

2015 Try It! Summer Mini-Grant: Results Report

Grant Recipient: Cynthia Matlock

Academic Department: Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

Title of the project: *'rehabilitating' the teaching and learning of professionalism*

Title of course where the innovation will be used: MOT 5020 Professional Development I

Semester during which the new strategy was implemented: Fall Semester 2015

Description of the grant-funded experiment and its goals:

The aim of professional education is to prepare student occupational therapists as competent practitioners. In addition to academic knowledge, this is accomplished by learning new skills, assuming behavior patterns, internalizing values and attitudes, and acquiring a professional identity. Throughout my years of teaching, I have developed various approaches (written assignments, discussion, internal and external guest speakers, student panels, experiential activities, low-tech/public view videos). Networking at our national conference, I was exposed to the use of software programs in augmenting the teaching and learning of professional behaviors and attitudes, 'soft skills'. I researched available media and located CRMLearning.com. This company produces video packages that systematically introduce aspects of professionalism. The specific program was *It's a Dog's World*, a comprehensive interactive package consisting of a primary video, vignettes, reinforcing modules, and review activities. The package was incorporated as a learning activity introducing professionalism from a "light-hearted" perspective, setting the foundation for achieving the Professional Development Seminar course objectives.

I believed *It's a Dog's World* would be an excellent addition to the first of three Professional Development Seminars:

- ~ Viewing the video and subsequent vignettes would assist the student with her/his definition of professionalism, help the student identify professional behaviors and attitudes required for practice as an occupational therapist, and readily allow the student to personally relate to the aspect of professionalism portrayed.
- ~ The package included opportunities for insightful self-reflection. These activities and assignments were to assist the student when completing the self-assessment and plan for progression.
- ~ It was to rapidly captivate student attention.
- ~ Adding a contemporary learning activity would contribute another dimension for achieving the learning objectives of the course.

Articulate what worked as expected and what did not:

I perceived *It's a Dog World* as an opportunity to bolster the initial Professional Development Seminar by providing a contemporary interactive learning activity that would engage this 'generation' of students. Upon incorporating the video package and corresponding activities, and after summarizing the responses of the student participants, I formed two conclusions.

~ First, the video package did not have all materials as described. Two small, non-essential items were not included. A note was inside the package stating they were out of stock and no longer available. Additionally, the interactive review modules were not included nor readily available for classroom use. I made several telephone calls to locate and acquire access. I was told we were permitted five complementary uses and then purchase would be required.

~ Second, quoting a student participant, *It's a Dog World* can be described in one word: "entertaining". The professional level students provided feedback that the video and corresponding activities were at a basic level. They continued that they felt they had previously been introduced to the significance of demonstrating professional behaviors and attitudes. Therefore, the number of class sessions scheduled for *It's a Dog World* were reduced; evaluation was altered to small group discussion.

Describe lessons learned and possible applications for other faculty members:

Several lessons were learned, two are explicated:

~ Prior to consider ordering another video learning package, I would consult with other professionals in Occupational Therapy or health care fields. Resources include those within the College of Health Sciences, local universities, and list serves.

~ The student respondents suggested the video package become a fundamental learning activity for our freshmen students in the introductory course in Occupational Therapy.

Identify ways the faculty member may draw upon these lessons and/or use the pedagogical innovation in the future:

The integration of video programs in the classroom remains an excellent learning activity. It can be difficult to evaluate the level of sophistication based on website information, viewing excerpts, and practice simulations. I misjudged the

appropriateness of *It's a Dog World* for professional level student occupational therapists. However, I look forward to integrating the media package in an undergraduate introductory course (Spring Semester OCS 1010: Orientation to Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy) and determining its efficacy with this student group.