



OT Program News

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAMS, SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES
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From the Program Director

I am pleased to report that the proposed changes outlined in the June 2007 Newsletter were accepted by the University so we will have a new field practice structure from 2009. This also means that we will not be seeking placements for third years in the second half of 2008. Now that we have the go ahead at the University level we can work with you to develop placement opportunities that have the potential to extend the services available to your clients.

A quick re-cap on the model may help to orientate your thinking to the possibilities. There will be five field practice blocks across the year. Each block will consist of 1 week preparation, at Uni, and an 8 week placement with an occupational therapist. Students will be able to choose to undertake their field practice placement in two of these blocks. Agencies have the opportunity to have students on placement with them for all 5 blocks or a selection of blocks.

Proposed Placement Blocks

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	Block 4	Block 5
Weeks 4-12	Weeks 13-21	Weeks 22-31	Weeks 32-41	Weeks 42-50

The advantage of having students across all, or the majority of the blocks, is in the capacity to have specific program run on a regular basis. For example, under supervision students could run a regular falls prevention program or a living skills/ cooking group. We are keen to work with you to develop ideas specific to your agency that will allow students to contribute to the services you offer. We would also like to identify a range of pre-placement workshops that can take place prior to a placement so that students are prepared for the practice environment. To assist us in doing this we would welcome the opportunity to meet with your team to discuss options and opportunities. As we have to schedule our timetable for 2009 by August 2008 we need to have these discussions in the first half of 2008. If you have a preferred time for such discussions please contact me or Kobie Boshoff to make arrangements. Alternatively we will be contacting larger agencies to arrange a suitable time to discuss the field practice opportunities further.

We have recently farewelled the class of 2007 and wish them all the very best as they enter the profession. The transition into practice can be a challenging time for new graduates as they move from being a student to novice practitioner. I am sure we can all remember our first days as an occupational therapist – the excitement and the anxiety of a new world. I hope the profession will embrace our new workforce and support them as they find their professional identity.

As this is the last newsletter for 2007 I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported the work we do here at UniSA and wish everyone a very safe and happy festive season.



Sue Gilbert-Hunt, Program Director

In Profile - Carolyn Murray

I am very excited to be on staff here in the Occupational Therapy Program at UniSA and am enjoying the refreshing change of the academic environment and the students. I have a passion for being an occupational therapy clinician, and have learnt so much from my colleagues and clients that I have worked with over the last 13 years. I think what has surprised me the most is the power of and necessity for meaningful occupation in any individual's life.

I graduated from UniSA in 1993 and went to work on the Northern Yorke Peninsula. Beginning my career in the country was a fabulous

experience and a huge learning curve. I moved back to Adelaide in 1995 into a position at Southern Domiciliary Care, based at the Noarlunga Office. I spent some time working at Noarlunga Hospital and Repatriation General Hospital and more recently worked in specialised equipment at Metropolitan Domiciliary Care.

Aged care and community work are my areas of expertise, but I also have a new interest in paediatrics due to having two small children of my own. I completed my Masters Degree in 2000 and have more recently joined the OT Australia SA council in the Professional Standards Portfolio. I am employed at UniSA half time and



currently teach with the second year undergraduate students. I believe, as a united professional group, we need to work to support and nourish our workforce, and I look forward to getting to know and working with my colleagues here at the School of Health Sciences.

Introducing Emma Owens...

My name is Emma Owens and I am the Division of Health Sciences Clinical Placement Administrator for the Occupational Therapy program. I am also responsible for clinical placement activities for the School of Pharmacy and Laboratory Medicine and the Medical Radiation Program. I have been working with the Clinical Placement Unit since its inception in November 2006.



My primary tasks are:

- Requesting and recording all clinical placement offers
- Notifying students of offers and assisting the Course Coordinators in allocating them
- Preparing the information for students about the agencies and clinical placement policies
- Maintaining the Sonia database and keeping accurate records of clinic's details and availability
- Notifying agencies of the placements and also providing them with information as required

The Clinical Placement Unit has a new website that you can view at www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/learn/UniSAnet-1/?PATH=/Resources/hsc/Students/&default=Welcome.htm. This is a hub for students and staff on all information regarding placements; please feel free to have a look around.

If you would like to find out more about having students for a placement with your organisation please do not hesitate to contact me either by email; emma.owens@unisa.edu.au or by phone on 8302 2583.

**“It is neither
wealth nor
splendour but
tranquillity and
occupation
which give
happiness”**

- Thomas Jefferson

2nd year Preschool Field Practice: A Clinician's Perspective Sue Clayton

I would like to share with you my experience as a tutor who's had the pleasure to be involved with the 2nd year OT students' placements for the last 5 years. During this placement students provide services to children within the community based setting of a kindergarten. Students visit kindergartens for 3 hours a week over a period of 10 weeks. During this time they implement pre-developed programs focusing on motor skills or sensory play, with a group of children and with an individual child each. In general the children have been identified as having some 'mild' developmental issues.

Whilst at the kindy, students conduct their group and individual sessions, then spend time with the children and staff, observing the children during free play and learning from the pre-school staff. Each week, students participate in a 3 hour tutorial with OT supervisors at the Uni. They debrief and critically evaluate the success of their sessions. It allows for important discussion of the link between theory and practice, enabling students to obtain specific OT input, support, and resources from tutors who have a wealth of paediatric experience.

The students are visited on site twice during the 10 week period and there is provision for more support if needed. As a supervisor I observe, and assist the students working with their children, often modeling therapeutic approaches. I help them with the process of problem solving and clinical reasoning. Working in this setting provides a uniquely valuable opportunity for students to learn practical clinical skills, while working with both typical 'normal' developing 4 year olds and those with mild developmental difficulties. This year we have introduced the use of some assessments for the individual children, including developmental checklists and the Beery Test of Visual Motor Integration (2006). This has further enhanced the observational skills of the OT students.

Working in this wonderful community setting also provides a real life context for the theories covered in students' studies, e.g. behaviour modification and implementation of behavioural management strategies. In this setting they observe, model and learn from the experienced kindy staff and implement this in their sessions. They gain a greater understand-

ing of how a child's life situation and experiences can impact on their performance at kindy. They learn the importance of detailed planning and preparation, how to present and structure activities to engage the children, how to provide them with the 'just right challenge' and to use activities in a therapeutic way, whilst understanding the rationale behind them. Whilst the students initially work from pre-developed program they are quickly encouraged to modify these creatively to better suit the needs of their children. The students' clinical reasoning skills gradually develop, as they explore in a detailed way what the issues might be for the children, and subsequently learn to prioritise and establish specific goals.

Developing communication skills and demonstrating respectful practice and professional behaviour is an essential part of this clinical placement. Learning how to engage and develop rapport with children is a very important skill and communicating well with kindy staff and parents. The students learn the importance of and get plenty of opportunities to do critical self evaluation reflecting on their clinical experiences. Documentation is an essential practical skill that the students begin to develop. They record and document relevant information about the programs they implement, and information that relate to the children they are involved with. They write a midway and final report for the group and individual child. These are provided to the kindy director at the conclusion of the placement.

This clinical education program is very innovative, especially as OT's are not currently employed within the Education sector in South Australia for the many children who are undiagnosed or at risk of developmental difficulties. The OT students share their ideas and the OT profession with the pre-school staff and families, and in doing so facilitate understanding about OT and its role within the pre-school system. In conclusion, this is a very unique and challenging clinical placement for 2nd year students, with an initial very steep learning curve. It is rewarding to observe how with support, the students grow and develop, gradually gaining more self confidence and independence in a whole range of skills that will be invaluable in their future roles as OTs.

Researchers undivided about drivers' attention Angela Berndt

In July, I presented "Drivers with Dementia: Environment, Errors and Performance Outcomes" at the Driving Assessment 2007 Human Factors Conference in Washington State, USA. Response to the research was positive and feedback indicated that, as dementia and driving is a growing issue for most countries, the development of a reliable simulator which is suitable for the driver with cognitive impairment will be the next big challenge.

The attendees at the conference, from over 15 countries, were a multi-disciplinary group, including clinical and research psychology, engineering, medicine, optometry and allied health. There were 2 OT's; myself and Laura, another driver trained Occupational Therapist from the Mayo Clinic in Phoenix Arizona. Sessions pertinent to the health focussed attendees discussed the safety and performance concerns of vulnerable drivers such as younger inexperienced driver and drivers with other neurological disorders including Parkinson's disease and hemianopia.



The hot topic in many sessions was the effect of distraction on safety and performance of the average driver. Innovative research testing the effect of introduced distracters and cognitive load distraction via simulators and instrumented vehicles was presented. Introduced distracters include iPods, mobile phones, navigation systems and warning devices. Results demonstrated that gap selection, hazard perception, lane tracking and scanning performance are all reduced with distraction.

So next time you think to fast forward your iPod or adjust your navigation guidance system or SMS your friend while you are driving Think twice! You really are diminishing your divided attention. This is one application I drew from the research; drive defensively. If you see a person talking on the phone behind you, even if they are hands free, watch them very carefully and be prepared to adjust your driving responses to compensate for their distraction. For further information on the conference go to: <http://ppc.uiowa.edu/driving-assessment/2007/>

UniSA experience an inspiration Mika Tanaka



Mika Tanaka on graduation day March 2007, with her parents who travelled from Japan for the occasion.

Being an Occupational Therapy student has been one of the most memorable times of my life. There was much to learn about OT and I also learnt a lot about myself. I still remember the first day at UniSA very clearly. It was too inspiring to forget! I hope that other graduates will agree that despite juggling studies and other commitments, and the occasional overwhelming assignment due dates, the satisfaction of completing the program was well worth it. And of course, the supportive and friendly OT school staff, and supportive friends, helped ease the stress and pain during the 4 years of study!

In time, I may change my direction but ideally, being an expert in the area of dementia/mental health (i.e. depression) is my ultimate goal as I thoroughly enjoy assisting and interacting with the elderly. I would also like to take this opportunity to work in Australia to increase my knowledge and skills. Therefore, if I do return home to Japan and work, I can contribute and share these skills and improve the lives of people with disabilities, and assist other health professionals in Japan. It sounds like a big goal, but I've learnt that if you believe in and work hard towards your goals, you can accomplish them despite their size!

As for now, I'm committed to being the best OT I can, like the OT people I've had the pleasure to meet and work with over the last 4 years. These people have shown me how positive differences can be made to people's lives.

In the Loop - P I C O Nicola Massy-Westropp

As part of the 4th year Occupational Therapy students' placement, they are required to complete an evidence-based practice review for the agency they are working with. The question is provided by the Occupational Therapists at the agency.

The question must be formatted in **PICO**;

P *The population and condition*

I *The intervention you are interested in*

C *The comparison or alternative intervention (if relevant and available)*

O *The outcome or reason for using the intervention*

For example;

What is the efficacy of slings (*intervention*) over functional electrical stimulation (*comparison*) for reducing shoulder subluxation (*outcome or reason for using the intervention*) in clients with hemiplegia/hemiparesis (*population and condition*)?

There is an alternative format for those questions that ask the efficacy of a certain assessment/evaluation/test.

The question must be formatted in **PACO**;

P *The population and condition*

A *The assessment you are interested in*

C *The comparison or alternative assessment (especially if there is a 'gold standard' assessment)*

O *The outcome of accurate diagnosis, valid for that condition, responsive to change in that condition, sensitive to those with the condition*

For example;

What is the reliability and validity of the Michigan Hand Outcomes Questionnaire over (*assessment*) the Disabilities of the Arm and Hand Questionnaire (*comparison*) for assessing hand function (*outcome or reason for using the assessment*) in aged clients with arthritis (*population and condition*)?

Questions about processes are not evidence-seeking and are better answered by other types of research, like qualitative research. These cannot be tested, using in evidence-based methods. An example of this type of question is, "what is the experience of men entering hostel care?"

Tales of a Hong Kong sojourn... Caitlin Stuart and Shelley Fulton

'Allo to all you OT crew out there. Friends and colleagues, we are Caitlin Stuart and Shelley Fulton, fortunate 4th year OT studs who completed our final 10 week placement in Hong Kong. Hopping aboard the 1940 Star Ferry each morning, we undertook our placement at 'Elite Resource and Consultation Service', a private practice in the heart of Hong Kong Island. The clinic provides services mainly to children with developmental delay and autism spectrum disorders. In addition, the therapists work with a number of elderly clients who have a range of disabilities (including stroke and acquired brain injury). Clients work with one of two OT's and in some cases a physio.

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University looked after us well and a number of their second year OT students provided wonderful support and orientation to a crazy city (also demolishing us both in all sporting pursuits, namely table tennis and badminton). For 3 months we called the Poly U student Halls home. At Aus\$6 a night it's remarkably cheap, yet provided more than we required. Facilities include a swimming pool, gym, canteen, karaoke room, dance room, computer pools and table tennis tables. Students from around the globe reside here and Caitlin shared her toilet with Chinese, South African and Alaskan girls. Although strict rules exist (i.e. no boys on the girls floors after 10pm), early evening frivolities are customary. On one occasion all students were sent home from placement and study due to a typhoon number 8 warning. The result, a 'tumultuous' typhoon party on the 19th floor.

Throughout July and August 'Elite' ran a summer program for their paediatric clients, whom attended 9 to 5, five and a half days a week. During this intensive therapy activities included; fine and gross motor groups, homework classes, dancing classes, cooking, sensory integration, individual therapy sessions and excursions (including visits to ocean park, the American Club, buffet lunch and a three day camp). It is fair to say that folk in Hong Kong work incredibly long hours and days are crammed with activities. This sometimes meant it was difficult to allocate time to see our individual clients.

Our time at Elite was both challenging and rewarding. The language barrier is far more significant than we had imagined. We found it important to reflect throughout our time, and issues around the importance of client



Caitlin and Shelley with Hong Kong Polytechnic University 2nd year OT students YoYo, Jenny, Pinky and Simon

independence were a recurring theme. We thought about how people with more money and access to resources view independence, for instance often clients have maids who attend to the majority of self care tasks. From these thoughts we questioned; "Do people who wish to be dependent on others get labelled or scape-goated?" In addition we reflected on the discrepancy of the OT theoretical base and client values.

Hong Kong is certainly a good time place for some good time kids. With China and a multitude of exotic islands at its doorstep Hong Kong enables us to get away on weekends. We went camping and trekking on Lantau Island, gambled our dollars away in Macau and even surfed small right handers on Lamma Island. Being in the heart of Asia we were also auspicious enough to pop down to Singapore for the WOMAD festival there. We finished our placement on the 7th of September and then headed to China for some travels and arrived back in the Land of the drought on AFL Grand Final Day.



OT graduates in demand

Our 3rd cohort of Master of Occupational Therapy (Graduate Entry) students graduated in August and most have already joined the workforce as Occupational Therapists, proving once again that there is plenty of demand out there for our graduates.

Feedback from the occupational therapy community is very positive, with a number of the students finding work in the agencies where they have been on field placement during their studies.

With one intake per year each July, and approximately 20 places, this demanding 2 year program is extremely rewarding for the students who have chosen Occupational Therapy as their career.

Cohort 4 is now well underway, with their first placements having commenced in August.

For more information about the Graduate Entry program go to <http://www.unisa.edu.au/hls/progsourses/IMOG.asp>

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School of Health Sciences
Occupational Therapy Programs
Bonython Jubilee Building
Level 2 Room BJ2-04

Office Hours: 9.00am to 5.00pm

Telephone: +61 8 8302 2308

Facsimile: +61 8 8302 2645

www.unisa.edu.au/hls/progsourses/ot.asp



The Staff from the School of Health Sciences Occupational Therapy Program would like to thank you for your support in 2007 and look forward to another successful year in 2008.

We wish you a very happy, safe and relaxing festive season.