peace. Themes under occupation were: traditional female occupations are important, working and serving others continues to generate intrinsic gratification, leisure occupations bring pleasure, and life satisfaction and socialization offer comfort.

Conclusion:

Past memories, meaningful occupations, and socialization were vital in this population.

Key Words:

oldest- old, geriatric, occupation, values

POSTER 3

Altruism and Quality of Life as Expressed by Retired Religious Females in an Assisted Living Facility

Student Researchers: Emily Boro, OTS; Jenna Burgio, OTS; David Gale, OTS; Rose Siciliano, OTS

Research Chair: Kathleen Hughes-Butcher, OTR/L

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

Abstract:

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate the individual experiences of assisted-living facility residents' engagement in an altruistic activity and its impact on their perceived quality of life. Three residents participated in a weekly lap-robe making activity for long-term care residents. Individual interviews were conducted after the last session. The Satisfaction with Life Scale was administered prior to and after engaging in the altruistic activity group, in order to guide the interview process. Interviews were analyzed using the interpretive phenomenological analysis. Four themes were extracted that were common across all three interviews. The themes identified were: (a) intrinsic commitment to altruism through life roles, (b) faith as a fundamental foundation for all aspects of living, (c) altruistic aspect and outcome of activity was meaningful, and (d) reminiscence. The results support the incorporation of altruistic activities in the intervention process and provide an opportunity for occupational therapists to promote greater client-centered care among ALF residents.

Keywords:

Altruism, Assisted-Living Facility, Life-Roles, Phenomenology, Quality of Life, Retired Religious

POSTER 4

The Effectiveness of a Multi-Sensory Center-Based Learning Curriculum in Pre-Kindergarten Students

Student Researchers: Leah Davis, OTS; Ellen Mahon, OTS; Samantha Rehrig, OTS; & Tara Robinson, OTS

Research Chair: Jennifer Dessoie, OTD, OTR/L

Research Reader: Dawn Evans, OTD, OTR/L

Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a multi-sensory centered-based curriculum for typically developing children enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program. The curriculum incorporates small group instruction in educational centers with gross and fine motor, visual motor, sensory motor, and visual perceptual learning experiences. The GRADE, Beery VMI and Beery VMI subtests of visual perception and motor coordination were administered at the beginning and end of the 2014-2015 academic school year. These assessments measured reading comprehension, visual motor integration, and fine and gross motor skills. Twelve children were included in this pilot study. Results indicated significant improvement in the GRADE raw score, Beery VMI raw scores and grade equivalents, and motor coordination subtest raw scores and grade equivalents. Data provides early support for this curriculum to improve school readiness. Further research is recommended to confirm the promising effects of this foundational study.

Key words:

Pre-kindergarten, children, early-learning, school readiness, multi-sensory center-based, center-based curriculum, community-based, small group instruction, fine motor skills, visual motor skills, and reading

POSTER 5

Study of Pre-Handwriting Factors Necessary for Successful Handwriting in Children

Student Researchers: Katarzyna Bialek, OTS; Melinda L. Clarke, OTS; Jessica L. Jansson, OTS

Research Chair: Lalit J. Shah, Ed. D., OTR/L

Research Reader: Lori Charney, OTD, OTR/LL

Abstract:

Handwriting is essential to academic success; however, current literature is limited in the identification of pre-handwriting skills. The purpose of this study was to identify the pre-handwriting skills, which occupational therapy practitioners deem important to handwriting success, as well as those which aid in intervention planning. The online survey instrument consisted of 33 questions that assessed various skills related to the development of handwriting. Both occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants were included in the survey study. The survey found that the respondents were in agreement that purposeful scribbling, the ability to copy (vertical/horizontal lines, circle, squares, and triangles), imitating an oblique cross, cognitive skills, grasp patterns, hand dominance, in hand manipulation skills, bilateral integration, stabilization of paper, crossing midline, and visual perception were important indicators of handwriting readiness. The results of the survey support the existing research regarding the skills necessary for the successful development of handwriting in children.

Key words:

development, handwriting, occupational therapy, visual perceptual skills

POSTER 6

Experience from the Field: Implementation & Evaluation of Multi-Sensory Stimulation in Geriatric Practice

Student Researchers: Amanda Cobucci, OTS; Brittany Lohr, OTS; Maria Weidemoyer, OTS

Research Chair: Lauren Zack, OTD, OTR/LL

Research Reader: Ellen McLaughlin, Ed.D., OTR/L

Abstract:

Individuals with dementia may demonstrate behaviors such as restlessness, agitation, and anxiousness in addition to typical dominant symptoms. These behaviors may cause a large strain on caregiver relationships, inhibit occupational performance, and can decrease quality of life. One treatment being tested is multi-sensory stimulation using Snoezelen principles. This theory states that individuals who display these behavioral characteristics may be experiencing a sensory imbalance and by fulfilling their sensory needs, undesirable behaviors will decrease. However, information in this area of practice is lacking. To address this issue a multi-sensory program was developed and implemented in a personal care facility for a duration of five weeks. The intervention was analyzed on a qualitative basis to determine perceived effectiveness, plausibility of implementation, and student perception of the process. Information presented will help practitioners to learn more about multi-sensory stimulation and potential benefits of practical implementation of this type of programming.

Key words:

occupational therapy, dementia, negative behaviors, qualitative research, multi-sensory stimulation, snoezelen, geriatrics, long-term care, intervention, program development, program implementation, sensory, experience, agitation, restlessness, quality of life, students

POSTER 7

Flow Rates of Enfamil Cross-Cut and Dr. Brown's Y-Cut Nipples:

A Comparative-Effectiveness Study

Student Researchers: Amanda Casem, OTS; Kristi Cianfichi, OTS; Sarah Ickes, OTS; Joanna Szeliga, OTS; Kara Yozwiak, OTS

Research Chair: Kimberly Kubistek, OTR/L, OTD

Research Reader: Jennifer Dessoie, OTR/L, OTD

Abstract:

This comparative-effectiveness study was designed to examine the variations of flow rate between Enfamil Cross-Cut (stretched), Enfamil Cross-Cut (un-stretched), and Dr. Brown's Y-Cut nipples using formula thickened to a honey like consistency with rice cereal. Three nipples of each type were tested in three separate trials. A Medela breast pump was used to extract thickened formula over 30 seconds. The formula was collected in a measurement bottle and the volume was recorded by three readers. The means and standard deviations of nipple flow rates were calculated. Results indicate that the Dr. Brown's Y-Cut nipple has the highest flow rate, followed by the Enfamil Cross-Cut (stretched), then the Enfamil Cross-Cut (un-stretched) nipple.

Key words:

Infant feeding, dysphagia, thickened formula, and cereal nipples

Research Posters Session II: 7:00 – 8:00 pm

POSTER 1

Exploring Occupational Therapists' Self-Perceived Life Balance

Student Researchers: Kyle Kurtek, OTS; Kevin McDonald, OTS; Amanda Salak, OTS; and Michael Sparich, OTS

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

Research Reader: Gwen Bartolacci, OTD, OTR/L

Abstract:

Background: An occupational therapist's knowledge of the concept of life balance as well as their unique perspective on engagement and participation could be of service to those who are overworked and stressed, therefore providing a preventative form of therapeutic outreach. **Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to determine the life balance of occupational therapists using the Life Balance Inventory (LBI). **Method:** An online survey was sent to participants to measure self-perceived life balance which was analyzed by researchers using SPSS statistical analysis to collect data on categories of balance of the Life Balance Inventory. **Sample/Population:** 44 participants were obtained from a database of Misericordia University Occupational Therapy alumni acquired through the alumni office at the University. **Results:** Results showed that this population has moderate life balance and mild stress according to the LBI. **Implications for practice:** Self-understanding of life balance may help occupational therapists better relate to their clients.

Key words:

life balance, stress, Life Balance Inventory

POSTER 2

Factors Influencing Faculty Recruitment and Possible Options for Hiring New Faculty in Occupational Therapy Programs

Student Researchers: Diane Brett, OTS; Colleen Magacs, OTS; Leigh Anne Murphy, OTS; Theresa Stoecker, OTS

Research Chair: Lalit J. Shah, Ed. D., OTR/L

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

Abstract:

The aim of this study was to determine potential factors that were influencing faculty recruitment in occupational therapy (OT) programs nationwide. A mixed method, concurrent nested research design was completed using a web-based survey sent to both OT program directors and practicing occupational therapists. Based upon the results of the program director survey, it was determined that the majority of directors reported they were not experiencing a shortage of full-time and/or part-time faculty for their universities; however, that is not to discount faculty shortages experienced in some cases. A few common themes found in the practicing occupational therapists survey included the perception that salaries in academia were significantly lower than salaries in the clinical world and the lack of desire for practitioners to pursue a doctoral degree. These themes coupled with the imminent transition of OT programs from a master's level to a doctoral level poses a potential problem for future faculty recruitment and retention. Future research is necessary to develop a plan of action to combat the number of occupational therapists retiring, the disproportionate number of practitioners with master's versus advanced degrees, and the various requirements and expectations for new faculty to teach at the university level.

Key words:

Occupational therapy, Faculty recruitment, Faculty shortage, Occupational therapy programs

POSTER 3

Linking Sensory Strategies and Social Skills Training to Improve Social Participation in Children with ASD

Student Researchers: Kelsey Maas, OTS; Danielle Makadon-Malone, OTS; Carly Zaklukiewicz, OTS; Logan Zeitler, OTS

Research Chair: Lori Charney, OTD, OTR/L

Research Reader: Ellen McLaughlin, Ed. D., OTR/L

Abstract:

Evidence supports a link between good sensory modulation leading to adequate social participation. It is of the utmost importance that occupational therapists consider environmental and contextual factors in addition to social skills to provide the best sensory and social experience for the child. Due to the fact that many occupational therapy clinicians are working with these frames of references, it is important to advance the knowledge in the area to further support the need for appropriate programming. According to DSM-V (2013), children diagnosed with ASD are given a "level of support" within the diagnostic category (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013). Considering the increased incidence of ASD and related sensory processing and social participation limitations within this population, the goal of the study was to provide preliminary research to identify the effectiveness of programming at each level of severity. The purpose of this study was

to examine the effectiveness of a 15 session sensory, social program that encompassed sensory integration elements and social skills training in order to increase social participation of young children with ASD. In addition, the extent to which the severity of ASD symptoms on the outcomes of the program was documented.

Key words:

ASD, Autism, Sensory Integration, Social Participation, Social Competence, Peer Modeling, Group Intervention, GARS III, Sensory Processing Measure, Social Skills Rating Forms

POSTER 4

Access To AAC: Arranging The Interface

Student Researchers: Erin Baker, OTS; Erin McGreal, OTS; Julie Mikolaichik, OTS; Jenna Reel, OTS

Research Chair: Dennis Anson, MS, OTR/L

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

Abstract:

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices are systems intended to enhance or replace voice communication for those with speech difficulties. AAC devices consist of two components: selection set and selection method. Typically, an AAC user requires a large vocabulary to express ideas in a range of topics and environments. Various strategies have been developed to manage large vocabularies including semantic compaction, word and phrase prediction, and communication macros. An unexplored issue of AAC device layout is deciding how the symbols are to be grouped into display pages, and how those pages are arranged for access. A single-page display increases cognitive and perceptual load of the user, whereas a multi-page display provides larger targets, but requires the user to remember the location of desired targets.

This study examines the effectiveness of single-page displays versus multi-page displays in the design of AAC systems on the efficiency of communication.

Key words:

Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), Communication, Selection set, Single-page display, Multi-page display

POSTER 5

Vocational Experiences of Young Adults (YA) with Intellectual Disability (ID) and/or Autism (ASD)

Student Researchers: Danielle Iozzia, OTS; Sarah Kirkpatrick, OTS; and Rebecca Peterman, OTS

Research Chair: Miriam Ludwig, MS, OTR/L

Research Reader: Grace Fisher, Ed.D., OTR/LL

Abstract:

Most recent statistics report that 23% of individuals with cognitive disabilities are employed. These statistics do not address the larger issue of underemployment wherein the majority of those individuals receive significantly less compensation and work fewer hours. Supported employment has become a national topic of interest, however, more community-based and nationally recognized organizations have recently invested their time to create new opportunities for employment. Given the high unemployment rate, researchers interviewed and examined the vocational experiences as perceived by YA with ID and/or ASD and their caregivers. Researchers

used a non-randomized, convenience sample of 4 individuals with ID and/or ASD and their caregivers. Semi-structured interviews were administered to collect information regarding individual vocational experiences. A phenomenological, thematic analysis was used to evaluate participant stories based on the interviews. Five themes resulted which included employment/interests and talents, community service/volunteer, self-esteem/purpose in life, value of social interaction, and family supports. Contrary to the high unemployment rates, participants felt very involved in their everyday lives and were able to gain self-fulfillment through vocational, volunteer, and their interests/talents with significant family support.

Key words:

Autism, intellectual disability, vocation, work, family, young adult, unemployment, employment, volunteer, talents, interests, supported employment, competitive employment, community service, and demographics.

POSTER 6

Comparison of Two Keyboarding Programs for Third Grade Students with Fine Motor Delays

Student Researchers: Ashley Barber, OTS; Jamie Opela, OTS; Dayanara Rodriguez-Munoz, OTS; Alexis Smerlick, OTS

Research Chair: Andrea Collins, OTD, OTR/L

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

Abstract:

The Mavis Beacon program has improved typing skills for over twenty years, however new developments have been made and a program was released in 2014 called Keyboarding without Tears (KWOT). This release raises questions as to the effectiveness of these typing programs. Although there are multiple typing programs, there's no evidence to support which programs are the most effective, particularly for children with identified motor delays. Discovering which program is most effective will help to choose the appropriate program to maximize the learning process in developing keyboarding skills and encourage function in students with fine motor delays within the classroom. Due to the increased focus on technological advances, it's crucial for children at an early age to learn efficient keyboarding skills. The purpose is to determine the effectiveness of KWOT versus the Mavis Beacon keyboarding program on improving typing skills in third graders with fine motor delays.

Key words:

keyboarding, fine motor

8:00 – 8:05 pm

Closing Remarks

Dr. Lalit Shah, Professor and Research Coordinator, OT Department



**MISERICORDIA
UNIVERSITY.**

301 Lake Street
Dallas, Pennsylvania 18612