Curriculum Design

The curriculum design is consistent with the program and institutional missions in that students are prepared to be reflective, evidence-based practitioners who excel in the profession and are committed to sustainable professional growth. The curriculum design of the Master of Occupational Therapy Program at Chatham University consists of three interrelated threads which are Professional Reasoning, OT Knowledge and Skills, and Professional Growth and Development. These threads are developed throughout the curriculum at three levels; beginning, intermediate, and advanced, which are reflective of Bloom’s revised taxonomy of educational objectives (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). At the beginning level, students are presented with foundational knowledge and concepts, which serve as the basis for future learning. At this level, students learn and process information and experiences specific to each of the curricular threads. As the curriculum progresses, the threads are further developed and woven together in an increasingly complex and dynamic manner to facilitate student progression through the intermediate to advanced level. At these higher levels of learning, students are expected to integrate and synthesize information and experiences as they relate to the curricular threads. The Chatham University Master of Occupational Therapy Program is grounded in the belief that Professional Reasoning, OT Knowledge and Skills, and Professional Growth and Development are interdependent competencies essential for successful entry level practice.

Initially, learning occurs within the individual threads of the curricular design. At the intermediate level, the threads expand and converge, as the students’ knowledge broadens and they begin to make conceptual connections. Finally, at the advanced level, the threads mesh together such that the individual threads begin to become indiscernible, representing integration of Professional Reasoning, OT Knowledge and Skills, and Professional Growth and Development necessary for entry level practice.

**Thread 1: Professional Reasoning** is defined as “the process that practitioners use to plan, direct, perform, and reflect on client care” (Schell, 2009). Professional reasoning begins with critical thinking, which includes the process of evaluating and judging the accuracy of information, and continues through questioning and probing of ideas in order to make informed conclusions (Ruggiero, 2008).

**Thread 2: Occupational Therapy Knowledge and Skills** is defined as a dynamic understanding of the theoretical tenets, the domain and process of occupational therapy (AOTA, 2014), and the competent application of that knowledge to OT practice. Occupational therapy knowledge and skills include professional standing and responsibility, screening, evaluation, re-evaluation, intervention, and outcomes (AOTA, 2015).
Thread 3: Professional Growth and Development encompasses a myriad of experiences that promote sustainable professional growth including servant leadership, enculturation into the profession, ongoing self-assessment, and engagement in continuing education and scholarly endeavors. Professional growth and development is viewed as a progression along a continuum from didactic instruction and modeling by faculty to an interdependent community of self-directed learners.