2016

Intentional Integration of Service and Therapy Dogs in an Occupational Therapy Program Curriculum

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INTENTIONAL INTEGRATION OF SERVICE AND THERAPY DOGS IN AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM CURRICULUM

by

Stephanie Rehovsky & Brittni Danner

Advisor: Dr. Anne Haskins, PhD, OTR/L

A Scholarly Project
Submitted to the Occupational Therapy Department
of the
University of North Dakota
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Occupational Therapy

Grand Forks, North Dakota
May
2016
PERMISSION

Title Intentional Integration of Service and Therapy Dogs in an
Occupational Therapy Program Curriculum

Department Occupational Therapy

Degree Master of Occupational Therapy

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Dr. Anne Haskins, PhD, OTR/L

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The authors wish to thank our advisor, Dr. Anne Haskins, for her guidance throughout the development of this Scholarly Project. We would also like to thank our professors, classmates, and family for the relentless support and kindness throughout our graduate career.
ABSTRACT

This scholarly project involves the intentional integration of Buddy, the service/therapy dog of the University of North Dakota’s Occupational Therapy graduate program. This project contains researched evidence regarding the variety of benefits involved with the implementation of animal assisted therapy (AAT) into the curriculum. The final product contains instructor materials for six existing courses in the graduate and undergraduate program. We have also included future implications for this product including adaptation to other similar graduate occupational therapy programs and future use at the University of North Dakota.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is an efficacious tool in an array of settings. However, there are no guidelines available to intentionally implement animal-assisted therapy into a graduate level curriculum. The fundamental purpose for this scholarly project was to intentionally implement Buddy (a therapy and service dog) into the University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Program curriculum. The population that has been identified includes the graduate level occupational therapy students at the University of North Dakota, as well as the faculty for this program. The proposition for this scholarly project was to create curriculum additions for the Master’s of Occupational Therapy program at the University of North Dakota. This project includes lesson plans, assignments, grading rubrics, exam questions, and discussion questions for five core classes currently included in curriculum. These lesson plans will incorporate introductory information with a gradual transition to more application-based material that was intended to match students’ advancement in knowledge within the occupational therapy program.

The structure for this continuum was based on assumptions of Adult Learning Theory. Adult learning theory is evidenced throughout the curriculum as learners are given foundational knowledge initially, and as students progress into their final year, instructors challenge them to use a clinical approach (Knowles, 1990).
Chapter II of this scholarly project contains the results of an extensive literature review initially completed to compile research resources and describe current evidence regarding AAT. Chapter III is comprised of the methods section in which we described the processes used to build this scholarly project. Chapter IV, Product, is the program developed for this project. In this section, readers will have the opportunity to review the lesson plans developed for this scholarly project as well as the curriculum materials. Chapter V, the Summary, is comprised of the conclusions of this scholarly project. This chapter finalizes the different important aspects regarding this project its population and the effect it will have on the profession of occupational therapy.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter II, the literature review, is comprised of resources we utilized to create this scholarly project. Readers will see the different ways animal assisted therapy (AAT) can be beneficial to students psychologically as well as physiologically. In addition, there is strong evidence of the relationship between human and animals being a major contributor to this project. A foundational knowledge is also created regarding the selected theoretical framework proposed as well as how can fit into an accredited occupational therapy master’s level curriculum.

Therapy animals are used today in a variety of settings to enhance the outcomes of interventions. There are countless types of activities and therapies that incorporate animals as a therapeutic tool. The requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act, according to the Department of Justice (2011), defined a service animal as, “any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability” (para. 1). Nepps and Stewart (2014) described the differences between animal-assisted activity and animal-assisted therapy. Although the terms sound synonymous, the two have different components. Nepps and Stewart (2014) defined animal-assisted activity (AAT) as the “use of trained animals for the therapeutic, motivational, or educational benefit of patients” (p. 211). The authors also described AAT as “the use of trained animals by trained health professionals to facilitate specific,
measurable goals for individual patients for whom there is documentation of progress” (Nepps & Stewart, 2014, p. 211).

The evidence for use of AAT in the clinical setting has proven to be an efficacious addition to traditional interventions. We are interested in the application AAT and potential positive outcomes on the population of graduate students. Currently, there is not a strong base of evidence that implements AAT into an occupational therapy graduate program. However, there is significant evidence about the effective use of AAT in other arenas. The Occupational Therapy Program at the University of North Dakota has attained a service/therapy dog, but have yet to integrate formally the dog into curriculum. Therefore, we propose the creation of a program plan involving the intentional implementation of AAT as an experiential teaching modality in the context of an occupational therapy graduate program, which would eventually lend itself to empirical study. Our goal is to apply a therapy dog to specific graduate classes to assist students in learning therapeutic foundations such as: activity analysis, compensatory methods, and calming approaches. Isaacson (2013) stated that occupational therapists can assist individuals in living meaningful lives; this task can be aided through the use of animals. As health professionals, occupational therapists have the credentials to utilize this type of alternative therapy. The following literature highlights existing research on the use of animals in a variety of contexts to describe its efficacious use.

**Human Animal Bond**

The human-animal bond was first introduced as early as 1944 into psychiatry, sociology, and psychology (Hines, 2003; Young, 2012). Young (2012) stated that meaningful relationships have been observed between humans and animals throughout
history, dating back to ancient Greece and Rome. Young’s (2012) research led her to report that across the world, animals have been observed to be an essential aspect of human survival, healing, and health. Creagan, Bauer, Thomley, and Borg (2015) defined this bond as, “an emotional, almost existential, relationship between animals and people” (p. 101).

Halm (2008) described pet therapy as “a tactile process whereby unconditional attachment bonds form between animals and humans, inducing relaxation by reducing cardiovascular reactivity to stress” (p. 373). This coincides with data found by Chandramouleeswaran and Russell (2014) that human/animal interaction provided much more than just companionship. Interactions and the bond between humans and animals can bring stress relief, increase self-confidence, improve social interactions, increase cognitive functioning, and increase the overall quality of life (Chandramouleeswaran & Russell, 2014).

Balleuerka, Muela, Amiano, and Caldentey (2014) evaluated the influence of AAT on adolescents with mental health problems. The participants in the study had undergone traumatic childhood experiences and were living in residential care (Balleuerka et al., 2014). The authors indicated through research that the emotional connection that individuals feel with their pets constituted a source of security, relief, well being, and emotional support (Balleuerka et al., 2014). They also found evidence that AAT provided a space of trust, creating a high quality therapeutic process (Balleuerka et al., 2014). This research coincides with the previously stated findings by Chandramouleswaran and Russell (2014).

**Supported Physiological Benefits**
There has been a great deal of research on humans’ systemic responses to animals. Evidence has shown that positive interactions with animals have the ability to decrease blood pressure, increase endorphins, and decrease high cholesterol (Chandramouleeswaran & Russell, 2014; Nepps & Stewart, 2014). Nepps and Stewart (2014) found that patients who interacted with an activity dog for approximately 12 minutes had a lower cardiopulmonary pressure, lower anxiety, and lower levels of neurohormones than patients who were left alone. Serum and salivary cortisol were also shown to decrease with therapy dog interactions (Nepps & Stewart, 2014). Researchers also indicated the importance of checking these systemic responses in order to confirm the self-reports of lowered stress, anxiety, etc. (Marcus, 2013; Nepps & Stewart, 2014). In a study by Nepps and Stewart (2014), two separate groups of patients participated in a program involving AAT animals. Researchers evaluated both the psychological and physiological health effects (Nepps & Stewart, 2014). Nepps and Stewart’s (2014) findings assessed physiological measures of pain, pulse, blood pressure, and salivary cortisol and psychological benefits through a questionnaire created to target current stress levels. Researchers assigned participants into two separate stress management groups (1 control and 1 with AAT) (Nepps & Stewart, 2014). After 41 sessions both groups showed a decrease in stress, however, participants in the AAT group showed had a significantly stronger attendance rating compared to the control group (Nepps & Stewart, 2014).

Bibbo (2013) referenced a study performed by Orlandi et al. (2007), which found animal-assisted activities (AAA) to decrease depression in adult patients with cancer through the increase of arterial oxygen levels. Two groups were selected to participate in
the study, a control and experimental (Orlandi, 2013). The control group participants received chemotherapy but had no interaction with AAA, while the experimental group had chemotherapy and interacted with therapy dogs (Orlandi et al., 2007). Orlandi et al. (2007) reported a significant reduction in anxiety for patients in the pet therapy group after receiving chemotherapy treatment. Similar results were found with depression and aggressiveness, which were tested through measuring heart rate values, blood pressures, and arterial oxygen saturation (Orlandi et al., 2007). The most significant findings from the study were the results from the arterial oxygen saturation levels, which indicated that those patients that interacted with the dogs after chemotherapy had a significant increase compared to the control group (Orlandi et al., 2007).

Marcus (2013) completed a compilation of studies that have examined the physiological benefits of AAT in an array of settings. Sobo (2006) completed research on children between the ages of 5-17 years experiencing pain post-operatively. Children spent approximately 20 minutes with a therapy dog per week (Sobo, 2006). After spending time with the therapy dog, children’s report of pain decreased from 3.9 mm to 1.6 mm (Sobo, 2006). This change qualifies that the children’s pain rating decreased from mild pain to no pain (Alcher, Peil, Peil, & Diener, 2012; Marcus, 2013; Sobo, 2006;). Other studies have been completed that correlate animal assisted therapy to a decrease in pain. Lust (2007) completed research on adults in a rehabilitative facility. After the addition of a therapy dog to the facility the average number of pain analgesics decreased from 6.7 to 3.5 per patient; findings which have been substantiated by other researchers as well (Lust, 2007; Marcus, 2013). Empirically supported physiological benefits are evidence that AAT can be complementary in creating calming effects for patients in a
clinical setting, though no known occupational therapy curriculum has been identified that outlines implementation of AAT concepts as an intervention for clients or an educational tool to teach occupational therapy students.

**Supported Psychological Benefits**

Chandramoulesswaran and Russell (2014) completed a study that researched the effects of pet assisted therapy utilized with children and adolescents with mental health diagnoses. They concluded that pets could provide people with friendship, emotional solace, and stress relief (Chandramoulesswaran & Russel, 2014). Chandramoulesswaran and Russel (2014) also found that individuals who had interactions with service animals had significantly decreased levels of depression, developed a stronger self-image, and an overall increase in quality of life. These results coincide with data found in the study by Orlandi et al. (2007), which indicated levels of depression significantly decreased in the experimental group when exposed to AAT. A systematic review performed by Kamioka et al. (2014) found individuals with a variety of diagnoses (i.e. cancer, depression, physical disability, etc.) receiving AAT to have significantly improved overall mental health. The authors reported that the AAT enabled the individuals to divert their attention from immediate stressors from their conditions (Kamioka et al., 2014). These findings are consistent with aforementioned research performed by Chandramoulesswaran and Russel (2014) and Orlandi et al. (2007).

Majic, Gutzmann, Heinz, Lang, and Rapp (2013) completed a study involving the geriatric population and AAT. Agitation and aggression are two common behavioral and psychological symptoms that the geriatric population commonly experience when experiencing dementia (Majic et al., 2013). Participants were randomly assigned to
receive either treatment as usual (TAU) or AAT in combination with TAU (Majic et al., 2013). Participants who received AAT and TAU did not showcase an increase in agitation and aggression in comparison to participants that only received TAU (Majic et al., 2013).

Beck et al. (2012) completed a study involving veterans in an occupational therapy life skills program. Participants were placed in two groups: experimental and control (Beck et al., 2012). Participants in the experimental group participated in an occupational therapy life skills group and AAT simultaneously, and findings were compared to the control group, which received the occupational therapy life skills program alone (Beck et al., 2012). Results indicated that overall outcomes did not differ between the two groups (Beck et al., 2012). However, participants in the experimental group commented that they felt calmer within their group and it was easier to build rapport with the therapist and other participants (Beck et al., 2012). Geist’s (2011) overall research findings concluded, “that a dog can be a transitional object in therapy” (p. 252). Rapport building is a necessary task for occupational therapists and AAT can be a beneficial strategy in creating a strong therapeutic relationship with clients.

AAT can be advantageous to an array of patients in a variety of settings (Chandramouleeswaran & Russell, 2014; Majic et al., 2013; Nepps & Stewart, 2014). AAT can have a strong impact on the emotional well-being of participants (Beck et al., 2012; Chandramouleeswaran & Russell, 2014; Nepps & Stewart, 2014). AAT can also have a sustainable influence of symptoms in a regressing disease such as dementia (Majic et al., 2013). The aforementioned evidence offers a foundation for the application of a
therapy dog to be a comforting part of the therapeutic process as a versatile tool in an array of settings.

**Occupational Therapy Curriculum**

An occupational therapy program consists of undergraduate and graduate-level curriculum that provides education for students to become occupational therapists. The main goal of this type of educational program is to produce practitioners in the field of occupational therapy. The Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®) is responsible for distinguishing educational programs that are affiliated with universities for a higher level of performance, veracity and value and accredits Occupational Therapy Programs in the United States (ACOTE®, 2015). This accreditation enables them to a higher reputation amongst other universities and graduate professions (AOTA, 2015).

**ACOTE® standards.**

ACOTE® (2015) standards provide the foundation for being an accredited occupational therapy education program. There is a specific section designated for a Master’s level education that students must be able to comply with required standards upon graduation (ACOTE®, 2015).

We will be using ACOTE® standards throughout our program plan to guide the foundation of the lesson plans implementing AAT. An example of an ACOTE® standard that will be used is B.2.7., which describes the student’s ability to utilize task analysis including individuals’ performance capacity, client factors, and environmental contexts (ACOTE®, 2015). Students will utilize a therapy dog in the classroom to assist in breaking down specific tasks to be analyzed. For example, using the occupation of
grooming one’s dog, students will have the opportunity to utilize an AAT animal in this process and utilize skillful observations to develop a task analysis of this occupation.

An additional example of an ACOTE® (2015) standard that we will be utilizing in our program plan is B.2.10, which states that compensatory methods may be implemented when desired tasks cannot be performed. We will apply this standard when describing compensatory methods in the assistive technology course. An AAT animal can be taught strategies to compensate for areas in an individual’s life that are limited due to disability, injury, or illness. A more in depth selection of specific ACOTE® standards will be included Chapter III Methods of this scholarly project. The standards will be applied to each undergraduate and graduate course in which a therapy animal will be involved in the curriculum objectives.

**AAT in Occupational Therapy Curriculum.**

There is a significant lack in research involving AAT inside of occupational therapy curriculum in higher education settings. However, at the University of Oklahoma, AAT was implemented into the fieldwork course (Issacson, 2013). Issacson was the fieldwork coordinator at the aforementioned university and, therefore, had direct access to students, curriculum, and fieldwork placements (2013). She incorporated AAT into program’s *Introduction to Assistive Technology* course to assist in students’ exposure to an AAT dog (Issacson, 2013). Issacson (2013) selected one student to complete a level one fieldwork (two weeks in length) at an AAT therapeutic center where dogs were trained and placed with an appropriate human. Overall, the student’s experiences were successful as a closing survey indicated that occupational therapy students may play a significant role in both the training and placement of therapy dogs (Issacson, 2013).
The University of North Dakota’s Occupational Therapy mission statement includes a portion stating, “promotion of health and wellness of the public through engagement in meaningful and valued occupations and commitment to best practice within the profession of OT are expected outcomes” (University of North Dakota, 2013, p. 4). The use of an intentionally applied AAT component in the occupational therapy program that may enhance student engagement, be part of the valued part of learning, and also introduces students to application of a therapy dog as a therapeutic tool is consistent with the Department’s mission statement.

Learning Theories/Adult Learning

We utilized a variety of learning theories to guide the implementation of service dogs into curriculum. The theories were specifically chosen due to the adult population in which this curriculum will be directed. The following are descriptions of the theories that were utilized including Adult Learning Theory, Constructivism, Experiential Learning, and Emotion and Learning. The above theories are explained more in detail in Chapter III Methods.

Emotion and learning.

Emotions are strongly linked to learning and memories. Human beings’ emotions are often specific triggers to remember past learning experiences. Elnicki (2010) pointed out the importance of engaging learners through emotion. Elnicki (2010) also reported that although positive emotions may enhance learning experiences, negative emotions could result in decreased learning or an aversion of the experience. Abe (2011) stated positive emotions and emotional intelligence may contribute to the process of reflection that is necessary in experiential learning. Stetina, Turner, Burger, Glenk, McElheney,
Handlos, and Kothgassner (2011) performed a study on learning emotion recognition from canines. Stetina et al. (2011) placed emphasis on the ability to both express and recognize emotions, as these are essential for interpersonal communication and emotional competence. This evidence supports the need to address emotions as an important aspect of adult learning and ensure its integration into planning the curriculum. A therapy animal will be a useful tool in this task and will ensure emotions are applied throughout the adult learning process.

**Conclusion**

After a review of current literature and evidence regarding AAT, we believe there is a need for program development in the graduate school setting to assist occupational therapy students in their learning endeavors. This program will allow students the opportunity to learn critical skills such as: activity analysis, compensatory strategies, and calming approaches all through the utilization of a therapy animal in the curriculum. There are limitations to using AAT, including phobias, animal-related allergies, and/or stress may have an impact on the ability for students to benefit from this program (Creagan, Bauer, Thomley, & Borg, 2015) but the literature suggests that the benefits outweigh the costs.

The current literature supports the use of AAT to decrease negative physiological and psychological reactions (Alcher, Peil, Peil, & Diener, 2012; Beck et al., 2012; Bibbo, 2013; Chandramoulesswaran & Russel, 2014; Lust, 2007; Marcus, 2013; Majic et al., 2013; Nepps, & Stewart, 2014; Orlandi et al., 2007; Sobo, 2006). Evidence has shown the positive influence of human-animal interactions and animal-assisted therapy on education and learning (Hines, 2003; Young, 2012). This evidence showcases the potential for
efficacious use with the indicated population of graduate level occupational therapy students (Issacson, 2013; University of North Dakota, 2013).

Chapter II consisted of a literature review of the current literary evidence and support for a project that addresses implementation of AAT in an occupational graduate curriculum. In Chapter III Methodology, we will provide an overview of the processes used to conceptualize and build this scholarly project.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

Chapter III is comprised of the interpretation of the methods utilized to compile this scholarly project. The initial idea for the intentional implementation of a therapy/service dog into occupational therapy curriculum came from our personal interest in animal therapy/service dogs. The focus was further developed through the assistance of the University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy faculty members, as well as the Occupational Therapy Department’s acquisition of a service/therapy dog, Buddy. We continued to narrow and hone the topic through research, and by anticipating the future of occupational therapy graduate programs.

A comprehensive literature review was completed prior to the development and completion of this scholarly project. We utilized the following resources to compile evidence for the literature review: University of North Dakota’s Harley French library, PubMed, and the American Journal of Occupational Therapy. Existing literature indicated the majority of animals utilized in university systems are “program pets,” or animals that are implemented into graduate programs but not embedded into curriculum. It was through this research that we determined there was ample room for a scholarly project in this area. It was through the recognition of this gap in the literature that the initial project back to take shape. The next step was to explore the concepts of adult learning and applicable theories to guide the development of the lesson plans and ensure that we fully understood the nature of adult learners.
Learning Theories/Adult Learning

We utilized a variety of learning theories to understand adult learning and guide the development of implementation of service dogs into course lesson plans. The theories were specifically chosen due to the adult population in which these lesson plans will be directed toward. The following are descriptions of the theories that were utilized including Adult Learning Theory, Constructivism, Experiential Learning, and Emotion and Learning.

Adult Learning Theory endorses the opportunity for students to be lifelong learners (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). As this project will be designed for a graduate program, we deduced these students will value education and a lifelong learning experience. Meizrow’s Psychocritical Approach is based on how adults understand their personal experiences (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Wiesner & Mezirow, 2000). Meizrow’s theory explained learning as the process of using a former experience or interpretation to construct an alternate understanding of the meaning of one’s initial experience; the alternate understanding will help create future action (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007; Wiesner & Mezirow, 2000). The Adult Learning Theory will be applied to the scholarly project to assist in building on the students’ former interactions with a service dog. The Adult Learning Theory will also contribute to the development of student’s understanding of animal assisted therapy (AAT) and future implementation in desired practice settings.

Adult Learning Theory is also frequently referred to as andragogy. Knowles (as cited in Bastable & Dart, 2011) uses the word andragogy to describe the method of teaching adults (Bastable, & Dart, 2011). Knowles asserted four major assumptions to
addressing planning, implementing, and evaluating programs for teaching adults (as cited in Bastable, & Dart, 2011). The first assumption is that students will move from a dependent personality to an independent and self-directed learner (Bastable, & Dart, 2011). The second assumption the student will begin to develop is a growing source of former experiences that will benefit future learning (Bastable, & Dart, 2011; Knowles, 1990). This correlates well with Meizrow’s theory of former experiences assisting new learning (Wiesner & Meizrow, 2000). The third assumption being that a student’s readiness to learn correlates with future tasks of social roles (Bastable, & Dart, 2011; Knowles, 1990). This assumption will associate well with the graduate level, as students will begin to develop a sense of clinical awareness and how education will relate to future knowledge. The fourth assumption states that student’s orientation will shift from a subject centered approach to a problem-centered approach (Bastable, & Dart, 2011; Knowles, 1990). The fourth assumption relates strongly to the University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Program, as students move from foundational to application knowledge throughout the course of the program. Taking into consideration the different theorists, the Adult Learning Theory correlates well with the objectives and audience that we intend to target with this scholarly project.

**Constructivism and Experiential Learning.**

“Constructivism is a theory about knowledge and learning” (Twomey Fosnot, 2005, p.1). Constructivist learning encourages students to engage in their own learning, and then select and apply pertinent information within a cognitive structure (Brandon, & All, 2010). Constructivist teachers are continuously asking students to analyze what knowledge is pertinent to them and how that knowledge can be applied (Brandon, & All,
The process of active learning helps to create the habit of lifelong education (Brandon, & All, 2010).

According to Twomey Fosnot (2005), professors that select a constructivist model for teaching believe that students should utilize opportunity for experience and real world application. This theory was also selected for the scholarly project, as this type of approach is common in graduate students’ education. Students are encouraged to both question and reflect upon the knowledge that is presented (Twomey Fosnot, 2005). Professors will begin to assume the role of a facilitator more rather than an autocratic leader (Twomey Fosnot, 2005). This theory will work collaboratively with the graduate school environment and promote not only learning, but also reflection and application for AAT into future settings (Brandon, & All, 2010; Twomey Fosnot, 2005).

Dewey was the founder of the concept of experiential learning and constructivism (Fowler, 2007). His concept involves the process of experience and reflection in order to obtain knowledge (Fowler, 2007). Experiential learning requires the learner to learn by “doing,” and subsequently reflect on this experience. Fowler (2007) stated that it is through this process that Dewey defined learning. Dewey was a strong believer in the idea that “all genuine education comes about through experience” (Dewey, 1938, p. 13; Merriam, Carafella, & Baumgartner, 2007). This coincides with the article by Abe (2011), who also defined experiential learning, as well as the importance of positive emotions and emotional intelligence on the process. This experiential learning concept can be applied to the implementation of AAT into an occupational therapy curriculum, as the students will have the opportunity to have hands-on experience with an AAT dog and reflect on these interactions.
Kolb and Kolb (2005) utilized ideas from Dewey, Piaget, and other founders in experiential learning to create 6 proposals of the Experiential Learning Theory. The first proposal states “learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes” (Kolb, & Kolb, 2005, p. 194). In regards to this scholarly project the curriculum will be part of the process in regards to implementing AAT into the program. The second proposal is “learning is relearning” (Kolb, & Kolb, 2005, p. 194). This concept is created to ensure that a discussion occurs involving students’ reflections on the learning experience. The third proposal “students must move between opposing modes of reflection and action and feeling and thinking” (Kolb, & Kolb, 2005, p. 194). The fourth proposal involves learning holistically (Kolb, & Kolb, 2005, p. 194). This proposal is enmeshed throughout the core values of occupational therapy as a profession. The fifth proposal states “learning involves interactions between the learner and the environment” (Kolb, & Kolb, 2005). As AAT begins to be intentionally implemented into the curriculum, students will be able to have a kinesthetic experience in a classroom environment. The sixth and final proposition involves learning being constructivist in nature (Kolb & Kolb, 2005). These six proposals provide a strong framework to utilize when creating the curriculum for AAT implementation.

**Implementation**

We identified existing courses in the University of North Dakota occupational therapy curriculum in which students may benefit from a supplemental lesson on AAT. We selected courses based on both personal experiences and current curriculum. We specifically chose courses from all three years in the program to better identify different aspects in the adult learning process. As current students of the program, we were able to
build on assignments, discussions, and clinical practical that were already developed in the program. The courses that were identified included:

1.) **OT 426: Personal/Professional Development.** “Promote self-awareness and interpersonal skills including basic listening skills, ability to provide meaningful feedback and appropriate group membership skills” (University of North Dakota, 2013, p. 25).

2.) **OT 429: Occupational Therapy with School Age Children and Young Adults.**
   “Normal and abnormal human development, disease, and disability, school age through young adulthood. Emphasis on assessment intervention planning and program outcomes for individuals with disabilities in a variety of practice settings including school, community, and medicine. Laboratory included” (University of North Dakota, 2013, p. 25).


4.) **OT 463: Psychosocial Dysfunction Seminar and Practice Integration.**
   Integration and synthesizing of theoretical knowledge with clinical experience toward the application of therapeutic use of self, self-evaluation, and communication skills in professional development. Occupational therapy experiences in mental health field facilities supervised by registers occupational therapists, qualified health-
professionals and university faculty. (University of North Dakota, 2013, p. 26)

5.) **OT 452: Assistive Technology I.** Introductory study of assistive technology devices and products, assessment, and application methods. Focuses on adaptations, modifications, and technology systems and services that assist individuals with disabilities in greater independence and accessibility across the lifespan. Laboratory included” (University of North Dakota, 2013, p. 26).

6.) **OT 504: Occupation and Vocation.** “Application of assessment and problem-solving skills necessary for remediation/rehabilitation of occupational performance deficits in the work realm. Laboratory included” (University of North Dakota, 2013, p. 27).

Next, lesson plan outlines were developed to comply with both the current course objectives as well as create a distinctive integration of AAT into material. The initial step in developing lesson plans involved the introduction of the material in each course. Presentation of the initial material can be done through assigned readings for the students, PowerPoint lectures provided by faculty, or open discussion amongst students. It then evolves into a more interactive learning process allowing students to apply the material through assignments, directed discussions with identified, or laboratory experience. Each lesson plan also contains an assessment portion to measure the outcomes of the curriculum. Assessment can be seen through exam questions, assignments and rubrics, or discussion questions.

Lesson plans were developed to specifically apply with certain ACOTE® (2015) standards. We will be using ACOTE® standards throughout our program plan to guide
the foundation of the lesson plans implementing AAT while remaining in the scope of ACOTE® standards. An example of an ACOTE® standard that will be used is B.2.7., which describes the student’s ability to utilize task analysis including individuals performance capacity, client factors, and environmental contexts (ACOTE®, 2015).

Students will utilize a therapy dog in the classroom to assist in breaking down specific tasks to be analyzed. For example, in OT 424: Muscle Function in Health & Disease, students will use the occupation of grooming one’s dog, Students will have the opportunity to utilize an AAT animal in this process and utilize skillful observations to develop a task analysis of this occupation. An additional example of an ACOTE® standard utilized in this scholarly project is B.1.2., which involves students demonstrating a comprehension for human development and the different stages. This will be implemented in OT 429: Occupational Therapy with School Children & Young Adults, as students will observe interactions between children and an AAT animal and determine through clinical reasoning developmental milestones involved in these human-animal connections.

Following the completion of lesson plans; the necessary correlating products were created. Each lesson contains different teaching materials focused on the objectives of the course, as well as the implementation of AAT. Adult learning theory was specifically integrated, evidenced by the introductory courses containing more foundational knowledge compared to the upper level courses with more application based learning (Bastable & Dart, 2011). There is also a learner's assessment contained in each lesson that consists of one of the following: exam questions, assignments with rubrics, or discussion questions.
As noted in aforementioned portions of this project, the central idea for the scholarly project came from considering the future of occupational therapy graduate programs. This product was specifically designed for the University of North Dakota’s occupational therapy graduate program though after use and testing, we anticipate it could be useful for other programs due to the adaptability of the materials. It is our hope that this product will influence academic practice through a unique educational integration experience.

Chapter III consisted of an in-depth description of the methods utilized to develop, and implement this scholarly project. Chapter IV is comprised of a description of the product, which encompasses the developed lesson plan outlines and materials.
CHAPTER IV

SCHOLARLY PROJECT

The final scholarly product contains six lesson plan outlines for instructor purposes. Each lesson plan also contains the necessary learning material for that specific class. Completed PowerPoint Lectures, assignments (grading rubrics included), discussion questions, pertinent research articles, surveys, exam questions, and lab scenarios are included. The final version of the scholarly product has been provided in the Appendix of this document.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

Chapter V consists of a general description of the scholarly project, the purpose of the project, strengths/limitations of the project, and future implications that were identified. The purpose of this scholarly project, the *Intentional Integration of Service and Therapy Dogs into an Occupational Therapy Program Curriculum*, was to intentionally implement a service/therapy dog into the University of North Dakota’s occupational therapy program through the development of individual course-specific lesson plan development. The product includes specific lesson plans, rubrics, assignments, videos, discussion questions, and exam questions for six core courses in the University of North Dakota’s Occupational Therapy Program. These lessons are intended to be delivered at different times in the three years of the program, introducing the topic of animal-assisted therapy (AAT) to students before advancing to more clinical-based application.

There were a variety of clinical practice strengths identified over the course of creating the products (i.e. lesson plans). Many students will be motivated to learn about a viable alternative therapy to add to their practice, as well as incorporate the benefits of AAT (stress management, physiological/psychological benefits) for themselves. These benefits have been well documented in the literature review. Evidence has shown that positive interactions with animals have the ability to decrease blood pressure, increase endorphins, and decrease high cholesterol (Chandramouleeswaran & Russell, 2014; Nepps & Stewart, 2014). Chandramoulesswaran and Russel (2014) also found that
Providing students with information about alternative therapies, such as AAT, as a viable option to supplement their practice skills will benefit the profession of occupational therapy by broadening the scope of practice. It will also benefit the students as a valuable tool for stress management and well-being while participating in a vigorous graduate school program. Another strength that was identified includes the expansion of course content. There is great potential for this addition to influence occupational therapy practice through the expansion of AAT utilized by entry-level practitioners.

Despite the promise of using AAT in educational settings, there are current limitations regarding the development and implementation of these lesson plans. Though there is a wealth of information on the benefits of AAT in a variety of clinical settings, there is limited evidence on the effectiveness of the implementation of AAT into a graduate level curriculum. Isaacson (2013) incorporated AAT as a fieldwork opportunity. Students were introduced to the topic through an assistive technology course and utilized a Level I fieldwork experience at an AAT therapeutic center (Issacson, 2013). This article was the only available research on AAT in graduate level occupational therapy curriculum. Another limitation to this scholarly project is that the product is untested with the intended audience. Lastly, the product was created for a small population of graduate level students and faculty.

In the future, feedback that is collected from students and faculty can and should be utilized to make adjustments to the lesson plans as necessary. The included assessments can be used to gather data as can surveys and course evaluations at the end of the year in each course. Effectiveness of the product will be assessed through faculty and student satisfaction, as well as outcomes of exam questions. As the University of
North Dakota’s Occupational Therapy Program progresses toward a doctorate level, additional changes will be necessary to ensure alignment with ACOTE® standards. In the future, expansion and elaboration of the product is feasible through additional scholarly projects. There is also potential for future projects to assess the effectiveness of this program through a formal study. A prospect of future publication is also a future option, as this program is unique and distinctive to the University of North Dakota and the entire field of occupational therapy.
REFERENCES


Accreditation council for occupational therapy education standards and interpretive guide.


Bibbo, J. (2013). Staff members’ perceptions of an animal-assisted activity.


Isaacson, M. (2013). The training and use of service dogs in occupational


APPENDIX
Lesson I
Lesson I

Course: OT 426: Personal/Professional Development in Occupational Therapy

Title: Professional Introduction to Animal-Assisted Therapy

Topic: This lesson will introduce occupational therapy students to animal-assisted therapy and the personal/professional opportunities that will be available throughout the University of North Dakota’s occupational therapy program curriculum. The implementation of a service/therapy dog into UND’s occupational therapy program differentiates this program from other occupational therapy programs across the nation.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify core constructs of animal-assisted therapy
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of how animal-assisted therapy is implemented into the University of North Dakota occupational therapy curriculum

Lesson Plan

A. Introductory PowerPoint presentation (included in subsequent pages) to be presented to students at the beginning of class session

B. Introduce students to Buddy and allow group interaction following PowerPoint presentation

C. Open dialogue to include question/answer session to conclude lesson

D. Assessment of learning will include exam questions (listed below) incorporating foundational knowledge of animal-assisted therapy and service animals

Question 1: Dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability
   a. Therapy animal
   b. Service animal
   c. Guide dog
   d. a. and b.

Question 2: The use of trained animals by trained health professionals to facilitate specific, measurable goals for individual patients for whom there is documentation of progress.
   a. Implementation of service animals
   b. Training process of guide dogs
   c. Animal-assisted therapy
Lesson Objectives

• Students will demonstrate the ability to identify core constructs of animal-assisted therapy.
• Students will demonstrate an understanding of how animal-assisted therapy is implemented into the University of North Dakota occupational therapy curriculum.

Service Dog

• Defined by the ADA as “dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.” [www.ADA.gov](http://www.ADA.gov)
• [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGhhzpf-0wE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGhhzpf-0wE)

Types of Service Dogs

Include, but are not limited to:
• Guide Dog
• Mobility Aid Dog
• Seizure Alert Dog
• PTSD Service Dog
• Hearing Alert Dog
• Diabetes Alert Dog
• Migraine Alert Dog
• Narcolepsy Alert Dog
• Seizure Response Dog
• Psychiatric Service Dog
• Narcolepsy Response Dog

Therapy Dogs

Animal-assisted therapy is defined as “the use of trained animals by trained health professionals to facilitate specific, measurable goals for individual patients for whom there is documentation of progress.”
Psychological Effects

- Evidence has shown interactions with service animals to decrease symptoms of depression, increase positive self-image, and increase overall quality of life
- Animals have also been proven to provide people with friendship, emotional solace, and stress relief

Chandramoulesswaran & Russell, 2014

Physiological Benefits

- Animals have been proven to impact human systemic responses:
  - Interactions with animals have the ability to decrease blood pressure, increase endorphins, and decrease high cholesterol
  - Also evidence of decreased pain, anxiety, and lowered levels of neurohormones

Chandramoulesswaran & Russell, 2014; Nepps & Stewart, 2014

UND & Buddy

- Acquired Buddy as a service/therapy dog in Fall 2014
- Recognition of the value of animal-assisted therapy
- Buddy’s addition to curriculum is unique to the University of North Dakota and differentiates this occupational therapy program from others across the nation

National & Community Resources

- National & Community Resources
  - National Paws with a Cause
    - www.pawswithacause.org
    - Telephone: 800-253-7297
  - Pet Partners
    - www.petpartners.org
  - Therapy Dog International
    - http://tdi-dog.org/
  - Institute for Human Animal Connection
    - www.therapyanimalconnection.com
  - Dog Wish Foundation
    - http://www.dogwish.org/aboutus.html
  - Casper
  - Alliance of Therapy Dogs
    - Office in Cheyenne, Wyoming
  - Therapy Dogs, Inc.
    - Based in Cheyenne, Wyoming
  - Grand Forks
  - Service Dogs for America
    - Mission is to assist physically challenged individuals to gain greater independence and autonomy through the use of trained and certified assistance dogs
    - Location: Jud, North Dakota
    - Telephone: (701) 685-2242
    - http://www.servicedogsforamerica.org/
  - Therapy Partners of the Red River Valley
    - Partnered with Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program
    - http://therapypetsrrv.org

Occupational Therapy Application

- Alternative therapies can be efficacious for our clients & should be considered during treatment planning process
- Occupational therapists are qualified health professionals to use AAT when proper certifications are in place

Learning Objectives

- Students will demonstrate the ability to identify core constructs of animal-assisted therapy
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of how animal-assisted therapy is implemented into the University of North Dakota occupational therapy curriculum
References

- www.ADA.org
- www.learnersonline.com/lol/learners-online/therapy-and-assistance-service-dogs/
- http://dogwisheservicedogs.com/2015/03/30/what-is-a-psychiatric-service-dog-for-autism/
- http://assistance-dog.com/our-services/
- http://positive-dog.com/no-words-are-needed/
Lesson II
Lesson II

Course: OT 429: Occupational Therapy with School Children and Adolescents

Title: Integration of Animal Assisted Therapy in a Pediatric Setting.

Topic: This lesson will expose students to the different benefits of animal assisted therapy in a pediatric setting through scholarly articles, a PowerPoint presentation, and community application.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate a proficiency of the different purposes animal assisted therapy can have in a pediatric setting.
2. Students will present with a knowledge of the current scholarly research involving animal assisted therapy in a pediatric setting.
3. Students will have a kinesthetic experience in a lab scenario with children and Buddy interacting (i.e. Sensory Santa).

Lesson Plan

A. The course instructor will provide the title of two research articles (see below) for students to read prior to class.

B. The course instructor will present a PowerPoint at the beginning of class (PowerPoint included in subsequent pages). This PowerPoint will introduce students to the different methods and allow for a question/answer upon completion of the presentation.

C. Students will then be asked to participate in an additional learning opportunity outside of the classroom. This learning opportunity will involve the interaction between children and Buddy in an outside setting. Two different opportunities will be provided to facilitate different schedules. “Easter Buddy” will participate in two local Easter egg hunts dressed as an Easter bunny. Students are expected to volunteer at one of these events and complete skilled observation regarding the interaction between children and Buddy.

D. Student’s knowledge of Buddy will be assessed through a reflection on recent knowledge of scholarly articles, classroom presentation, and skilled observation of children and therapy animal interactions.
Animal Assisted Therapy in Pediatrics

Learning Objectives

• Students will demonstrate a proficiency in identifying the different purposes of animal assisted therapy in a pediatric setting.

• Students will present with a knowledge of the current scholarly research involving animal assisted therapy in a pediatric setting.

• Students will have a kinesthetic experience in a lab scenario with children and Buddy interacting (i.e. Easter Buddy).

Beneficial for Different Diagnoses

• Pervasive Developmental Disorders
• Autism Spectrum Disorder
• Mental Health
• Childhood Illness

Pervasive Developmental Disorders

• Diagnosis Background
  • Socially withdrawn
  • Decrease in social skills
  • Disinterested and disengaged in activities

• AAT can be a Beneficial Therapy
  • Animals can act as transitional objects
  • Maintaining interest
  • Developing therapeutic rapport

Autism Spectrum Disorder

• Diagnosis Background
  • Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior
  • Deficits in social communication and interaction in an array of settings

• AAT in a School Context
  • Provide a communication tool
  • Create a calm and effective learning environment

• How AAT Can Help
  • Increase social interaction
  • Motivation for better behavior
  • Increase in adaptive skills

Mental Health

• Diagnosis Background
  • School Maladjustment
  • Support deficits
  • Behavior issues

• How AAT Can Help
  • Increase social interaction
  • Motivation for better behavior
  • Increase in adaptive skills
Childhood Illness

- Hospitalizations
- Sterile environment
- Frequent procedures
- Focus on pain
- AAT in the Hospital
- Provide gentle touch
- Alternative therapy
- Pain reduction

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgXYFnwgu8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgXYFnwgu8)

Braun, Stangler, Narveson, & PeBngeli, 2009

Wrap-Up

- In this presentation you have been exposed to a limited number of diagnosis/situations where animal assisted therapy can be beneficial in a pediatric setting.
- However, with innovation and creativity more opportunities and future benefits can be created.

Questions???

Learning Objectives

- Students will demonstrate a proficiency in identifying the different purposes of animal assisted therapy in a pediatric setting.
- Students will present with a knowledge of the current scholarly research involving animal assisted therapy in a pediatric setting.
- Students will have a kinesthetic experience in a lab scenario with children and Buddy interacting (Easter Buddy).

References

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3r1c06fJag](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3r1c06fJag)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgXYFnwgu8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgXYFnwgu8)
Lesson III
Lesson III

Course: OT 424: Muscle Function

Title: The Use of Buddy for Task Analysis through a Lab Scenario

Topic: This lesson will incorporate the use of Buddy into a lab scenario. The students will use his presence as an opportunity to analyze instrumental activities of daily living tasks in a realistic setting and apply their recently acquired knowledge of this topic.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate carryover of their understanding of task analysis in order to successfully complete application in a lab scenario.
2. Students will demonstrate proficiency in their task analyses of scenarios presented.

Lesson Plan

A. Professor will begin class session by presenting students with three scenarios:
   • Feeding Buddy
   • Grooming Buddy
   • Taking Buddy on a short walk

B. Students will analyze each of these tasks using their knowledge of task analysis from previous class lectures.

C. Students will have the ability to choose one of the scenarios listed above to perform a task-analysis write-up (rubric included in subsequent page).

D. Class will conclude with question/answer session to facilitate and clarify task-analysis process.

E. Students understanding will be assessed through grading of task-analysis write-up.
Lesson III: OT 424 : Task-Analysis Write-Up Rubric

Student utilizes proper APA format, grammar, and spelling throughout document /10

Comments:

Student utilizes proper sequencing through task analysis process /10

Comments:

Student addresses task in its entirety, with no aspects missing in analysis /10

Comments:

Total Points: /30
Lesson IV
Lesson IV

Course: OT 463: Psychosocial Dysfunction Seminar/Practice Integration

Title: Physiological and Psychological Calming Effects of Animal Assisted Therapy.

Topic: This lesson will the course of the semester Buddy will be present in OT 463 to act as a calming agent in an emotional environment that contributes to student’s ability to grow interpersonally.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the calm therapeutic environment a service/therapy dog can create.

Lesson Plan

A. Students will complete a survey on the first day of the course. This survey is included subsequently in the product.

B. Students will be re-introduced to Buddy on the first day of the course. The course instructor will explain to students that Buddy will be present in this course throughout the semester. The instructor will encourage students to take advantage of Buddy’s presence throughout the course, especially during emotional/stressful moments.

C. The course instructor will continue to follow the course objectives/curriculum developed for OT 463. Buddy will be present throughout the course but no additional information needs to be provided.

D. Students will complete a survey on the final day of the course. The survey is included subsequently in the product.
OT 463 Pre/Post Survey

1. How much experience have you had with Buddy prior to this class? Please circle one.
   - Not at all
   - A little bit
   - Somewhat
   - Quite a bit
   - A tremendous amount

2. Do you think Buddy is an effective calming agent in the classroom? Please circle one.
   - Not at all
   - A little bit
   - Some
   - Quite a bit
   - A tremendous amount

3. Overall, how much do you think Buddy will contribute to your learning? Please circle one.
   - Not at all
   - Neutral
   - Somewhat
   - A lot
Lesson V

Course: OT 452: Assistive Technology 1

Title: Animal-Assisted Therapy as Assistive Technology

Topic: This lesson will include the provision of information on AAT as assistive technology for individuals across the lifespan. The lesson will include a lecture portion utilizing a power point presentation, as well as a lab scenario for knowledge application.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to identify methods for using animal-assisted therapy as assistive technology
2. Students will demonstrate carry-over of knowledge during lab scenario application

Lesson Plan

A. Professor will deliver a lecture on this topic through use of PowerPoint presentation attached in subsequent pages.

B. At the conclusion of the presentation, there will be a question/answer period to solidify understanding of the topic.

C. Students will then be introduced to Buddy in a lab scenario. Students will be given three different scenarios with the requirement of applying Buddy as assistive technology to each.

D. Students will be required to perform a write-up on the application of AAT as assistive technology for a hypothetical situation of their choice. The rubric for this paper is included in the subsequent pages. Understanding of this concept will be assessed through grading of each student’s paper.
Animal-Assisted Therapy as Assistive Technology

Learning Objectives

- Students will demonstrate the ability to identify methods for using animal-assisted therapy as assistive technology.
- Students will demonstrate carry-over of knowledge during lab scenario application.

Assistive Technology

- “Any item, piece of equipment, or product system whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities”
- Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended 2004

Service Dogs as “Assistive Devices”

Service Dog

- Defined by the ADA as “dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability.” – ADA.gov

Real World Application

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3b8_-C4BB4g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3b8_-C4BB4g)
- Bella & George:
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55R-DDGLjT4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=55R-DDGLjT4)
Types of Service Dogs

Include, but are not limited to:

• Guide Dog
• Mobility Aid Dog
• Seizure Alert Dog
• PTSD Service Dog
• Hearing Alert Dog
• Diabetes Alert Dog
• Migraine Alert Dog
• Narcolepsy Alert Dog
• Seizure Response Dog
• Psychiatric Service Dog
• Narcolepsy Response Dog

How service dogs fit the role of AT

• Trainable to each individual and their specific needs
• Medication reminders
• Notification before seizure, low blood sugar, etc.
• Mobility assistance
• Item retrieval
• Infinite amount of possibilities

Seizure Alerting in Action

• [Links to YouTube videos]

National & Community Resources

- National Paws with a Cause
  - www.pawswithacause.org
  - Telephone: 800-253-7297
- Pet Partners
  - www.petpartners.org
- Therapy Dog International
  - tdi-dog.org
- Institute for Human Animal Connections
  - www.therapyanimalconnection.com
- Dog Wish Foundation
  - www.dogwish.org/aboutus.html
  - Telephone: 760-662-3767; Email: Bob@DogWish.org

- Casper
  - Alliance of Therapy Dogs
    - Office in Cheyenne, Wyoming
- Therapy Dogs, Inc.
  - Based in Cheyenne, Wyoming
- Grand Forks
  - Service Dogs for America
    - Mission is to assist physically challenged individuals to gain greater independence and autonomy by use of a trained and certified assistance dog
    - Location: Jud, North Dakota
    - Telephone: (701) 685-2242

- Therapy Partners of the Red River Valley
  - Partnered with Pet Partner Therapy Animal Program
  - www.therapypetsrrv.org

Occupational Therapy Application

• Assistive technology can be utilized across the lifespan for all populations receiving occupational therapy
• Alternative therapies can be efficacious for our clients
• Full list of resources attached for future use

Learning Objectives

• Students will demonstrate the ability to identify methods for using animal-assisted therapy as assistive technology
• Students will demonstrate carry-over of knowledge during lab scenario application
Lesson VI: OT 508: Case Scenario Rubric

Student appropriately applies aspects of AAT to their chosen scenario
Points possible: / 10

Student demonstrates proper understanding of how AAT can be implemented in the work environment
Points possible: / 10

Student creativity in development of intervention
Points possible: / 5

Total Points: /25
Additional References

• www.ADA.org
• Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended 2004
• http://www.dogvacay.com/blog/on-the-job-service-dogs/
• http://www.amsservicedog.com/10-benefits-china-therapy-and-shih-tzu-service-dogs
• Images: http://www.learnsonline.com/lol/learners-online/therapy-and-assistance-service-dogs
Lesson V: OT 452: AAT Application Rubric

Student utilizes proper APA format, grammar, and spelling throughout document

Points possible: / 10

Student appropriately applies aspects of AAT as assistive technology to their chosen scenario

Points possible: / 10

Student demonstrates proper sequencing through AAT implementation

Points possible: / 10

Student creativity in development of intervention

Points possible: / 5

Total Points: / 35
Lesson VI
Lesson VI

Course: OT 508: Occupation and Vocation

Title: Animal Assisted Therapy in the Workforce

Topic: This lesson will be comprised of opportunities to incorporate animal assisted therapy into individual’s work environments.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the benefits of implementing a service dog into the work environment.
2. Students will demonstrate a proficiency of service dog application in the work force through case study scenarios.

Lesson Plan

A. The professor will assign a required article (listed below) to students to promote an open discussion among classmates.

B. The professor will begin the class by opening it up to a discussion starting with the questions:
   • “Imagine any work environment. How can a service/therapy dog be implemented into this setting?
     The professor will facilitate the group’s answers and questions throughout this process allowing an open discussion regarding service dogs in an employment setting.

C. After discussion students will write a reflection regarding a case scenario of how animal assisted therapy can benefit an individual in an employment setting. Case studies and a rubric will be attached subsequently.
Lesson VI: OT 508: Case Scenarios

- Ben is a 45-year-old male with a complete spinal cord injury at T5. Ben uses a manual wheelchair to get from place to place. He currently works as a telemarketer, but is having a difficult time moving around in his wheelchair in his small cubicle. He would like to bring his therapy dog Jack into work. What assistance can Jack give Ben while at work?

- Kate is a 32-year-old female with a diagnosis of epilepsy. Kate currently works as a car mechanic but is nervous of having a seizure while working with dangerous tools. Kate has a therapy dog named Steve. How can Steve be beneficial to Kate while at work?

- George is a 64-year old male with a diabetes mellitus. He currently works as a greeter at Home Depot. He has a hard time managing his blood sugar count. George has a therapy dog named Jose. How can Jose help George manage his blood sugar while at work?