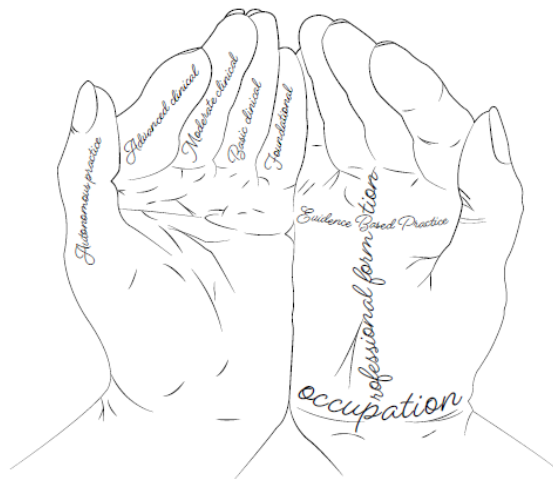


-OTD PROGRAM CURRICULAR DESIGN-

“Man through the use of his hands as they are energized by mind and will, can influence the state of his own health.” -Mary Reilly



The Program’s philosophical frame of learning and three-year educational process to fulfill the mission to serve are illustrated through the metaphor of the developing and transforming image of human hands engaged in occupation over a lifespan. The hands are a paradigm of the Program’s **transformative philosophy** of “doing, being, and becoming” (Wilcock, 1998, p. 248).

The student is represented through the anatomical hands, signifying him or her as an occupational “being” utilizing their unique, intrinsic qualities and personal experiences to influence his/her **occupation** of learning (AOTA, 2017). The universal structures and function of the hands demonstrate the unifying physiological, psychological, cognitive, neurobehavioral, and spiritual dimensions that make up an occupational being (Christiansen & Baum, 2008). These dimensions guide the holistic approach of **evidence-informed** content delivery considering the whole occupational being across the lifespan (AOTA, 2010). Similar to the distinguishing features of an individual’s hands, the Program recognizes the distinctiveness of these dimensions for each person. This upholds an academic, learner-centered culture that supports a mindset for appreciating each student’s individual self and experiences.

Movement of the hands signifies the student’s occupational engagement in learning or the act of “doing,” resulting in meaningful occupational participation. Learning is an active process influenced by context, personal factors, and the teaching-learning process (Barker Dunbar, 2015). The physical actions and “hands-on” experiences are necessary for learning but alone are not sufficient. Students must engage their minds to determine the importance of the information and the meaning of their

engagement. Like the hand, although each student's engagement in learning is similar, their unique experiences and reflections guide student-directed development (Kuennen, 2015).

Just as the hands change over time through occupational participation, the student's intellectual, psychomotor, and attitudinal properties are influenced and changed. Growth through occupational participation is made through self-awareness, reflection, and self-efficacy (Mezirow, 1991). These changes represent new knowledge and the ***professional formation*** of "becoming" into a doctoral-level occupational therapy professional.

Along with the hand demonstrating the program's philosophical base of mind-body-spirit participation in occupation to learn, grow, and transform the hands also illustrate the foundational values and theme of ***Servant Leadership***, which align with Briar Cliff University's and the OTD Program's Missions. Individuals upholding these leadership principles use their hands, hearts, and minds to serve and empower individuals, communities, and populations in need (Barker Dunbar, 2015).

As the occupational being inherently initiates the interdependent transactions between person, occupation, and environment, the abilities of his/her fingers develop and are refined, emerging in an ulnar to radial pattern (Law et al., 1996). Representing the five digits of the hand, the curriculum is designed to progress in complexity along Bloom's Taxonomy. The curriculum progresses from acquiring foundational knowledge/skills/and attitude into application, integration, and finally, competency as an autonomous, entry-level professional.

The three arches of the hand symbolize the three threads of the curriculum design. Just as they are recognized individually by their anatomical position and purpose, the arches are also understood to depend on each other to assist with the development and improve the function of the whole being.

OCCUPATION

Just as the Proximal Transverse Arch provides stability for the hand, this curricular thread defines the Profession's unique modality. It supports the historical and theoretical foundation for developing and applying occupation-centered knowledge, skills, and attitudes throughout all didactic and experiential learning.

EVIDENCE-INFORMED PRACTICE

The Distal Transverse Arch allows for movement in the hand and refined dexterity in the digits. Similarly, this thread supports the theoretical movement of students' knowledge from foundational, didactic coursework to evidence-informed application through "hands-on" interprofessional, traditional, and community-engaged experiences to support their active learning and transformation into entry-level occupational therapists.

PROFESSIONAL FORMATION

The Longitudinal Arch runs lengthwise along the hand emanating from the very core of the student. Kinematically, this arch is more stable at the base and allows for more mobility in the hand and digits as it follows distally. This illustrates the transformational scope of this thread as students take their intrinsically perceived core identities, values, beliefs, and experiences to transform into doctoral-level professionals developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards leadership and service.

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