

Belmont University Mission Statement

Belmont University is a student-centered Christian community providing an academically challenging education that empowers men and women of diverse backgrounds to engage and transform the world with disciplined intelligence, compassion, courage and faith.

MSOT Curriculum Design

School of Occupational Therapy Philosophy

The human being is a holistic, dynamic person who is internally motivated to engage in occupation. Occupation is defined as “Activities...of everyday life, named, organized, and given value and meaning by individual and a culture. Occupation is everything people do to occupy themselves, including looking after themselves...enjoying life...and contributing to the social and economic fabric of their communities.” (Law, Polatajko, Baptiste, & Townsend, 1997; also referenced in the Practice Framework [AJOT, 2002]) An optimal health state is supported when individuals engage in occupations that are meaningful, purposeful and self-directed. Engagement in occupation promotes well-being, competence, a sense of autonomy, as well as connectedness to others. Engagement in occupation occurs in a variety of contexts (cultural, physical, social, personal, temporal, spiritual, virtual). The individual’s experience and performance cannot be understood or addressed without understanding the many contexts in which occupational and daily life activities occur. (AJOT, 2002)

The holistic aspect of the human being consists of biological, psychological and socio-cultural dimensions. The holistic nature of each human being is unique and individualized. This unique individual functions as an open system that interacts in a dynamic fashion with the environment. This continuous interaction provides the individual with the opportunity to learn as a result of experience and thus grow, develop, change, and adapt. The growth process is facilitated by the occupational nature of human beings and is evident in the interactions with the environment that are self-initiated and goal-directed. These interactions or occupations can be categorized into the areas of occupations (e.g., activities of daily living, instrumental activities of daily living, education, work, play, leisure and social participation).

Occupational therapy is based on the belief that occupations may be used to promote wellness and remediate dysfunction. Occupations can be used as a means as well as an end in the intervention process. Occupations have the ability to be graded and to be used therapeutically to promote adaptation which enables individuals to attain the highest level of performance that promotes desired or needed participation in a variety of roles and settings. Changes in performance are directed to support engagement in meaningful occupations that subsequently affect health, well-being, and life satisfaction. (AJOT, 2002) Through active participation in the intervention process, learning can be facilitated through actual doing that can lead to effective change in occupational performance. The process of occupational therapy integrates the application of critical thinking skills with evaluation, process of intervention, and outcomes.

Scope

The depth and breadth of the curriculum are designed to develop a generalist occupational therapist with a strong foundation in occupation-based practice. Students are educated in uses of occupation to provide therapeutic intervention for individuals and groups of all ages through in-depth exploration of evidence-based literature.

The scope covers the spectrum of entry-level practice competencies in both physical and mental health settings. Throughout the curriculum students are introduced to the role responsibilities of a clinician, educator, advocate, educator, researcher, manager, and consultant. Clinical studies courses and fieldwork seminar courses focus on students' personal and professional integration of the curricular themes. The educational outcome is a competent entry-level occupational therapist that is dynamically engaged in the profession and uses clinical reasoning to determine and implement best practice to enable performance in occupations.

As identified by the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, occupational therapy practitioners are committed to assisting others to attain, retain, or maintain their ability to participate in purposeful and meaningful occupations. MSOT students engage in the occupational area of education to develop in their professional careers and transition to the role of occupational therapist. In assisting with this transition, entry-level education must be accountable for adhering to guidelines set forth in the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc. (AOTA), document *Standards for an Accredited Educational Program for the Occupational Therapist*, revised in 2006. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) monitors compliance with these *Standards*. The *Standards* encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are required to function as a generalist in occupational therapy. The MSOT program ensures that students meet objective criteria by identifying learning experiences and methods of evaluation to ensure that students meet the *Standards*. Ralph Tyler's traditional model of curriculum design is an objective-oriented approach to education. In this model, the program planner states objectives, selects learning activities, organizes learning activities, and develops means of evaluation. This approach is linear and consistent with an outcome-oriented view of education. Thus, the work of Tyler is an inherent part of the MSOT program curriculum design. In this vein, the *Standards* are viewed as objectives that each student must meet. Learning experiences are developed by faculty and learning outcomes are evaluated. Changes are implemented to ensure success.

MSOT faculty recognizes, however, that education goes beyond attainment of objectives. Belmont University's mission is, in part, to "provide opportunities for students to develop intellectually, spiritually, socially, and physically through experiences of leadership and collaboration, of success and failure, and *of choice* (italics added). For example, in conjunction with the academic fieldwork coordinator, student may choose Level I and Level II fieldwork experiences that are of interest to the student. In addition, choice is provided through specific courses that offer a selection of assignments that the students may choose from to meet individualized learning goals in addition to course objectives.

As a faith-based institution, Belmont University also encourages "high moral standards, habits of ethical reflection, and an atmosphere of respect for civil expression of diverse perspectives." An aim of the university mission is also to challenge students to consider innovative solutions to problems that face the community. In line with the aim of the mission, a socio-cultural view of education which emphasizes the importance of learning about the human condition and one another through dialogue (classroom and web-based discussion) as well as through immersion in the community (service learning, level I and Level II fieldwork) is also reflected in the curriculum design. A constructivist learning approach, in which students are challenged to build upon and challenge pre-existing knowledge and views, is also inherent in the curriculum design as reflected by a multitude of case-based inquiry learning activities as well as web based discussion.

Caffarella (2002) states that five broad purposes of education are "to encourage growth, to assist with practical problems, to prepare people for current and future opportunities, to assist with change for desired results, and to examine community or social issues" (p. 10). She also states that program planning must consider contextual factors that influence the program including the social, economic, cultural, and

political climate. Thus, the MSOT curricular design reflects consideration of not only educational objectives, but goals and previous experiences of the learner as well as growth needed to transition to the role of occupational therapist, in relation to the learning context, and demands of the learning task. In addition, the content that is included in the curriculum includes not only objectives as identified by the *Standards*, but learning experiences and philosophy of learning that are conducive to achieving the Belmont University vision and mission and the mission and vision of the School of Occupational Therapy.

View of Learning

1. The Learner;

Diverse factors influence learning and educational performance and learning does not occur in a vacuum: Each student has, in part, differing life experiences, motivations, learning styles and aspirations that he/she brings to the learning environment.

Thus in addition to the traditionalist view to education outlined by Tyler, the MSOT curriculum design incorporates the work of Caffarella that recognizes curriculum as a dynamic and holistic process that encompasses a broader aim than achievement of objectives as an “end” to learning. The learning process is influenced by context as well as by an individual’s biological, and psychological changes as well as socio-cultural experiences. MSOT students are adult learners with diverse cultural backgrounds. Merriam and Caffarella (1999) have identified best education practices for adult learners:

Key considerations include:

- Learning implies the intersection of the learner; the context; and the process.
- An adult needs time to examine a problem or respond to a situation.
- Adults are not inclined to engage in learning unless it is meaningful.
- Acquisition of information may be slower than with children due to age-related factors, but because accumulation of knowledge is seen as crucial to the integration of new learning, adults are in a better position to learn new things than children.
- Adults are “problem finders” (adults “notice” a problem) and engage in dialectical thinking (the art of reasoning about matters of opinion).

Case scenarios and inquiry learning are embedded throughout the program to promote meaningful critical thinking and problem solving experiences for the MSOT student.

2. Context

a. Spiritual Context

At Belmont University, the importance of the spiritual context is reflected in the University’s underlying Christian standards of morality and ethics. Students are expected to exhibit values including:

- mutual respect and collaboration
- the worth of the individual
- personal integrity
- critical independent thinking
- self control
- community responsibility and accountability

These values are expected to be demonstrated in a variety of roles and contexts including the live and “virtual” classroom and at the fieldwork setting. Education includes social interaction and demonstration of university values is expected and reflected in course assignments as well as ongoing assessment of a student’s professional behaviors (Level 1 fieldwork evaluation form).

b. Virtual Context

The teaching/learning process can occur not only in the traditional classroom environment, but via virtual environments. Advances in technology speed the rate that information can be accessed. The MSOT program uses web-enhanced instruction to promote a dynamic, interactive media to promote learning.

Researchers have begun to identify some indicators of success for distance learners including:

- Being self-directed, intrinsically motivated and an active learner
- Having support systems (resources, services, administrative, faculty, family, employer, etc.)
- Relating course content to personal and career interests (meaningfulness)
- Possessing good organizational and time management skills

Faculty recognize that learning in the online environment is facilitated by timely and regular feedback. Many of the teaching strategies used with adult learners are also effective when engaging in online learning.

The MSOT curriculum includes virtual, live, and fieldwork experiences to construct new knowledge, attitudes, and skills and reinforce existing knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are needed to transition to the role of occupational therapist

3. Faculty

Faculty recognize that they are a human component of the educational environment. Faculty concur that “Education . . . is a form of social intervention, which is defined as “any act, planned or unplanned, that alters the characteristics of another individual or pattern of relationships between individuals” (Kelman & Warwick, in Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, p. 13). As such, faculty engage in ongoing evaluation to assess implications of their endeavors. Although faculty are content experts, their role is to facilitate student learning rather than merely transmit information. Faculty concur with Malcolm Knowles work regarding the role of the instructor in adult education. Namely, the instructor’s role is to

- Encourage active involvement of students in learning and serve as facilitator
- Guide students towards knowledge rather than supply facts
- Explain how activities contribute to attainment of goals
- Solicit input from students
- Allow students to select projects of interest
- Provide opportunities for students to assume responsibility for presentations and group leadership
- Draw on students’ experience and knowledge that is relevant to specific course material
- Relate theories and concepts to students
- Acknowledge the value of experience in learning

- Provide opportunities to incorporate modify and adapt existing knowledge with new learning (activities that compare and contrast)
- Provide learning that builds upon existing knowledge or updates current knowledge
- Provide activities that have clear outcome criteria for successful attainment
- Demonstrate/explain how course material will help students attain their goals.
- Allow students to choose fieldwork placements that reflect their interests
- Explain how course material will be utilized in the work place
- Provide opportunities to practice/apply the skills/knowledge being taught
- Provide opportunities to display professional behaviors
- Model professionalism

Instructional delivery

Learning is an active process in which the student assumes the responsibility for the learning and the fulfillment of the outcomes. Faculty can assist the student with identifying learning objectives and developing an effective, individualized learning style that is congruent with the demands of the program. Learning experiences occur on a developmental continuum culminating in the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of knowledge. During the learning process, faculty function as facilitators to structure learning experiences to enhance the critical thinking skills of the students and facilitate integration of content with each student's unique life experiences.

The curriculum is delivered through a variety of lecture, lab and seminar formats, fieldwork experiences, and web-based instruction. Students are required to demonstrate proficiencies in problem solving, psychomotor, behavioral and clinical competencies as they progress through the curriculum. Since this curriculum is a shared effort amongst the faculty, students will be given the benefit of receiving input from more than one source. Likewise, the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator, in conjunction with faculty and community clinicians, provide students with feedback regarding their progress toward clinical competence.

Graduates of Belmont's program are prepared to demonstrate commitment to the profession of occupational therapy as ultimately demonstrated by their involvement in professional organizations and their continuing education. They are prepared to promote occupational therapy through the continuous development of leadership skills as well as collaborate with other professionals.

Pre-Admission:

Prior to being admitted to the Weekend MSOT Program, students must demonstrate that they have successfully completed (received a grade of "B" or better) the following prerequisite courses: Human Anatomy; Human Physiology; Statistics; Human Growth and Development across the lifespan, Introduction to Psychology, Introduction to Sociology or Anthropology as well as 6 credits in Communication. These courses serve as the foundation for first semester MSOT courses including neuroscience, pathophysiology, and kinesiology. The pre-requisites in communication also ensure that incoming students possess adequate written and oral communication skills for participation in the educational program. The pre-requisite requirement of statistics lays a foundation for future coursework in the research component of the MSOT curriculum Although OTA's are given priority for admission, other health care professionals may be admitted. Non-health care professionals must complete OTW 5040 prior to the start of the second semester of enrollment in the MSOT program. Completion of this course will ensure that students are exposed to basic occupational therapy and medical terminology and are acquainted with the philosophy of occupational therapy.

1st Semester – Fall First Year:

During the students' first weekend on campus they receive a comprehensive orientation to the Weekend MSOT Program that includes training in accessing and utilizing Blackboard, instruction in conducting online literature searches, and introduction to the Portfolio requirement. The portfolio process is used to encourage self-assessment and reflection related to self-responsibility for learning and promotion of professional growth and development. The Myers Briggs Type Indicator is also administered. The students are educated regarding their identified MBTI preferences and are made aware of how this relates to their communication and learning styles.

The first semester of the program provides course work in kinesiology; neuroscience; and physiology and clinical pathophysiology to ensure that students, regardless of their professional background, have a firm understanding of client factors (body functions and body structures). Developmental Influences on Living provides an introduction to the development of occupational roles and role dysfunction across the lifespan. This course builds upon the course content that is covered in most human development across the lifespan courses. In addition to the concept of role development and dysfunction, this course also provides an overview of the contribution of occupation to health and wellness and examines development of performance patterns and skills from a lifespan perspective. This course also includes an experiential component that is intended to provide an opportunity to examine role development, function and dysfunction. This component also provides an opportunity for the student to observe and reflect on social and community issues that impact engagement in occupation. This experience requires students to examine issues and propose solutions related to unmet needs of diverse groups of society which is consistent with Belmont University values related to analysis and problem solving to enhance social conditions. In addition, Knowles recommends that adult learners should be provided with opportunities for practical application of knowledge and participation in experiential learning provides this opportunity during the 1st semester.

The applied science and foundational courses in development that are offered during the 1st semester prepare the students for the subsequent intervention courses in the curriculum that are presented in birth-forward progression during the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th semesters of the program.

2nd Semester – Spring First Year:

During the second semester, the study of occupation is intensified by examining occupational issues that are relevant from birth through adolescence. Content inclusion in the first intervention course, Occupational Performance I, includes examination of theories, frames of reference, assessment, intervention and outcomes that are applicable to children. Incorporated into this course work is material related to interpersonal communication, communication with families and interdisciplinary teams. The student utilizes the collaborative process model as identified by the Practice Framework. Course content covers issues related to physical and mental health of children and adolescents. Course content also prepares students for practice in current practice settings and emerging practice settings. Since many students in the OTW program are from rural areas, exposure to school-system practice is an emerging practice area for many students and viewed as emerging practice by the curriculum.

Courses that support the primary intervention courses, have related content objectives or courses that facilitate application of a concept are offered concurrently with the intervention courses. This horizontal organization reflects adult learning theory concepts in which content is best learned when relationships can be demonstrated.

The Clinical Studies, Assistive Technology, and Occupational Performance I lab provide further opportunities to apply the principles and expand on course content that is included in occupational

performance I. The Clinical Studies course uses case based scenarios that require critical thinking, problem-solving, and application of problem based learning for a student to practice clinical reasoning skills.

Occupational Analysis is also offered during the second semester. This lifespan course expands on content presented in Developmental Influences on Living. The learner analyzes the demands of various tasks and is introduced to the evaluation process as related to basic understanding of an occupational profile.

The vertical arrangement of the curriculum is apparent as experiences are provided to reinforce and build upon learning from previous semesters. The Clinical Studies series are a good illustration of this concept. During the first Clinical Studies course, the student is exposed to diverse methods of clinical documentation. During subsequent Clinical Studies courses, students utilize methods that they have been previously exposed to and learn additional formats that are appropriate based on the concurrent intervention course. Therefore, as the student progresses through the coursework, the student's cognitive development, critical reasoning and problem solving capacity is challenged and enhanced. Likewise, the clinical reasoning experiences build upon and widen a student's knowledge base and fosters a continuous reflective process. Concurrent with their course work, the students also engage in a Level I fieldwork experience where they have the opportunity to actively participate in a pediatric setting under the direct supervision of an occupational therapist or other health care professional. The students are challenged to reflect on this experience in the Fieldwork Seminar course.

During the second semester, the students also take a Research Methods course that formally prepares them for their research project. This course presents both the quantitative and qualitative research processes using examples from the occupational therapy literature. This introductory course provides an orientation to the research process, scientific writing, and statistical analysis. This course also supports content provided in the accompanying intervention course by examining issues related to evidence-based intervention.

3rd Semester – Summer First Year

The third semester focuses on the roles of the occupational therapy practitioner in the assessment and treatment of adults. Course content includes examination of physical and mental health. Occupational Performance II requires the student to apply the collaborative process model as first introduced in Occupational Performance I. Concurrent courses including assistive technology and fieldwork seminar that expand on concepts presented in Occupational Performance II. The Assistive Technology II course examines how technologies can help to compensate for disability and enhance functional performance in adults. As in the previous semester, a companion Clinical Studies course is used to synthesize the material presented in Occupational Performance II. Students engage in a Level I fieldwork experience where they have the opportunity to actively participate in the assessment and treatment of adults with various disabilities under the direct supervision of an occupational therapist or other health care professional.

It is also during this semester that the students initiate their research project under the supervision of a faculty member.

4th Semester – Fall Second Year:

Building on the information gained in Occupational Performance I and II, as well as their foundational knowledge from the first semester, students focus on occupational performance issues and use of therapeutic occupation related to older adults during their final semester of academic work. As in

the previous semester, the students have a course in Clinical Studies to encourage critical thinking of concepts and more advanced clinical analysis of cases that are presented in the intervention course. During this semester the students also complete a course in management. This course is designed to prepare the students for managerial roles in a variety of service delivery systems. The students are introduced to basic management and leadership principles and expand on the depth and breadth of course content related to ethics that is first presented in Occupational Performance I. The management course is also expands on the concept of needs assessment that is first introduced during the first semester in the Developmental Influences on Living Course. The needs assessment experience is directly tied to the student's professional development activities. Students also engage in a Level I fieldwork experience where they have the opportunity to actively participate in a setting under the direct supervision of an occupational therapist or other health care professional. It is during this semester that the students also complete their research project which is directly related to occupational therapy practice.

5th & 6th Semesters – Spring and Summer Second Year:

Upon successful completion of all their academic course work, research project, and Level I fieldwork, the students are then prepared to begin the Level II fieldwork. Based on the curriculum design and the student's reflection regarding needs related to professional growth, students are encouraged to choose the setting for their level II experiences in conjunction with the academic fieldwork coordinator and faculty.

Fieldwork:

Relationship to Curriculum Design:

Fieldwork is viewed as an integral part of the MSOT educational experience. Fieldwork provides opportunities for students to integrate and apply academic learning. During the first semester, students participate in foundational coursework that is intended to prepare the student for second semester intervention coursework and the first Level I experience. Level I Fieldwork is incorporated into the semesters when intervention courses, Occupational Performance I, II, and III, are offered (during the second, third and fourth semester of the MSOT program). The purpose of the level I experience during the second semester is to observe occupational therapy practice in a pediatric setting to support and expand knowledge acquired in second semester course work. During the third semester, the fieldwork Level I experience is intended to provide a context for understanding second semester course work, which focuses on adults' experience of decreased function in occupation. The fourth semester Level I experience is provided in a setting to provide a context for understanding fourth semester course work, which focuses on older adults' experience of decreased function in occupation. The curriculum design is based on a holistic view of man and supports the view that, to enhance function, both psychosocial and physical health must be assessed and addressed by the occupational therapist. Therefore, the curriculum design does not *mandate* that students participate in a minimum of one traditional or non-traditional "mental health" or "physical disability" settings in isolation, rather students are expected to work in conjunction with the academic fieldwork coordinator to design Level 1 learning experiences to:

1. Meet a student's learning needs and evolving learning needs as they progress through the curriculum
2. Enable integration of concurrent semester coursework.
3. Enable the student (by the time of Level I part 1, 2, and 3 completion) to have observed individuals across the chronological and developmental continuum.

4. Enable the student to report on both physical and psychosocial needs of clients across the lifespan (as required in Fieldwork Seminar which is offered concurrently with each Level I experience).
5. Enable the student to be exposed to and report on traditional and emerging practice areas.
6. Understand what constitutes “traditional” and “emerging” practice in the student’s local geographic region in comparison/contrast with Belmont’s geographic area and national trends.

The curriculum design is based on an adult learning model. Thus, each student must be able to determine what constitutes ‘current’ and “emerging” practice in his/her geographic region. While the MSOT program support the definition and examples of emerging practice provide by AOTA, such as support of aging in place, driver rehabilitation, community health and wellness, addressing the psychosocial needs of children and youth, ergonomics and assistive technology consulting, the geographic diversity of MSOT students requires that the program’s definition of emerging practice is flexible based on a student’s geographic location. Thus, community-based practice, rural practice, and school-based practice are “emerging” practice in some geographic areas and student’s must be able to provide support for what he/she identifies as “emerging” in his/her geographic region.

Fieldwork Level I Hour Requirement

OTA’s are required to complete two of the Level I experiences in settings other than where they are employed. For the third experience OTA’s are permitted to practice required professional skills under the supervision of an occupational therapist at their place of employment. OTA’s are required to complete a minimum of 20 hours on-site. PTA’s and other health care practitioners must complete a minimum of three Level 1 experiences with a minimum of 40 hours for each Level 1 experience. Students may choose, and are encouraged to choose, one of the three Level I experiences under the supervision of a non-occupational therapist. This “non-traditional” Level I experience may enrich a student’s professional growth and provide learning that a student may not experience with an occupational therapist. However, the curriculum design is built upon an adult learning model and recognizes that such an experience may not be valuable to all students since each has different prior learning experiences, educational backgrounds, and learning styles. Students who would like to complete a Level I in a non-traditional setting are asked to complete a brief proposal that identifies how the learning experience will meet specific objectives, relate to the curriculum design, and enrich their professional development. As part of the Level I Seminar course, the students also engage in an online discussion of the experience. Specific questions are used to encourage critical and clinical reasoning, explore the differences in roles and education of the occupational therapy assistant and occupational therapist; the frames of reference being utilized; and the specific occupations being performed by the clients. Students are required to complete the 20 hour fieldwork experience during the relevant semester with the concurrent intervention course (Occupational Performance I, II, or II). Failure to do so may jeopardize continuation to the next semester.

Level II Fieldwork is begun following completion of the fourth academic semester. Successful completion of their Level II Fieldwork fulfills the requirement for graduation and enables one to be eligible to apply for the NBCOT Certification Examination.

As reflected in the Occupational Therapy Practice Framework, occupational therapy practitioners’ expertise lies in their knowledge of occupation and in knowing how engaging in occupations can be used to affect human performance and the effects of disease and disability. Completion of the Weekend MSOT Program assures that our graduates are prepared to help their clients engage in meaningful occupations that subsequently affect their health, well-being and life satisfaction.

Curriculum

Fall Semester – Year 1 (13-15 credits)

- *OTW 5040 Foundations in Occupational Therapy (2)
- OTW 5000 Physiology & Clinical Pathophysiology (3)
- OTW 5010 Neuroscience in OT (3)
- OTW 5011 Neuroscience in OT Lab (1)
- OTW 5030 Kinesiology in OT (3)
- OTW 5031 Kinesiology in OT Lab (1)
- OTW 5050 Developmental Influences on Living (2)

*for non-OTA's

Spring Semester – Year 1 (16 credits)

- OTW 5030 Research Methods (3)
- OTW 5150 Occupational Performance I (4)
- OTW 5151 Occupational Performance I Lab (1)
- OTW 5152 Clinical Studies I (1)
- OTW 5153 Level I Fieldwork I (1)
- OTW 5154 Fieldwork Seminar I (1)
- OTW 5260 Assistive Technology for Human Performance I (2)
- OTW 5250 Occupational Analysis (3)

Summer Semester – Year 1 (10 credits)

- OTW 5160 Occupational Performance II (4)
- OTW 5161 Occupational Performance II Lab (1)
- OTW 5162 Clinical Studies II (1)
- OTW 5163 Level I Fieldwork II (1)
- OTW 5164 Fieldwork Seminar II (1)
- OTW 5230 Research Project I (2)

Fall Semester – Year 2 (15 credits)

- OTW 5170 Occupational Performance III (4)
- OTW 5171 Occupational Performance III Lab (1)
- OTW 5172 Clinical Studies III (1)
- OTW 5173 Level I Fieldwork III (1)
- OTW 5174 Fieldwork Seminar III (1)
- OTW 5320 Professional Issues (3)
- OTW 5330 Research Project II (2)
- OTW 5360 Assistive Technology for Human Performance II (2)

Spring Semester – Year 2 (9 credits)

- OTW 5400 Fieldwork Level II, part 1 (9)

Summer Semester – Year 2 (9 credits)

- OTW 5410 Fieldwork Level II, part 2 (9)