

University of Mary

# OT Fieldwork Connection Newsletter

## Adult Learning Principles (Part 1)

By Carol Olson, PhD, OTR/L



Carol Olson

In the next several newsletters, I will be providing information about **Adult Learning Principles** and how these can impact your interactions with **Level I and Level II fieldwork students**. Vella (2002) describes twelve principles in her book *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults* (Rev. ed.). In this article, I will provide a brief description of the **first two principles** and describe how these can be implemented with students at your FW site. Although some of these ideas may seem very obvious, taking the time to address them initially may actually make the fieldwork experience flow more efficiently.

The **first principle is “Needs Assessment”**. As students begin their fieldwork experience, they come with various educational and life experiences. They anticipate an experience that will match their interests. They also have an expectation that the experience will help solidify what they have learned in school and will challenge them to synthesize all that content and more. To implement this principle, the FW educator can spend time at the beginning of the FW talking to the student about those interests, and also try to get some ideas of what the student feels are his/her strengths and weaknesses related to the population served. This puts both of you on the same page at the beginning, and opens the door for frank discussions about the student’s needs and your expectations.

The **second principle is “Safety”**. This principle addresses respect for learners, realizing they have some idea of what they need to learn. They need to know they will be respected where they are at, but it also suggests that the learners will be challenged in a way that helps them learn and not feel overwhelmed. One suggestion regarding this principle is to promote student trust in the competence of the FW design. This is reinforced as you provide an overview of your experiences as a FW educator and as an OT. Even if you are a new FW educator, you can reinforce this by letting the student know you were in their shoes not that long ago, so you understand where they are coming from. Trust in the competence of the FW design also includes trust in the sequence and achievability of FW objectives. This can be accomplished by sharing objectives and weekly expectations with the students prior to their arrival and discussing them throughout the FW. You can ease anxiety by letting students know they can ask questions along the way and that you will only push them as much as they can handle. Knowing what to do if they are struggling will also help students realize the objectives are attainable. Letting students know what the objectives are, and why they were designed in this order will help them feel safe in their learning. Another suggestion is to provide a nonjudgmental environment. Discussions about *why* a statement, project, goal, or intervention idea is right or wrong is much more helpful than just hearing that the answer is adequate or not. It is important for the student to know that even if they are not 100% accurate, that you are there to help them learn.

I look forward to providing more information in Part 2 of “Adult Learning Principles” in the next FW newsletter.

Information taken from: Vella, J. (2002). *Learning to listen, learning to teach: The power of dialogue in educating adults* (Rev. ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

“Letting students know what the objectives are, and why they were designed in this order will help them feel safe in their learning.”

## Guatemala Service Learning Trip

By Wanda Berg, PhD, OTR/L



Wanda Berg

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This August, seven graduate OT students and I traveled to Guatemala to provide service to children and families in need. We were affiliated with the GOD's CHILD Project (GCP) in Antigua, Guatemala. It was an exciting time for us! We volunteered at Hope Haven, a wheelchair factory in Antigua. Workers at Hope Haven's wheelchair clinics provide "custom" seating for children. Many of the children have never had a wheelchair before, so this was a unique experience! We also worked with children at Casa Jackson, which is a malnutrition center that provides services to families who are unable to care for their infants or children. The children first needed nutrition and love. Once they were on the road to health, the children had many needs. Most were behind in developmental milestones and students were able to provide them with opportunities to work toward those milestones. One little girl who only scooted on her bottom to get from place to place, was able to use a walker after a short period of time! We visited one nursing home that had a PT and OT department. The picture below was taken in the OT department there. Although the OT worked mostly with crafts, residents were very involved with OT. They did not need a doctor's order to attend therapy and did so voluntarily. The OT stated she worked with many of the residents on a regular basis. One other nursing home had no therapy services, and in fact seemed short of staff in general. The students learned they can do therapy with little to no supplies at all! We worked with residents to independently use walkers donated by Hope Haven. Fortunately we had Juan, from the GCP, to help us with Spanish! Although some of us could speak a little Spanish, none of us were even close to fluent. One of the highlights of the trip for all of us was building two homes for families who desperately needed them. We dug and built a foundation, mixed and shoveled cement, hauled gravel, put up walls, and painted the houses with the GCP signature blue paint! Thank goodness for Edgar, our leader- he crawled up the 2x4's to put the roof up. Despite the aches and pains, the heat, and blisters, it was worth it all to see the faces of the Guatemalan families who now had a better chance in life! Of course, it was not just all work and no play... we shopped, and shopped some more, visited Lake Atitlan, a beautiful volcanic lake in Panajachel, and went to the market at Chichicastenango. Some of the students went zip lining at Finca de Filadefia, a coffee plantation just outside of Antigua, while others toured the plantation. I think all of us brought coffee home from Guatemala...what a treat! Overall this was a wonderful, heartfelt experience for us all! Although we may not have made a lasting difference in Guatemala, we made a difference in the lives of those we worked with for a short time. Maybe we are part of their life story now. They are certainly part of ours! If you are interested in learning more about participating in future service trips to Guatemala, please contact me at [wberg@umary.edu](mailto:wberg@umary.edu).



OT Students in Guatemala August 2011

## Message from the Program Director

By Janeene Sibla, OTD, OTR/L



Janeene Sibla

Greetings from high on the hill at the University of Mary. Once again the season is beginning to change and students fill the halls and classrooms. It is quite a change from the summer. The University of Mary provided housing for the men and women of the National Guard who were helping fight the flood in Bismarck. A parking lot filled with student vehicles is quite a contrast to one filled with military equipment. If you were impacted by the flooding throughout the state this summer, we continue to keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

I am very excited to introduce our newest faculty member, Jason Lawson. Originally from Killdeer, ND, Jason is a 2003 occupational therapy program graduate from the University of Mary. Jason recently began working toward a doctorate degree from the University of North Dakota in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Prior to teaching, Jason worked in a variety of settings, including hospital-based, skilled nursing, and outpatient therapy across the lifespan in the Dickinson community. Jason will be teaching a variety of courses within the curriculum, with a primary focus on pediatric coursework.

This year we will be writing our self-study for the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). We began reviewing our curriculum in-depth last year, with several course revisions or additions being implemented this year. The self-study process allows us to review all aspects of the program including educational requirements, program evaluation and the overall effectiveness, making a plan for necessary changes and modifications. The onsite visit by the accreditation team will occur during the 2012-2013 academic year.

As our graduate students complete their Level II fieldworks, it is exciting to hear what they have learned. As faculty, we notice tremendous growth and professional development in our students, as they move from the student role into one of a professional while on their Level II fieldwork experiences. Thank you for your influence, guidance and support in creating competent entry-level therapists. The students speak fondly of their experiences and what they have learned! We can't express often enough a THANK YOU for providing meaningful fieldwork experiences for the University of Mary OT students.



Jason Lawson

## Fieldwork Updates

By Cindy Anderson, OTD, OTR/L

As the students from the OT Class of 2011 are finishing up their second Level II fieldwork this November, I want to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all those educators who have supervised them this past summer or fall. The students are learning so much on their Level II fieldworks and developing into competent entry-level practitioners under the careful guidance and support of their FW educators. Thank you for a job well done!

Our Level I fieldworks are scheduled for March 5-9, 2012 and I am in the process of matching students to available sites. I will be mailing out match letters in the next couple of weeks—so you can be looking for those. Thank you to all the sites who have reserved a placement for next year's Level II students. As you know, we begin planning for those well in advance. I look forward to collaborating with all of you this winter and spring regarding site specific objectives and other information and helping you prepare for the educator role. Please know if you have any questions about fieldwork education, I am available to you via email ([canderson@umary.edu](mailto:canderson@umary.edu)) or by phone (701-355-8112).

I'd also like to take this opportunity to introduce our department's new administrative assistant, Beth Hoffer. Beth is originally from Garrison, ND. She has lived in Bismarck for the past 30 years. Beth earned her A.A.S. degree from Bismarck State College and was most recently employed by CorVel Corporation as a rehab coordinator. Beth will be assisting me with fieldwork-related tasks, including contract management, obtaining FW forms, and general FW communication.



Cindy Anderson



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## OT Research Topics

Our graduate occupational therapy students along with their faculty preceptor are busy with their research projects which include the students carrying out the methodology and writing pieces of their article which they will finish in spring semester. The ultimate goal is to submit the article for publication, which would be a very exciting accomplishment! Student projects range from qualitative to quantitative studies and topics include the effects of Montessori-based activities on engagement levels for persons with dementia, the effects of pet therapy on engagement levels for persons with dementia, the impact of occupational therapy upon quality of life for individuals diagnosed with a mental illness, exploring the perceptions of healthcare providers and caretakers on physical activity for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, examining the quality of life for individuals receiving services at a local community based facility, and exploring outdoor play preferences for preschool children. The students will be presenting their research projects at our annual Allied Health Research Colloquium which takes place later this spring. Watch for more details regarding this valuable and informative event which you are welcome to attend.

Jennifer Schroeder, OTD, OTR/L

## Evidence-Based Practice: New Course

AOTA's Centennial Vision States **"We envision that occupational therapy is a powerful, widely recognized, science-driven, and EVIDENCE-BASED PROFESSION with a globally connected and diverse workforce meeting society's occupational needs."** So you may wonder what exactly Evidence-based Practice (EBP) is. Many of our students wonder this also.

As a result, we now have a new course in the UMary OT curriculum: Evidence-based Practice. In this course, students learn the definition of EBP, why it is important, and the formal steps to begin using and maintaining EBP. According to D.L. Sackett **"Evidence based medicine is the conscientious, explicit, and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients."**

EBP involves integrating

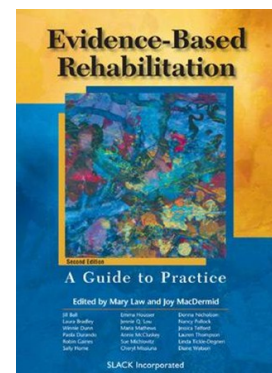
- individual clinical **expertise** with
- the best available **external clinical evidence** from **systematic research** with
- **patient preferences and values.**

Students also learn the 5 step process of EBP:

1. Translate a clinical decision/information need into an answerable question
2. Efficiently track down the best evidence
3. Critically evaluate the evidence
4. Apply the evidence to clinical practice
5. Evaluate one's performance in the EBP process.

As a result, students have the tools to locate and evaluate the best available evidence on occupational therapy topics and treatment. We encourage you to partner with our students during their fieldworks to have them locate and evaluate the evidence, evaluate the patient preferences/values, and discuss with you how your clinical expertise would assist in blending the 3 areas into a clinical decision for the specific client.

Terrance Anderson, OTD, OTR/L



Terrance Anderson



## Announcements

### **UMary OT Professor Recognized As Chamber's Outstanding Higher Education Teacher**

The Outstanding Teacher of the Year Committee of the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce presented Dr. Janeene Sibla, associate professor and occupational therapy program director, with the 2011 Outstanding Teacher of the Year for Higher Education Award.

In making the announcement, Chamber spokesmen said:

Janeene's nomination inspired the nominating committee to consider her for the honor with statements that included, "Her experience, personality and organization have helped the program grow from a time five years ago where we were struggling to fill our classes to now where we have a long waiting list. She has the utmost respect for all, but has the uncanny ability to guide students through murky situations where they grow and prosper from experience."

Janeene is credited with bringing novelty and enthusiasm to the classroom; characteristics her students love and appreciate about her teaching style.

