Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America Accreditation for Assistive Technology Education

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Introduction and Needs

This poster is in partial completion of OTD 6680: Experiential Component. The objectives (listed below) are to ensure that the outcome of the experiential component is consistent with the mission and vision of the Belmont University, and to meet the stated goal of qualifying the Doctor of Occupational Therapy program at Belmont University (Belmont OTD) for accreditation through the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) in assistive technology (AT) education.

The Belmont OTD program provides students with knowledge and skills to become entry-level OT practitioners according to standards set by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE). Belmont also offers education and experiential learning in several advanced practice areas, including AT. Belmont currently offers 4 courses in AT (a lecture and a lab course in the fall and spring of the 2nd year of the program) for a total of 6 credits, making it one of the leading OT programs in the United States in terms of AT education. The needs of the Belmont OTD program that were identified for this project include staying competitive in the market of OTD programs and continuing to recruit the highest caliber students.

RESNA offers an accreditation to programs that provide advanced education and training in AT. This accreditation is currently held by 3 programs, 2 that offer certificates in AT as part of a master’s degree program, and one that offers a master’s degree in AT. There are currently no OT programs or doctoral degree-level programs accredited through RESNA.

The aim of this project was to modify the existing AT curriculum used in the Belmont OTD program in order to meet the standards and guidelines published by RESNA. The course learning objectives, schedules, and assignments (including in-class/lab activities, case studies, and practical experiences) were altered in order to qualify the Belmont OTD program for RESNA accreditation.

Mission

The School of Occupational Therapy provides comprehensive graduate education at the master's level within a Christian environment. The School of Occupational Therapy provides diverse backgrounds to positively impact the community at large and enhance the human condition through appreciation of diversity, problem-solving, and utility of meaningful and purposeful occupations.” (from Belmont.edu)

Goals of the Experiential Component

1) Demonstrate innovation (originality, creativity, etc.) and professional reasoning by designing a site-specific work projects. (Clinical Excellence, Leadership)
2) Advocates for the occupational potential, occupational performance and occupational engagement of clients including individuals, organizations or populations, and those with disabilities. (Clinical Excellence)
3) Identify and synthesize best evidence of population/agency to utilize in the development of the site-specific project within the EC setting/site. (Clinical Excellence, Clinical Reasoning)
4) Demonstrates the application of knowledge of relevant contextual factors within the agency/site. (Clinical Excellence, Leadership)
5) Communicates and collaborates with all other clients and others to identify meaningful ways to transcend system limitations. (Leadership, Service)
6) Demonstrates advanced knowledge of all types of assistive technology and strategies for effective treatment planning, provision, processing, training, reassessment, and reimbursement. (Clinical excellence, Scholarship, Service)
7) Demonstrates ability to develop academic programming for graduate level programs that meets multiple standards for accreditation from national and accrediting bodies. (Leadership)

Current Curriculum and Artifact of Work Product: Additions to Each Course

Belmont University’s OTD program currently teaches it’s AT curriculum in 4 classes across 2 semesters, for a total of 6 credits. The current curriculum includes tests and assignments shown in the table below, and the adjusted course standards follows. Assignments that highlight how the adjusted curriculum meets the RESNA standards and guidelines are described in further detail to the right.

The comprehensive transportation plan requires students to pick a real patient/client to develop a needs assessment for their patient. The students then create a plan for their patient to access the OT services. The plan will be presented to the provider’s office, a grocery store, a bank, and a location of the students choosing, using services available in Nashville. All departure/transfer/arrival times, fees/fares, and other relevant details must be listed. This assignment addresses the following RESNA domains/tasks: Assessment: 1, 6, 11; Intervention Strategies: 1, 5, 8, 10; Implementation 3, 5, 11. The assessment video assignment requires students to gather a predetermined amount of information within the timeframe of 30 minutes on video. Students will select an in-class setting for role-playing, and 12 minutes role-playing as the therapist. Prior to filming, students must determine what information they will need to gather and what information they can rely on other team members to provide, and justify their decisions. This assignment addresses the following RESNA domains/tasks: Assessment: 1-6, and Intervention Strategies: 1, 5, 8, 10, 11; Implementation 3, 5, 11; Evaluation 1-4.

The seating and mobility assessment, goals, and training plan is one of the most in-depth assignments given during the AT curriculum in the Belmont OTD program. Students must establish a plan to select an appropriate wheelchair for their patient, along with any additional components or accessories that are appropriate for the wheelchair and task analysis methods (standardized), a timeline, patient/caregiver goals and progress, and what will the patient be doing at the hospital (e.g., wheelchair or wheelchair-only when the training will take place). There are 3 other assessment goals/training plan assignments that focus on important areas of AT throughout the second year. This assignment addresses the following RESNA domains/tasks: Assessment: 1, 6, 8-11, Intervention Strategies: 1, 4, 6, 9, 12-14; Implementation 3, 5, 11, and Evaluation 1-4.

The teaching center at Belmont

Expert mentorship for this project was provided by Dr. Mike Pittner, Director of Belmont’s Teaching Center. The Teaching Center is a resource for faculty at Belmont which provides resources for creating more effective learning environments and materials. Dr. Pittner was instrumental in providing resources about effective learning environments and with assistance navigating the approval process for graduate-level curriculums.

Several assignments have been added to the AT curriculum, and some have been removed. The first letter of medical necessity was eliminated, and several assignments relating to assessing needs and training clients and caregivers were added. An additional benefit of creating more assignments can be found in the high grade distribution for each class (Pittner discusses this in his novel). Changes were also made to the first year student, 5 third year student, and all cases, changes/deletions/additions to the AT curriculum, the stakeholders were asked a number of questions. Subsequently, faculty was also involved in the decision-making process. A list of descriptions and grading rubrics for all new assignments. A summary of the focus group is provided below:

Q: What are the benefits of the assistive technology curriculum currently taught at Belmont?
A: Hands on assessments, case studies, the level of medical necessity, and prerequisite knowledge of the universal design principles and home modifications in a real-world setting.

Q: What are the pros of a RESNA-approved curriculum?
A: There is an increased need for OTs who are certified assistive technology professionals or have advanced practice knowledge of AT. Having the RESNA accreditation will make the program more competitive to prospective students and will make those students more experienced in AT upon graduation, without increasing the cost to students.

Q: What major hurdle do you see in adopting the new curriculum – how would it impact other classes?
A: The new curriculum wouldn’t have a very big impact on performance in other classes, because the workload is more evenly distributed. Students noted that the AT used in every setting, so a more in-depth AT curriculum would inform their practice and their performance in other classes, rather than detract from it.

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Accessed on 3/25/2018 (resna.org)

Acknowledgements and Contact

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Appendix A:附件A