

A photograph of four students in a library setting. A young man in a grey t-shirt is smiling and looking at a laptop. A young woman with glasses is looking at the laptop. Another young woman is looking at a book. A young man is looking at the laptop. They are all sitting at a table. Bookshelves are visible in the background.

Occupation-Centered Teaching and Learning

Putting occupation at the center of occupational
therapy academic programs



WHAT IS THE GOAL OF AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ACADEMIC PROGRAM?

Begin with the end in mind – Stephen Covey



GOAL: OCCUPATION – CENTERED PRACTITIONERS

- “Renaissance of occupation” (Whiteford, Townsend, & Hocking, 2000, p. 61)
- Occupational revolution (Stav, 2025)
- How do we create occupation-centered practitioners who will remain authentic to occupation?
 - Coursework
 - Lab experiences
 - Assignments
 - Materials used in teaching
 - Fieldwork
 - Extracurricular engagement
 - Continuing education



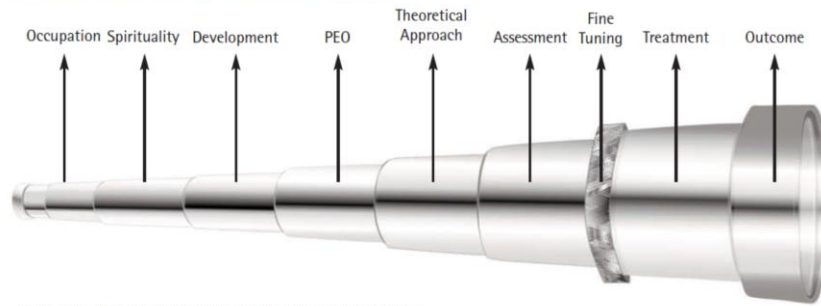
COURSEWORK

How do we create an occupation-centered course?

How do we create an occupation-centered course?

- Use a lens of occupation for the course

McMaster Lens for Occupational Therapists



Salvatori, Jung, Missiuna, Stewart, Law, & Wilkins (2006), McMaster University

- Use occupation language (course titles, course objectives, test questions)
- Teaching using multi-dimensional meanings, depth and breadth of the sources of meaning, and how it effects occupational identity
- Explicit mention of occupation, don't assume it's understood
- Real world examples illustrating occupation
- Subject-centered (occupation) rather than topic-centered

Salvatori, P., Jung, B., Missiuna, C., Stewart, D., Law, M., & Wilkins, S. (2006). *McMaster lens for occupational therapists: Bringing theory and practice into focus*. Hamilton, ON: McMaster University

LAB EXPERIENCES

How do we create occupation-centered lab experiences?

How do we create occupation-centered lab experiences?

- Use natural environments where authentic occupation occurs
- Practice performing occupations with equipment
- Documentation about occupation
- Incorporate time management into the lab activity
- Introduce occupation-centered assessments
- Use occupational materials
- Administer occupational profile

A photograph of students in a classroom, with a focus on their hands writing in notebooks. The image is partially covered by a red semi-transparent overlay on the right side.

ASSIGNMENTS

How do we create
occupation-centered
assignments?

How do we create occupation-centered assignments?

- Interview about occupations
- Administer occupational profile
- Create adaptive equipment to perform occupation
- Occupational discovery / analysis
- Consider SES, cultural, political perspectives that may influence access to and performance of occupation
- Contextual knowing rather than absolute knowing
- Move beyond diagnosis-related deficits and explore occupational injustices
- Integrate OBPA items into rubrics for case studies and practical exams



MATERIALS USED IN TEACHING

What materials should we use and what materials should we avoid?



What materials should we use and what materials should we omit?

Materials to Include

- High and low tech options
- Books that depict true occupation
- Videos and documentaries
- Non-western perspectives of occupation
- Occupational justice
- Consumer perspective – standardized clients

Materials to Avoid

- Cones, pegs, ROM arc, etc

FIELDWORK



How do we facilitate fieldwork experiences to yield occupation-centered practitioners?

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- Forum to be creative (discussion board, etc.)
- Assignments to force students to generate occupation-based activities, assessments, documentation assignment, in-service, educational material, educational material - all focused around occupation
- Education of clinical educators to understand occupation-based practice, how it's taught in the curriculum, expectations of students
- Set up challenges to plan a session but now allowed to use exercise
- Model the inclusion of occupation into practice
- Non- traditional settings where there is no OT



EXTRACURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT

What extracurricular experiences can contribute to occupation-centered learning?

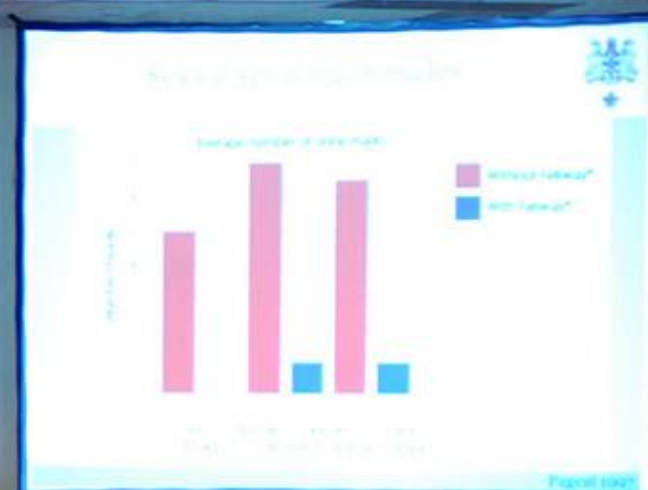


What extracurricular experiences can contribute to occupation-centered learning?

- Use occupation lens during volunteering
- Occupation-centered experiences
- Advocacy opportunities
- Health fairs to educate about OT and occupation
- Hill Day
- Mastering communication about occupation
- Advocating about accessibility at the city level

CONTINUING EDUCATION

How do we infuse occupation into professional development activities to refresh practitioners' occupational lens?



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- Infuse occupational engagement into the education
- Opportunities to DO
- Bring the voices of those we serve, hearing from the “experts”
- Simulation experiences
- Refresher of core occupation knowledge (history, definitions)
- How to bill, how to document
- Highlight the uniqueness of occupation to differentiate from other disciplines