

**GUIDED REFLECTION: BECOMING A SELF-DIRECTED LEARNER****NAME: Diane Makovsky**Areas in which I feel adequately prepared for Level II fieldwork:

- My ability to do research.
- My ability to observe and assess a client and their situation.
- To know when I do not understand. To stop, ask questions, and get help.
- My ability to listen, to learn, and to follow directions from supervisors.
- My ability to recognize my own capabilities and to stand firm when I am being pushed to do something that is beyond them or that may hinder or hurt someone else.
- I have a good knowledge of assessments necessary for a variety of practice areas, and the ability to research, learn and practice, in advance, what will be needed on fieldwork.
- My ability to work with clients of all ages.
- My ability to empathize with clients and bring support based on experience and best practices.
- My ability to create and lead a group.

The way I have learned these skills is by:

- Some of my skills were developed by experience in my commercial career in communications, management, and human resources before coming to Bay Path.
- Bay Path has given me knowledge and techniques that span the breadth of occupational therapy concerns, including, but not limited to, the areas of mental health, pediatrics, biomechanics, and neurology.
- I have practiced in labs, listened in lectures, and studied the areas covered in the academic courses, including some individual research into areas such as hand hygiene and behavioral influences, relationship skills among people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and Asperger's Syndrome (AS), bipolar disorder among children, vestibular dysfunction, and burns.
- I learn well by combining listening, reading, and reviewing.
- I enjoy analysis and planning to structure activities into sequences.
- I reflect on the feedback provided by my professors and use it to try and improve as a result.
- I have worked to really understand and assimilate the material, and not just accept it or learn it by rote.
- I integrate information well; this means that although I may not be the quickest to memorize and recite information, I absorb material and have good long-term recall, associative memory, and problem-solving skills.

Areas in which I do not yet feel prepared for Level II fieldwork:

- My main concerns center around doing work at a speed and accuracy level to meet the demands of a real world environment.
  - I feel confident in the basic techniques, but feel I am slower than I need to be in producing the quality work that I demand of myself.
  - I suspect efficiency will come with practice during the fieldwork itself
- I am a little concerned about being confident in determining blood pressure and pulse.
  - I am feeling a bit better about this after practice in lab and suspect I will be given more training if the more medical aspects form a significant part of the Level II fieldwork
- I am already working on a plan to improve my abilities to do goniometry and manual muscle testing.

From this list, set three learning goals for yourself that you wish to achieve by Dec. 2011 (Make sure they have a measurable outcome!!)

The three learning goals relate to the fluency and speed with which I can determine and create treatment plans, draft client goals, and write SOAP notes:

1) Be able to read through a history, determine what areas to assess, and write a treatment plan in less than 90 minutes three times in a row where the output is assessed as good enough for real world use.

2) Be able to determine and draft client goals appropriately and in good time. My target is to be able to produce goals, based on a written evaluation of a case, in 20 minutes or less.

3) Be able to draft SOAP notes accurately and at a good speed, so as to be able to manage paperwork appropriately and efficiently in fieldwork. Each note, for this exercise, should take 15 minutes or less to draft, working up to a goal of five notes in an hour.

**Learning Goal #1:** Be able to read through a history, determine what areas to assess, and write a treatment plan in less than 90 minutes.

Strategies that will help me gain the knowledge and skill to meet this goal:

- Reading case studies and practicing writing treatment plans within time limits and then having the output from the exercise checked by competent reviewers such as OT tutor, professors, and fieldwork supervisors.

Potential barriers to achieving this goal and ways to overcome them:

- Getting the feedback from busy reviewers to help me understand better the distinction between excellent (but slow) and good (and fast) enough.

I can monitor my progress towards this goal by:

- Recording each time I practice.
- Looking for opportunities for efficiency within the remaining coursework and monitoring time taken
- Getting all trial attempts assessed against the standard of “good enough.”
- Looking for any patterns of particular conditions, which would enable me to increase speed by better understanding of the condition, and looking for areas, or patterns of symptoms, that may seem harder for me to address than others.

### **Follow-up**

Assess your progress towards achieving this goal:

- I found working by myself using the course book was not an effective method to improve execution efficiency.
- I was, however, more successful writing up treatment plans, goals, and soap notes from clients I worked with on the fieldwork we performed. Also, I find that the transition from completing an academic treatment goal assignment to using the same thought process in a real-world context enabled me to focus on practical utility and this enabled me to write efficient SOAP notes for the number of clients I actually met and would expect to see each day as an OT.

Have your learning strategies been effective? Why or why not?

- I was successful in finding an alternative to my original idea of using the book for case histories. I switched to using real people – clients from fieldwork and also, occasionally, people I met over the summer who were prepared to discuss their issues casually. In these cases, I was not offering any advice but using the

information they gave me to ask myself what I would recommend if he or she were a client.

- I anticipate that by observing and practicing on a daily basis during fieldwork with actual clients and conditions that my abilities will improve.

In the future, will you stick with these learning strategies? If not, list different strategies to try:

- In a work situation, I will also look to get feedback as I go along, since saving up questions does not enable me to learn as effectively. If I make an error in documentation the first time, by not having timely feedback, it is more likely that I make the same mistake again. During my interview with a Rehabilitation Program Manager, who is an OT, she expressed how she reviews the documentation produced by her staff in order to ensure billing is not rejected. I would like to learn to do things correctly and efficiently first time, so someone checking my work will only catch oversights not errors.
- Continuing to contact my professors for feedback during fieldwork, should I come up with general questions that are not facility-specific.
- Continue reading OT Practice and AJOT for relevant advice, for advice. For example, OT Practice recently covered older adults and driving.

**Learning Goal #2:** Be able to determine and draft client goals appropriately and in good time. My target is to be able to produce goals, based on reading and interpreting a written evaluation of a case, in 20 minutes or less.

Strategies that will help me gain the knowledge and skill to meet this goal:

- Set up practice scenarios. For instance, use the case studies from Radomski and Latham (2008) and write goals relating to them.
- Read and re-read examples of measurable goals found in textbooks, and other handouts.
- Learn techniques such as checking to see that each goal is S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely).
- The best way might to set up a schedule of reviewing a certain number of evaluations per week and writing goals for them.

Potential barriers to achieving this goal and ways to overcome them:

- Finding time to do these goal-writing exercises may be hard but I attempted to pay attention to this during the course work of OTP 542, older adults.
- The materials also need to be reality checked. So it would be good to find someone to review at least a few of the goals I create in practice.

I can monitor my progress towards this goal by:

- Tracking how many case studies I have read and written short-term and long-term goals for.
- Monitoring the time it takes to do assignment.

### **Follow-up**

Assess your progress towards achieving this goal:

- This went well, particularly when working with real clients and cases.
- I also found myself summarizing and reflecting on what treatments I would do for each client I interacted with. This was a good step for enabling processing of information.

Have your learning strategies been effective? Why or why not?

- I found I work better when the information being discussed is in a more real-life environment than from a formal case study.
- I found I was able to ask questions and not have to guess about certain situations that may or may not have been affecting the client in the academic context.

In the future, will you stick with these learning strategies? If not, list different strategies to try:

- In general I will be sticking with the modified strategy of developing client goals in real client situations. This seems to provide me with the give and take that seems to be essential to being a client-centered occupational therapist and also provides the time constraint that helps encourage performing to a schedule.
- Being aware of time seems to come automatically in real-world situations and at the same time the additional context makes it easier to be clear.

**Learning Goal #3:** Be able to draft SOAP notes accurately and at a good speed, so as to be able to manage paperwork appropriately and efficiently in fieldwork. Each note, for this exercise, should take 15 minutes or less to draft, working up to a goal of 5 notes in an hour.

Strategies that will help me gain the knowledge and skill to meet this goal:

- Working from prepared goals, write up a SOAP note for each.
- Create a schedule to find time to attend to this important but not urgent task.

Potential barriers to achieving this goal and ways to overcome them:

- Lack of time for the exercise when set against competing demands from other parts of the academic course.
- Making this practice serious, which would include getting feedback.
- Making SOAP notes concise and accurate so that they also can communicate well to other practitioners, particularly other occupational therapists who may be using my fieldwork notes for their own work.

I can monitor my progress towards this goal by:

- Measuring how many SOAP notes I create.
- Timing them as I write them.

**Follow-up**

Assess your progress towards achieving this goal:

- I received feedback on real-life SOAPS written for fieldwork as part of the course and this did indeed help.

Have your learning strategies been effective? Why or why not?

- It seems that each Occupational Therapy facility has a “house style.” I would like to learn to adapt to the style of note expected in the place I do my fieldwork, as it will aid in communication. Specifically I will need to understand the precise phraseology needed for efficient billing.

In the future, will you stick with these learning strategies? If not, list different strategies to try:

- Although timing treatments is important, I think that writing a note should be an efficient and standard part of the treatment time. Clock-watching for just for producing a SOAP note is not completely effective for me, as I find it distracting so I will focus simply on becoming more efficient and being sensitive to time-related feedback from fieldwork supervisors.
- With practice over the year I have been able to write SOAP notes in just a few minutes and so my strategy will be to continue to practice and maintain this standard.

**SUMMARY REFLECTION (Spring 2011)**

Describe TWO things you have learned about yourself as a learner that will support your future academic endeavors, both in the classroom and in the field.

- I enjoy the processes of research and the application of assessments.
- While I am aware that I may not be the quickest learner in physical areas, I have learned in the past, and through this year's courses, that once I get used to a new process, technique, or tool, I can master it and become one of the most proficient at it. I think this is probably related to my desire to be among the best in whatever I do. At the end of this more studied approach, I believe I tend to have a deeper level of understanding than those who have learnt the new material more quickly. In short, for example struggles in physical areas such as working with people in braces, tend to lead eventually to a broader understanding of the concepts as a whole.

**SUMMARY REFLECTION (Fall 2011)**

Describe TWO things you have learned about yourself as a learner that will support your future academic endeavors, both in the classroom and in the field.

- I do best when I understand how or why something is done, rather than just following instructions.
- I enjoy undertaking scientific research. I enjoy both the library work of literature review and experimental design and conducting experiments.

Upon starting Level II fieldwork, what can you inform you supervisor about in regards to your learning style and professional manner? How can s/he best support your learning during fieldwork?

- I am, first, an auditory/verbal learner and then a visual/verbal learner. I do well by first reading through material and then applying it.
- I do not have particularly strong visual recall, so it is good for me to see something, write down the instructions, and see it again.
- I am better able to describe a concept than to pull up a particular term quickly. Therefore, I like to write down new terminology and refer to a sheet until it becomes rote.
- I would say I am a good processor, in that I take the time, outside of the proscribed hours of work, school or, even, civic activities, to understand and become competent in new areas. This does not, however, mean I cannot think and react on my feet, just that by my assimilating information, often out of hours, I tend to become very smooth in my execution over time.

### Reference

Radomski, M. V. & Latham, C. A. T. (Eds.). (2008). *Occupational Therapy for Physical Dysfunction* (6th Ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.