

4-1949

Occupational Therapy Courses as Offered at the College of St. Catherine

Jeanne Marie
College of St. Catherine

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/jmas>



Part of the [Science and Mathematics Education Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Marie, J. (1949). Occupational Therapy Courses as Offered at the College of St. Catherine. *Journal of the Minnesota Academy of Science, Vol. 17 No. 1*, 118-120.

Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.morris.umn.edu/jmas/vol17/iss1/15>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of the Minnesota Academy of Science by an authorized editor of University of Minnesota Morris Digital Well. For more information, please contact skulann@morris.umn.edu.

Social Science

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY COURSES AS OFFERED AT THE COLLEGE OF ST. CATHERINE

SISTER JEANNE MARIE

The College of St. Catherine, St. Paul

Occupational therapy courses at the College of St. Catherine begin formally in the sophomore year, continue through the junior and senior years, and terminate with nine months of clinical training. These courses, leading to a B. S. degree, are offered in our Division of Community Service. This is the pattern suggested by the four liberal arts colleges within the twenty-three fully accredited schools of occupational therapy.

Most people express surprise that the student's success in these courses does not depend upon her ability in art. It is true that the Reconstruction Aides following the First World War were art teachers to whom doctors referred convalescing or chronically ill patients for treatment. Furthermore, the original course from which other courses developed in special schools was called "bedside activities." The present trend in occupational therapy seeks to attract students interested in music, dramatics, physical education, home economics, library work, social service, and teaching at the childhood, adolescent, or adult levels. Both psychology and sociology are required courses; but such electives as economics, horticulture, and ornithology make valuable contributions.

Since modern occupational therapy is in reality "treatment through activity," liberal arts colleges are beginning to welcome this training into their curricula while they overlook the less attractive physiotherapy training.

People are further surprised that our program includes approximately one hundred fifty medical lectures in such fields as: general medicine and surgery, neuropsychiatry, orthopedics, pediatrics, and tuberculosis. It is vitally important that these lecturers be successful practitioners, experienced in applying physical and occupational therapy and exercise within their special fields. It is just as important that students in this program acquire basic science training branching further into anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, etc. The College of St. Catherine works with five hospitals in securing medical instruction for students majoring in occupational therapy. In addition to attending medical lectures on the campus, students visit these hospitals to observe the doctors and their assistants working with special

cases and conferring in clinics. This serious study of medicine is one of the finest opportunities the new major has brought to our college.

An extensive repertoire of *activities* and much accurate information about *medical diagnoses* would seem sufficiently challenging to the average undergraduate student, but she cannot begin seriously to acquire her professional techniques until she has mastered both sets of these learnings to a recognizable degree. As an approach to the acquisition of these professional techniques, the College offers theory of occupational therapy at three levels. In the sophomore year, there are: observations of local occupational therapists at work; reference readings about occupational therapy practices in hospitals, in rehabilitation centers, and in curative workshops; discussions with guest therapists; and participation in club activities. In the junior year, the program includes: the study of recommendations of specialized procedures with patients suffering from particular diseases; the reading of evaluations of such procedures; and some participation in planning and trying out the treatments prescribed for patients selected by the medical lecturers. During the senior year, supervised practice is arranged with local occupational therapists, each of whom ideally should be considered a member of the teaching staff of the college. However, this is hampered by the facts that local therapists are too busy with patients to visit the college more than once or twice a year, and not one of our local therapists as yet has even a master's degree. Thus, during the past four years many of our students have had to obtain their clinical training outside of Minnesota. This has brought advantages, since many of the students worked in places where occupational therapy was better known and more highly valued than it is in our state. They associated with students from other schools and thus gained new ideas for improving opportunities here. While some clinical training will still be given outside the state, we will welcome a development of more and better local centers for closer integration of the contributions made by the school and centers in this training program.

Finally, the college is responsible for preparing each student occupational therapist to take and pass the national registration examination. Thus far, we have fulfilled this obligation with our graduates achieving grades averaging slightly above the average for the country as a whole.

After qualifying for national registration, each graduate is responsible for obtaining the position which she feels best qualified to fill. The College maintains a file of reported vacancies and writes recommendations for each graduate. Placement to date has been immediate and highly satisfactory.

The United States today has 3400 working occupationalists. Annual salaries range from \$2000 to \$5000, with 2000 vacancies to be filled. Thus, no graduate need accept a beginning salary below \$240 a month. So great is the demand for occupational therapists in mental

institutions alone, that some authorities have proposed the training of such aides in the larger mental hospitals.

In case some undergraduates plan to teach occupational therapy, the College of St. Catherine can well provide this preparation, since the director of this new professional program formerly was the head of a department of psychology and education. Motivation of right responses is the constant challenge of both the occupational therapist and the teacher, and reeducation of abilities involves many of the techniques used in the initial education of such abilities. Our College will probably never offer graduate work in occupational therapy, but it will regularly try to prepare its students to share their knowledge wisely and effectively.

The students' motto for occupational therapy at college and after college is: **TOWARD AN ACTIVE PEACE**. The definition of "peace" which they accept is from St. Augustine: "The tranquility of order," and the only war in which they will ever engage is the only one pronounced justifiable by St. Thomas Aquinas: a war for a greater peace. The "active" in this motto has been chosen advisedly. No one wants a lazy peace. Treatment through activity is effective only because activity is essential to life. The activity appropriate to a human being is necessarily personal activity with activity of mind and will accompany activity of hands and eyes and feet. This complete activity is social activity for the greater benefit of many individuals. On the supernatural level, no more wonderful name is given to God than that of Pure Act as a synonym for Personal Peace. One reason why occupational therapy was most acceptable during war time may well have been that it offered, even in war zones, the works of peace. Its continuance in peace time may depend on the activity it nourishes in bodies and minds too limited for too long by injury or disease. Helping well, happy, intelligent college women to lighten the burdens of nurses and to remember the sick, advances recovery and makes illness more tolerable. Furthermore, it is a heartening responsibility for a liberal arts Church college, since it encourages the sharing of the best in learning with those whose need is great and whose gratitude provides rich rewards.

SUGGESTED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

- The American Occupational Therapy Association, 33 West 42 Street, New York 18; New York, can provide the following helpful and authoritative publications:
- A Career of Service in Occupational Therapy, a new brochure.
 - American Journal of Occupational Therapy, a periodical published six times a year, \$1.00 a copy. Successive issues from January 1947 to the present give descriptions of courses offered by occupational therapy schools.
 - Directory, includes list of names and addresses of occupational therapists in Minnesota.
 - List of Schools of Occupational Therapy Accredited by the American Medical Association, a folder.
 - Willard, Helen S. and Spackman, Clare S. Editors, Principles of Occupational Therapy. 1947. Presents complete bibliographies by leading occupational therapists.