Melissa Murowski

Experiential Education Personal Statement

A wise woman once said, “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, OTR). This wise OT was definitely on to something, when she explained that through the experience of doing an activity or occupation, not only will you learn, but you will improve your own health and the health of others. This is one of the main principles of Occupational Therapy, which I not only abide by at fieldwork, but during my daily life experiences. After all, the best way to learn something is to experience it.

Doing my clinical education in Kessler West, I learned a great deal from both the experienced therapists surrounding me as well as the patients I was able to treat. The staff at Kessler was extremely supportive of one another, both personally and professional. Modeling my supervisor’s interactions with patients and staff, as well as being forced to confront various difficult situations with patients and family, I have shaped and defined my interpersonal skills. I learned how to be a participating and respected member of an interdisciplinary team, and recognized situations in which asking for help is beneficial. Through working with patients and their families, I have become more culturally competent, learning that the individual is the expert and I am there to scaffold their learning.

I also learned the importance of evidence based practice in the healthcare profession, and was able to contribute to Kessler via an amputee in-service I provided to the therapy department. The handout I distributed during my in-service regarding the assessment of a residual limb provided many therapists with a basis of which to evaluate skin integrity, and prompted the department to create a similar, yet more formalized version to improve treating patients with amputations. Through this experience, I became confident Occupational Therapy was for me.

Making a difference in patient’s lives, and being a member of an interdisciplinary team that truly cares about increasing a patient’s independence and self efficacy was worth the hard work. Not
every day was easy, especially those where I had to work 10 hours to complete documentation. The day I received a visit from a discharged patient made the entire experience worthwhile, especially knowing there were many more patients out there like this one, thankful.

Besides my clinical education, I try to maintain involvement in both the school and the community. At Seton Hall, I am a member of the Student Occupational Therapy Association. My first year of school, my office on the executive board was the Historian, responsible for photo documentation of events and creating a Facebook page for SOTA. This year I am the NJOT Association Representative, responsible for keeping the organization up to date with NJOT. I am also Editor/Creator of the first OT Department Newsletter. I believe this newsletter is extremely important in maintaining contact with our valued alumni, thus building upon our program.

In the community, I volunteer/work every summer at a camp at the Children’s Specialized Hospital for children with hemiplegia. I babysit for a young adult who is mentally retarded, and a child who is on the Autistic Spectrum. I also coach soccer in the town that I reside in, as well as physically train/educate both children and elderly. I believe maintaining one’s health and social involvement increases self esteem, thus having a more fulfilling life.

Although I keep extremely busy daily, I believe that being a servant leader involves helping others whenever possible. I prefer to lead by example, demonstrating to those around me in all locations, how to better their lives. Whether it’s sacrificing sleep to do homework early, so that I may take the young adult I babysit for a walk and to talk about her bad day, it’s worth it for me. If this means typing up notes on my computer for a classmate who missed class, instead of writing them down like I prefer to do, I will. A servant leader is committed to doing as much as he or she can for others within his or her power. I believe that I am a true servant leader, and through my clinical experience I was able to further my service as well as learn from others. Through the use of my hands, I influence the state of my health, and the well being of others.