

An Occupationally Just Society: Improving Global Health

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Eighty percent of the world's more than 1 billion disabled population lives in a less developed country, with limited access to health care (WHO, 2013). According to the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) 2015, our role as Occupational Therapists (OT) is to work with communities and societies to enhance participation and achieve a socially just society. An important aspect of OT training is to identify and address barriers to successful engagement in meaningful occupations. With a diverse global demographic, professionals must be prepared and equipped to provide culturally competent care.

OT students do not gain awareness of cultural attitudes, knowledge and skills from merely learning foreign languages or exposure to cultures (Liu, 2014). Students who complete journal reflections in their coursework have shown to improve self-awareness, critical thinking, problem solving and leadership skills (Horton-Deutsch and Sherwood, 2008).

As part of a 10-day international level 1C fieldwork experience at Diphetogo Preschool, North Western Province, South Africa, guided reflection of experiences was used to develop meaning from observations and interactions in order to increase intercultural competence (ICC). Reflective writing goes beyond describing a situation, but rather provides an opportunity to critically reflect on the experience; its relationship to personal and professional growth (Chabon and Lee-Wilkerson, 2006).

Objective 1: Learn to responsibly address cultural sensitivity fostering cultural competence and assess its impact on learners and global partners by examining both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Objective 2: Learn to develop sustainable partnerships to promote participation through meaningful occupation.