

# SHERRI MATHIS, MS, OTR/L

## ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM

Office: HP 2097  
Phone: 812.461.5420  
E-mail: [sdmathis@usi.edu](mailto:sdmathis@usi.edu) or [otinfo@usi.edu](mailto:otinfo@usi.edu)

### *Education*

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 2008-Present | Doctor of Occupational Therapy (anticipated graduation 5/2010) with Specialty in Ergonomics and Pediatrics, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA                       |
| 2007         | Masters of Science in Occupational Therapy, University of Southern Indiana, Indiana, Evansville IN  |
| 2004         | Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville IN  |
| 1999         | Associate of Applied Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant, Southeastern Illinois College, Harrisburg, IL & Southern Illinois Collegiate Common Market, Herrin IL |



### *Teaching Assignments*

#### Past and Current OT Courses

- OT 310 Applied Pathophysiology I
- OT 380 Professional Evaluation
- OT 331 Media & Modalities
- OT 699 Occupational Therapy Synthesis

#### Past and Current OTA Courses

- OTA 213 Pathophysiology & Conditions I
- OTA 214 Pathophysiology & Conditions II
- OTA 221 Technical Communications
- OTA 232 Media & Modalities
- OTA 242 Performance Components II
- OTA 297 Practicum Seminar A
- OTA 298 Practicum Seminar B
- OTA 344 Occupational Performance Areas II

### *Community Service*

USI Children's Center Advisory Board

### *Teaching Philosophy*

Based on personal experience, I believe that students learn best when they actively perform tasks. During classroom instruction, I use a combination of learning styles that includes lectures (including guests), case studies, videos, pictures or internet clips, and application of concepts focusing on the kinesthetic learning style. Students' critical thinking skills improve as a result of actually doing a task-which is built on previous learning that has already taken place. Another technique that I use to facilitate learning is to provide a safe environment for which the students can feel comfortable asking questions and discussing content.

Providing a safe environment doesn't mean that I coddle students, but rather motivate and stimulate their thought processes to allow them to come through the full learning cycle-which occurs over a period of time. My availability via E-mail, scheduled and unscheduled meetings, and phone are all methods that I use to support my students. If I see a student struggling and the student has not communicated with me, I try to open up conversation to allow the student an opportunity for dialogue with resulting problem solving. Another concept in creating a safe environment is that I believe that every day I walk into the classroom is a new day for the students. I try to always come into the classroom with an enthusiastic attitude and a welcoming comment for my students.

# SHERRI MATHIS, MS, OTR/L

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM

## *Teaching Philosophy (continued)*

The goals that I strive for my students to achieve are that they will begin to understand how to provide occupational therapy services in a competent and professional manner. The transition from laypersons to occupational therapy practitioners involves the process of first learning the information, then being able to initiate, being a self-starter, understanding time management, and communicating well. When I facilitate discussion, I challenge my students to apply content to 'real life' situations and encourage the entire class to share.

In order to fully grasp content that I present, students must be responsible for reading assignments—which is initiating their learning experiences. The OT/OTA programs are demanding in that students must be organized in order to plan accordingly for assignments, during fieldworks, and studying for tests and/or quizzes. One of the difficulties that students have with juggling the demands is that they sometimes resist progressing along the knowledge-reasoning continuum because preparing for content is such a time-consuming task. By the time the students near the completion of their programs, they continually verbalize "aha moments" regarding the depth and breadth of their understanding and knowledge. These "aha moments" are perfect indicators as to just how much the class achieves the goals set for them.

In order to implement my teaching philosophy, I push myself to use prompt, written feedback on assignments, tests, and quizzes. In addition to comments when grading, I also post bulletins and send E-mails to individual students and to the entire class regarding issues or themes that were displayed within the assignment. I address these issues by using 'teaching moments' in that I can take a few minutes at the beginning or ending of a class period for discussion. I do my best to treat my students with a respectful and kind attitude, while conveying my genuine care and concern for their success. Many students have described that I am a "tough" teacher, but not a "mean" teacher. I believe that in order to help my students become great occupational therapy practitioners; I must set high, but achievable standards which involves great work ethic and motivation from the students.

In addition to the high expectations that I have for my students, I believe in pursuing my own personal growth through content and teaching workshops, studying in a doctoral program, and keeping my OT practice skills current. The goals that I have for myself include continuing to be a content expert in the areas that I teach by attending such courses including neurology, physiology, communication, ergonomics, and physical disabilities, etc.; continuing to work with residents in long term care facilities which improves my skills in geriatrics; continuing to work with students and teachers in elementary schools which improves my skills in pediatrics; improving my teaching skills; completing my doctorate in occupational therapy; and participating with various university committees, research, and community services.

## *Personal*

I have 3 children: Amber, Randy, and Dylan and 2 grandchildren, Andrew & Isabelle. Amber lives with her husband Joe and little Isabelle in the Evansville area, Randy lives and works in the Southwestern Illinois area and is Andrew's dad, and Dylan is a senior in high school. I teach in the College and Career Sunday school class at my church (crazy kids!), I ride a Harley Davidson Street Bob (not as much time for it as I'd like!), I am learning to play golf (and loving it!), and I love spending time with my grandkids...Isabelle's nickname from me is 'Punkie Pie' and Andrew is 'My Buddy'. Check out my facebook page and give me shout out sometime! Also check out the Health Profession's facebook!