



SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Spring 2024

From the Chair Spring 2024



One of the greatest joys of teaching and working with students is being present when they have those “ah-ha” moments of connecting dots, finding meaning in the learning, recognizing the value of occupation in everyday life and being able to articulate the reasoning that

underlies that classic answer to so many questions in OT: “it depends.”

This issue of the newsletter shares some of the learning our students have been engaged in, activities they’ve been a part of, and scholarly work they are disseminating. As a preview, I want to share about a class activity that prompts students to form both professional and personal connections with their learning.

In a recent class activity, students identified their personal strengths and values, and dove deep into examining the relationships that exist between a person’s values and their choices. Students recognized that values are influenced by a person’s history and experience as well as the dynamic contexts within which they function every day. They came face to face with the inevitability that at times they will experience friction between personal and professional values, and situations in which their professional values conflict with those of their clients. If you’ve spent much time practicing as an occupational therapist, there is no doubt that you’ve experienced this too.

The questions to us as therapists, and that our students encountered, then become, “what do we do? How do we navigate these tension-filled situations in a manner that respects and honors individuality while also staying true to our charge and our professional role?”

It should come as no surprise that the best response to this question is “it depends.” In other words, context matters. It matters to us, it matters to our clients and it matters to the people they share their lives with. OTs are highly skilled at looking at the bigger picture, at examining the context to help understand the situation and decide the best course of action. I’m proud that Puget Sound’s occupational therapy students are learning this. They are learning to genuinely hear the perspectives and values of others. They are learning how to reason through challenging situations. They are learning how to lean into the “it depends” moments by considering all the unique qualities, contextual variables, and individual values of clients in order to answer clinical questions. They are having “ah-ha” moments, and it is a rewarding and exciting thing to witness.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. And, please reach out and share with us your memories of or recent experiences with your own “ah-ha” moments.

Renee

Renee Watling, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA
Associate Professor, MSOT and OTD Program Director,
School of Occupational Therapy Chair

OT STUDENTS IN ACTION



2023 Cohort : OT 602 Health and Occupations Across Diverse Populations at the exhibit *TWO WAY MIRROR: Double Consciousness in Contemporary Glass by Black Artists*, made possible by the Community Engagement Initiative Grant.

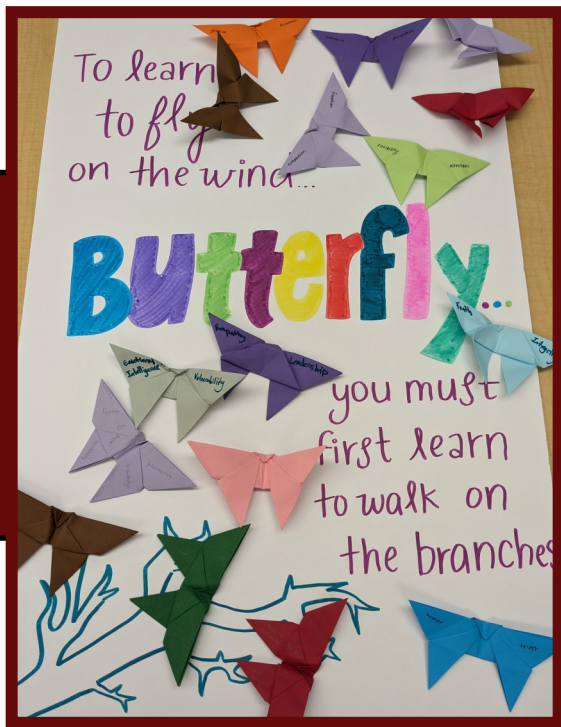
The Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) hosted a table at the February 29th Fresh Check Day designed to be a mental health check in with interactive booths, snacks, prizes, resources and more! SOTA facilitated crowdsourcing of an uplifting playlist on Spotify: *sunny days! By CHWS*. Check it out! This is one of the first campus community events hosted by CHWS and the Suicide Prevention Taskforce. In 2023, professor Amy Kashiwa collaborated with other campus stakeholders to initiate the new campus task force.



SAW SATURDAY: A vision that began over thirty years ago by Dr. Juli McGruder and was continued by Drs. Wendell Nakamura and Kirsten Wilber—students in OT 602 continue to participate in a one-day workshop to explore social determinations of health and grow in their socio-cultural awareness during their first semester in the program. In fall 2023, recent OTD graduate, Anthony Sy participated in the workshop for a second time, serving as a facilitator.

WHAT ARE WE DOING FOR LAB TODAY?

Escape Room Fun!
Students in OT 648/748, Occupational Therapy Process in Pediatrics, stepped back in time to test their executive functions in a 1920's-themed escape room learning lab.



OT Professionalism & Leadership III: Students developed their own themes and visually represented their understanding of leadership with a kaleidoscope of origami butterflies.

To The Heights: The OT curriculum is designed conceptually around the evergreen tree, with student learning and growth occurring at all levels—in the roots, the trunk, the branches, and the needles. On many occasions throughout the program, students find unique ways to depict the connections between the content they learn across multiple courses and show how various topics link to each other. In this photo, cedar boughs were the medium of choice.





OTD student Noam Baruch presents the evidence project her team completed in collaboration with a practitioner from the community.

Poster Title: Interventions For Daily Life Skills For Adults in Transition Programs

DR. GEORGE TOMLIN EVIDENCE SYMPOSIUM

Please join us this spring for our 2nd Annual Dr. George Tomlin Evidence Symposium to be held on **Thursday, May 2, 2024 from 6:00-8:30**. This will be our second event that combines presentations of both our traditional evidence projects and our doctoral capstone projects. The symposium will be held in Harned Hall.

2024 Projects include:

Group Interventions for Transitioning Transgender Veterans
Low-Calorie Movement for Eating Disorders
The Role of Occupational Therapy with Hospice Volunteers
Understanding the Role of OT in Rural Island Communities
Approaches for Functional Neurodevelopmental Disorder
Family Centered Care and Supporting Sleep in ASD

The professional development our students gain through the evidence and capstone project experiences is invaluable! Past community collaborators have reported very positive experiences and many have been able to implement new practices as a result. We are currently seeking practicing therapists who have a desire to partner with our students for the next round of projects. Please reach out to Dr. Renee Watling (rwatling@pugetsound.edu) or Dr. Aimee Sidhu (asidhu@pugetsound.edu) for more information or complete [this registration form](#). The next cycle of evidence projects begin in April 2024 with completion in May 2024; the doctoral capstone experiences begin in January 2025 and continue for 14 weeks through April 2025.

To RSVP register here: [2024 Symposium](#)

Please register by 4/25/2024

STUDENT CORNER

Conferences & Posters

Recent graduate Kylie Darby, OTD, OTR/L and current doctoral student Natalie Daughton, OTS will be joining faculty member Renee Watling, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA to present her recent sabbatical research at the AOTA INSPIRE Annual Conference & Expo in Orlando, FL, March 21-23.

Title: Experiences of Families Receiving Occupational Therapy Services for Their Autistic Children

This study used an online survey and follow-up interviews of therapist-caregiver dyads to better understand the service delivery and receipt experience. Findings reveal that families highly value therapeutic relationships, receiving coaching, and having therapists use a strengths-based approach.

Occupational Therapy Student Ambassadors

Puget Sound Occupational Therapy Student Ambassadors serve as invaluable program representatives to prospective students, campus, and community. Some activities that they participate in are prospective and admitted student information sessions, providing department and campus tours, and representing the School of OT to the campus community during Logger Days. Ambassador Caitlynn Flagg reflects, “I enjoy engaging with the prospective and incoming students, so I’m glad that it seems to have been helpful. I have really enjoyed my time in this program, so it feels good to describe that experience to other people and help them figure out their own path to becoming an occupational therapist.”

**Do you know
what
Occupational
Therapy is?**

A group of Student Ambassadors led by COTAD co-chairs Danielle Blue-Day and Paige Bagley are promoting the profession and the UPS OT program by visiting middle and high school career fairs in the region. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Danielle shared, “All OT students are welcome to help spread the word to students to start planting the seeds of OT as they start thinking about careers and college education.”

We would like to extend a very heartfelt THANK YOU to this year’s Ambassadors and the other students who have assisted with career fairs and program presentations:

Paige Bagley — Danielle Blue-Day — Jaycee Conti — Helena Fantz

Myah Firch — Caitlynn Flagg — Drew Goaslind — Tran Nguyen

Brooke Roy — Gillian Wahleithner — Charlotte Willin

FACULTY SCHOLARLY UPDATES

Conferences & Posters

Maggie Hayes, OTD, OTR/L and Amy Kashiwa, OTD, OTR/L presented at the Lily Conference in San Diego, CA, January 6, 2024.

Title: *Exploring Intersections of Community-Based Learning and Occupational Therapy Curricula*

Jessica Nakos, MOT, OTR/L has been accepted to present at the AOTA INSPIRE Annual Conference & Expo in Orlando, FL, March 21-23.

Title: *The Role of Culture in Professional Socialization Experiences in Occupational Therapy*

Dimensions of meaning associated with professional socialization are introduced and offer a unique occupation-based lens through which to view entry-level occupational therapy program experiences.



Sheryl Zylstra, DOT, MS, OTR/L, BCP and Lauren Hamilton, OTD, OTR/L recent OTD graduate will present Dr. Hamilton's capstone research at the AOTA INSPIRE Annual Conference & Expo in Orlando, FL, March 21-23.

Title: *Use of Gross Motor Interventions for Improving Attention-to-Task Among Children With ADHD: An Exploratory Study.*

This poster presents pilot research supporting the role of physical activity in improving attention-to-task in children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Journal Publications Coming Soon!

Open Journal of Occupational Therapy

Title: *A Synthesis of Professional Socialization Literature and Educational Opportunities in Occupational Therapy*

Author: Jessica Nakos (*University of Puget Sound*)

Open Journal of Occupational Therapy

Title: *Effectiveness of an Occupational Therapy Led Social Skills Group Utilizing Parent Training: A Pilot Study*

Authors: Sheryl Eckberg Zylstra (*University of Puget Sound*), Yvonne L. Swinth (*University of Puget Sound*), Aimee Sidhu (*University of Puget Sound*), Julie Anderson (*Puyallup School District*)