

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.

OTD Curriculum Design

Content and Scope

A primary purpose of Belmont University's doctorate of occupational therapy professional education is to provide experiences that develop an individual's knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function as a member of the occupational therapy professional community. Doctoral education is focused on the blending of theoretical knowledge with the development of practice skills and attitudes including professional behaviors required of the entry-level practitioner (Hinojosa & Blount, 1998). This 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*, published in 2006 and effective in 2008 (AOTA, 2006). The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) monitors compliance with these published *Standards*. These *Standards* encompass knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are required to function as a generalist in occupational therapy and lead to advanced practice with the doctoral program.

Keeping current with the educational *Standards* is essential to meet the national accreditation entry requirements of the profession. However, an educational program must also meet local and regional needs. Based on these needs, the Belmont educational program prepares students to be cognizant of the potential need for occupational therapy services in traditional and non-traditional roles in their local community. Thus, besides professional preparation for the role as a generalist in occupational therapy, students are oriented to the role expectations of educators, managers, consultants, researchers, and entrepreneurs. To compete in the current health care arena, our graduates must be familiar with each of these roles. The student is exposed to these roles through didactic coursework and participation in an expansive Level I fieldwork experience. Each student also maintains a portfolio to provide the opportunity to formally reflect on his/her perceived development and competence in achieving professional role expectations. Students also participate in learning experiences through classroom, laboratory, service, fieldwork, and residency in which they are expected to function as change-agents and advocates for both the profession and individuals who may benefit from occupational therapy services.

Belmont University's Doctorate of Occupational Therapy Central Themes

Belmont University's School of Occupational Therapy has identified four central themes that are consistent with the ACOTE standards. These themes are interwoven throughout the curriculum design and sequence and embrace Belmont University's mission and vision. These central themes are:

- Faith-Based Advocacy

- Clinical Excellence
- Entrepreneurial Leadership
- Technological Advancements

Belmont University Occupational Therapy Program's Definitions of Central Themes

Faith-Based Advocacy: Prepares the OTD student to advocate for individuals, groups and the profession in order that clients may participate fully in society. The student must understand the ethical ramifications of acting, or not acting, to plead the causes which impact our consumers. The student must also understand the systems within which the profession of Occupational Therapy operates and how one might impact these systems. The desire to act on behalf of the consumer and the profession is founded on the belief that “faith is God’s work within us” (Martin Luther) and that doing good works based on this faith is a demonstration of a commitment to the greater good.

Clinical Excellence: Sackett, Richardson, Rosenberg, and Haynes (1997) defined evidence-based practice (EBP) as the “conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients. The practice of evidence-based (health care) means integrating individual clinical expertise with the best available, external clinical evidence from systematic research” EBP needs clinical reasoning as well as findings from research to be integrated for best practice (clinical excellence). The essential goal of EBP is to ensure the external research evidence is critically evaluated, understood, and used in applicable clinical situations. The use of EBP should lead to clients receiving the most appropriate occupational therapy treatment. Likewise, EBP uses the best available evidence. EBP should lead to clients receiving the most appropriate occupational therapy treatment rather than the least costly treatment. Likewise, EBP uses the best available evidence. EBP is the marriage of external research evidence with clinical reasoning and client participation to ensure that the OT services provided meet the needs of the persons receiving them.

Entrepreneurial Leadership: The occupational therapy student will become a primary force in enabling effective change necessary for organizational and systematic development. The individual leader empowers colleagues to collaborate through a shared vision within the organization. The leader will collaborate through networks to create desired change within communities or global agencies to meet the needs of marginalized populations and/or individuals.

Technological Advancements: The occupational therapy student will be encouraged to incorporate assisted technologies into the intervention plan. Keeping pace with technological advancement is essential for health promotion for all populations. Technologies include, but are not limited to, information, communication, manipulation, mobility / locomotion, and environmental access.

Learning Philosophy

Our philosophy of occupational therapy is reflected in our approach to education. Just as our practice is client-centered, our teaching is **student-centered**. Just as our practice is evidence-based, the methods used to disseminate knowledge are based on sound adult learning theories and principles. Malcolm Knowles (1980) noted that adults learn on a need to know basis and welcome opportunities to apply newly learned information. Caffarella (1994) expanded on Knowles' theories and suggested that adults are not likely to willingly engage in learning unless the content is **meaningful** to them. He noted that they prefer to be **actively** involved in the learning process, and that they learn both in **independent, self-reliant** modes and in interdependent, connected and collaborative ways. Engagement in the occupation of education, therefore, must occur in a **variety of contexts** including the lecture hall, laboratory, clinic and virtual classroom. To function as an effective practitioner, the student must be exposed to not only the knowledge base of the profession, but must engage in self-reflection to promote therapeutic use of self (Schon, 1987).

Learning Theory for the OTD Program

An educational program must consider “who” the learners are. The entry-level doctoral program is designed to admit students who have completed undergraduate coursework effective July 1, 2010. Thus, the Belmont University OTD program is designed to develop adult learners and is based on principles of adult learning models.

For occupational therapy professional education to best meet the needs of learners, coursework must focus on attainment of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills which are required for practice in traditional as well as non-traditional arenas. To function as an effective practitioner, the student must be exposed to not only the knowledge base of the profession, but must engage in self-reflection to promote therapeutic use of self. The student must be cognizant of the impact of the human and non-human environment on the profession as well as on individuals in need of OT service. To value the significance of this impact, the educational program must prepare the student to anticipate, recognize and evaluate individual, population, and global needs. Educational activities must encourage critical thinking, be student-centered, and reflective of the needs of society.

Several theories of curriculum design and learning theory are reflected in the purposes, content, activities, and organization of this educational program. Ralph Tyler (1949) proposed a curriculum model that focuses on a traditional or “functionalist” viewpoint of education. The key features of this model are to state objectives, select learning activities, organize learning activities, and develop means of evaluation. Occupational therapy practice, however, client problems may be ambiguous; therefore exposes to situations that are ambiguous or ill-defined are crucial to developing a professional who is equipped to deal with the complexities of practice. Cervero (1988) noted that the “critical viewpoint” is advantageous in developing a well-rounded professional that can think critically. This viewpoint involves the element of reflecting on a multitude of factors, including personal value systems and “human” elements that may affect the decision-making process. An occupational therapy educator, Royeen (1995), stated that “an educational foundation in clinical reasoning and critical reflection prepares an occupational therapist for all the years of practice as well as for lifelong learning”. Thus,

opportunities for clinical reasoning and critical reflection are an essential feature that is reflected in the curriculum design of the occupational therapy program here at Belmont. By merging together the ideas of Tyler, Cervero, Knowles, and Caffarella, a curriculum has been designed that blends together comprehensive, didactic coursework with extensive, reflective clinical fieldwork experiences.

The organization of the curriculum has both a vertical and a horizontal organization. The horizontal nature of the curriculum illustrates the scope of the side-by-side organization of the courses. For example, courses that have related content objectives (i.e.: year one: OTD 6030 Kinesiology/Anatomy and OTD 6040 Clinical Pathophysiology), courses in which relationships can be readily drawn between the objectives (i.e.: year two: OTD 6300 Cultural Awareness in Human Development II and OTD 6310 Occupational Performance for Infant through Adolescent Populations, or courses that facilitate application of a concept presented in a concurrent class (i.e. year two: OTD 6410: Occupational Performance for Aging Population and OTD 6430 Interventions in Cognition and Perceptual Disorders) comprise the considerations for the horizontal organization. In addition, while knowledge-based objectives may be the focus of one class, a concurrent class may emphasize application of concepts. Students learn evaluation, theory, and treatment related to the age group that is being studied that semester and therefore builds on skills applicable to that population. The OTD curriculum is also sequentially organized whereby information is presented in a way that flows from what has been learned previously. Thus, the vertical organization refers to the gradual accumulation of content knowledge and skills that build upon one another (OTD 6120 Clinical Studies I, OTD 6320 Clinical Studies II, and OTD 6420 Clinical Studies III).

As a student progresses through didactic coursework, he/she is provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate attainment of knowledge, skills, and advancement of professional behavior through competency testing, self assessment, and the portfolio process. Scholarly inquiry, knowledge, and skills evolve over the curriculum from learning to appreciate other's scholarly writings to the student developing their own research project in small groups with mentoring by faculty and experts in the field. Throughout the curriculum, the student's cognitive development, critical reasoning and problem solving capacity is challenged and enhanced. The clinical fieldwork experiences build upon and widen a student's knowledge base and demand a continuous reflective process, which is crucial to the development of critical reasoning; these experiences lead to a capstone project that integrates the didactic learning with research and clinical practice. Formal presentation and publication of the OTD student's research work is required following these experiences.

Learning is an active process in which the student assumes the responsibility for his/her learning and the fulfillment of the educational outcomes. During the learning process, faculty are viewed as facilitators who structure learning experiences to enhance the development of critical thinking skills, clinical skills and professional development by integrating educational content with each student's unique life experiences.

The curriculum is delivered through a variety of lecture, lab and seminar formats, fieldwork and residency experiences, as well as web enhanced instruction. Students are required to demonstrate proficiencies in problem solving, psychomotor competencies, behavioral

attitudes, 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 a variety of scholarly resources to optimize the learning process. Likewise, the Fieldwork Coordinator, working with the Fieldwork Educators, will provide students with feedback regarding their progress toward clinical competence.

Graduates of Belmont's program exhibit a commitment to the profession of occupational therapy as demonstrated by their involvement in professional organizations and participation in continuing education. They promote occupational therapy through ongoing development of leadership skills as well as collaboration with other health-care and wellness professionals. Upon completion of this program graduates possess generalist knowledge, as well as advanced skills to practice occupational therapy, and demonstrate critical thinking skills commensurate with graduate studies and continuing education.

OTD Course Sequencing

The profession of occupational therapy has its base roots in the beliefs of the psychosocial dimensions of human performance. Fidler (1995) stated that it is from the theoretical foundations of psychology and sociology that all occupational therapy specializations have developed and matured. Holding this assumption to be true, the sequence of the occupational therapy curriculum reflects the "development and refinement of knowledge about the multidimensional aspects of human occupation, the crucial meaning and roles of purposeful activity, and the skillful application of such knowledge." (AJOT, 1995, page 1022)

Students start their professional studies after completion of prerequisite courses (Anatomy and Physiology I & II, Statistics, Medical Terminology, Introduction to Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Intro to Sociology / Anthropology, and Biology) which serve as a stepping stone to the framework of the program. These courses partially provide the knowledge base for students to build nomenclature and elementary concepts for OT coursework.

The first semester can be thought of as a foundational semester. The students begin learning the essential information about occupational therapy theory as well as professional behavior and communication in Foundations in Occupational Therapy (OTD 6000) and Occupational Behavior (OTD 6010 and 6011). These courses will serve as an introduction to the understanding of the occupational therapy process and its underlying premises. The development of ethical discernment and critical analysis begins with the introduction of these concepts in Ethical Decision Making (OTD 6020) and Critical Reasoning and Evidence Based Practice (OTD 6050). Kinesiology / Anatomy Assessing Human Performance (OTD 6030 and 6031) and Clinical Pathophysiology (OTD 6040) build on the science based prerequisites listed above. Information from these courses is applied in each subsequent semester.

The second semester introduces concepts of practice that help the student to understand the physical relationship between occupational performance and understanding the mechanisms of treatment planning for personal adaptation in the adult population. The rationale for focusing on this population is familiarity and comfort level with this age group. Students study the physical, cognitive, emotional, and psychological development of adults in the broad context of sociocultural and socioeconomic factors in Cultural Awareness in Human Development I (OTD 6100). To further develop the student's knowledge of participation and ability to participate in occupations a foundation must be laid in the neurosciences (OTD 6140 and 6141). In Occupational Performance for Adult Population (OTD 6110 and 6111) and Clinical Studies I (OTD 6120) students begin to learn how to synthesize information to be able to assess, to analyze, and to design interventions for this population. The environmental demands that are placed on individual performances are studied in an Assistive Technologies course (OTD 6130 and 6131). Adaptation and modification are central to the intervention theme in this semester (OTD 6130 and 6131). Students continue their educational experience in research processes by taking a course in Quantitative Research Methods (OTD 6150). The first of three Level I Fieldwork experiences integrates theory and clinical practice (OTD 6160).

The third semester empowers the student to explore opportunities within the four central themes: faith based advocacy, clinical excellence, entrepreneurial leadership, and technological advancements. This is accomplished by introducing the student to Management of Occupational Therapy Services (OTD 6210) and Leadership and Public Policy (OTD 6220). Qualitative Research continues research themes this semester (OTD 6250).

The fourth semester centers on the roles and function of occupational therapy practitioners in the treatment of the infant through adolescent population. This content area is placed at this point in the curriculum so students can capitalize on previous knowledge of the biopsychosocial nature of individuals, content they have learned in each of the subsequent semesters. A Human Development course (OTD 6300) centers its exploration and discussions on the developmental needs of children and adolescents and the impact that disease and disability can have on these individuals as well as the family unit. A course, and a partnering lab, in Occupational Performance for the Infant through Adolescent Population (OTD 6310 and 6311) take advantage of content taught earlier in the curriculum and discuss intervention applications for this younger population. Clinical Studies II reinforces critical reasoning and problem solving with cases from this population (OTD 6320). Students are exposed to the complexities of transdisciplinary practice with an emphasis on the consultative role (i.e.: occupational therapists working in school based therapy settings). A second Assistive Technologies course (OTD 6330 and OTD 6331) is taught with attention to early childhood and special needs pediatric populations to further integrate students' skills in human, task/occupation, and environmental assessment and intervention. To coincide with the educational practice setting, students are introduced to Educational Strategies in OT (OTD 6340) where the concept of a capstone project is explored. The group research project begins this semester (OTD 6350). Capitalizing on previous semesters' academic work, students select their research projects, define their research teams, and complete a research proposal for submission to Belmont University's Institutional Review Board (see <http://www.belmont.edu/irb/> for policies and procedures related to the IRB and student research).

The fifth semester emphasizes occupational performance for the aging population and builds on prior learning regarding the physical relationship between occupational performances and understanding the mechanisms of treatment planning for personal adaptation. Students study the physical, cognitive, emotional, and psychological development of the aging population in the broad context of sociocultural and socioeconomic factors in Cultural Awareness in Human Development III (OTD 6400). In Occupational Performance for the Aging Population (OTD 6410 and 6411) and Clinical Studies III (OTD 6420) students synthesize information to be able to assess, analyze, and design interventions. Students participate in a course on Cognition and Perception (OTD 5310) which focuses on specific intervention strategies for individuals who have cognitive and perceptual disorders. This course is placed in this semester to capitalize on the neuroscience and occupational performance series. Courses that were taught in the previous semesters refine the occupational therapy. Students continue their scholarly research work and present their research project (OTD 6450). This is the third and final Level I Fieldwork experience that continues with integrating theory and clinical practice (OTD 6460). Students develop an individual capstone project that demonstrates advanced practice in an area of personal and professional interest (OTD 6440). This combination of courses along with previous coursework and successful completion of competency testing (OTD 6470) prepares the student for their first Level II Fieldwork experience (OTD 6480). This is followed by a sixth semester that contains their final Level II Fieldwork experience (OTD 6580).

The final semester of the program focuses on advanced practice with the student carrying to fruition plans made in the fifth semester (Capstone, OTD 6440). This plan addresses one of the four central themes of the program to be completed in conjunction with their residency (OTD 6680): Community Based Practice and Faith Based Advocacy (OTD 6600); Entrepreneurial Leadership (OTD 6610); Clinical Excellence (OTD 6620); and Technological Advances (OTD 6630).

OTD Course Sequence
OTD Curriculum Class of 2011

Fall Year 1

OTD 6000	Foundations in Occupational Therapy	3
OTD 6010	Occupational Behaviors	3
OTD 6011	Occupational Behaviors Lab	1
OTD 6020	Ethical Decision Making	2
OTD 6030	Kinesiology/Anatomy: Assessing Human Performance	3
OTD 6031	Kinesiology/Anatomy: Assessing Human Performance Lab	1
OTD 6040	Clinical Pathophysiology	3
OTD 6050	Critical Reasoning and Evidence- Based Practice	2
	Semester Credits	18

Spring Year 1

OTD 6100	Cultural Awareness in Human Development I	3
OTD 6110	Occupational Performance for Adult Population	3
OTD 6111	Occupational Performance for Adult Population Lab	1
OTD 6120	Clinical Studies I	2
OTD 6130	Technology and Environmental Interventions I	2
OTD 6131	Technology and Environmental Interventions I Lab	1
OTD 6140	Neuroscience: Assessing Human Performance	2
OTD 6141	Neuroscience: Assessing Human Performance Lab	1
OTD 6150	Quantitative Research Processes	2
OTD 6160	Adulthood Population Fieldwork and Seminar – Level I	2
	Semester Credits	19

Summer Year 1

OTD 6210	Managing OT Delivery Systems	2
OTD 6220	Leadership and Public Policy	2
OTD 6250	Qualitative Research Processes	2
	Semester Credits	6

Fall Year 2

OTD 6300	Cultural Awareness in Human Development II	3
OTD 6310	Occupational Performance for Infant through Adolescent Populations	3
OTD 6311	Occupational Performance for Infant through Adolescent Populations Lab	1
OTD 6320	Clinical Studies II	2
OTD 6330	Technology and Environmental Interventions II	2
OTD 6331	Technology and Environmental Interventions II Lab	1
OTD 6340	Educational Strategies in Occupational Therapy (intro to capstone)	3
OTD 6350	Research I	2

OTD 6360	Infant through Adolescent Populations Fieldwork and Seminar – Level I	2
	Semester Credits	19

Spring and Summer Year 2

OTD 6400	Cultural Awareness in Human Development III	3
OTD 6410	Occupational Performance for Aging Population	2
OTD 6411	Occupational Performance for Aging Population Lab	1
OTD 6420	Clinical Studies III	2
OTD 6430	Interventions in Cognition and Perceptual Disorders	2
OTD 6431	Interventions in Cognition and Perceptual Disorders Lab	1
OTD 6440	Capstone Planning Seminar	1
OTD 6450	Research II	2
OTD 6460	Aging Population Fieldwork and Seminar – Level I	2
OTD 6470	Competency Testing	1
OTD 6480	Fieldwork – Level II	9
	Semester Credits	26

Fall Year 3

OTD 6580	Fieldwork – Level II	9
	Semester Credits	9

Spring Year 3:

Each student must select 1 of the following 4 Theme Courses to be completed in conjunction with the Residency.

OTD 6600	Community Based Practice and Faith Based Advocacy (elective)	2
OTD 6610	Entrepreneurial Leadership (elective)	2
OTD 6620	Clinical Excellence (elective)	2
OTD 6630	Technological Advances (elective)	2
OTD 6680	Residency: Experiential component 640 hours/16 weeks	10
	Semester Credits	12

Total Semester Credits		109
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