

Simple strategies for supporting metacognition in online learning

Rapid move to online learning in a professional programme where student's are « too stretched to think well »

INTRODUCTION

The national lockdowns in the autumn of 2020 meant a rapid transition to online delivery of the Occupational Therapy programme modules (BSc and BSc). The challenge was to create teaching and learning activities that engaged students in virtual learning, enabled them to meet the module learning outcomes in a module that was designed to enable students to develop their occupational therapy practice.

Teaching and learning within the module used an enquiry based learning approach.

Metacognition is thinking about thinking but when related to learning, it means reflecting on how we approach learning, our habits and knowledge.

"In higher education, metacognition is valued for the ways it charges and motivates students with self-regulation of their learning, and enables transference of skills and content through reflection and abstract comprehension" (Poorvu Yale, 2021)

STRATEGIES USED

Reduce the cognitive load: use moodle books to organise teaching and learning activities – both preparatory tasks and seminar materials. Organise student learning sets and keep the same sets throughout the module. Balance repetition with novelty in the organisation and delivery of teaching materials.

"I wanted to give some positive feedback about how organised this module is, making online learning more bearable".

Use real world activities: case studies, service users, videos/podcasts/films
"I really enjoyed having speakers who had experienced the condition themselves or who were practicing OT's. It was very useful having them lead some of the seminar groups."

"I really enjoyed watching the films for my preparation as i felt that this gave me a really good understanding of the condition and how it affects everyday life."

Students developed their understanding through applying concepts to case studies. *"I really liked to do the case studies, cause this prepared us a lot for our assignment and I feel much more confident doing an OT Intervention plan now compared to at the beginning of this module".*

Provide worked examples: clinical reasoning.

Created a wiki to demonstrate professional reasoning around a case study – simulating the final assessment

1. Preparation tasks week 7

1.1. Week 7 seminar plan

This seminar will focus on introducing you to movement assessment and interventions.

10:30 - 10:45 Activity 1: discuss your PED observation from the video in the narrated viewpoint.



10:45-11:15 Complete a movement analysis - the movement analysis form is [here](#). You will need to select an everyday task. Then either complete the task your self and think about your movement as you do it or one person in your group completes the task and the others observe (this will require you to set up your video accordingly).

OT plan for group enquiry example

This is an imperfect example of an OT plan. It is under 1000 words (excluding the OT plan). There is a comment option, so please post comments or questions.

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Occupational Therapy intervention plan

Summary of the case: Ivan is a 50 year old man who works as a city park warden.

STRATEGIES USED

Choice and active learning: Students were set learning activities that allowed them to break away from the screen, choose how and where to complete the activity.

Choice of case studies – allowed students to pursue their interests and identify gaps in learning

2.2. Seminar plan: fatigue

10:30-11:15 Working in your allocated group and break out room.

Choose one of the [Fatigue assessments](#) available in the shared google folder on OT resources and complete the assessment. What can you find out about the tool? Who was it designed to be used with? What are the strengths and limitations of the tool.

What other areas of daily life would you assess for a person experiencing fatigue and how would you assess these? What tools would you use. Again look at the resources in the fatigue assessment folder and on the lecture slides from this morning.

11:15-12:00.

Choose one of your groups activity diary and develop a plan for how you would change the persons routine to adapt to living with fatigue. Work with the student in a collaborative way but use the spoons approach, as seen in your preparation tasks. Prepare a visual aid to share with the rest of the group

12:30 Share findings, ask questions and summarise.

Reflection: using zoom chat or padlet to support students reflecting on their learning:

What 3 things did you learn today?
What were the key concepts in today's teaching?
What else do you need to know about?

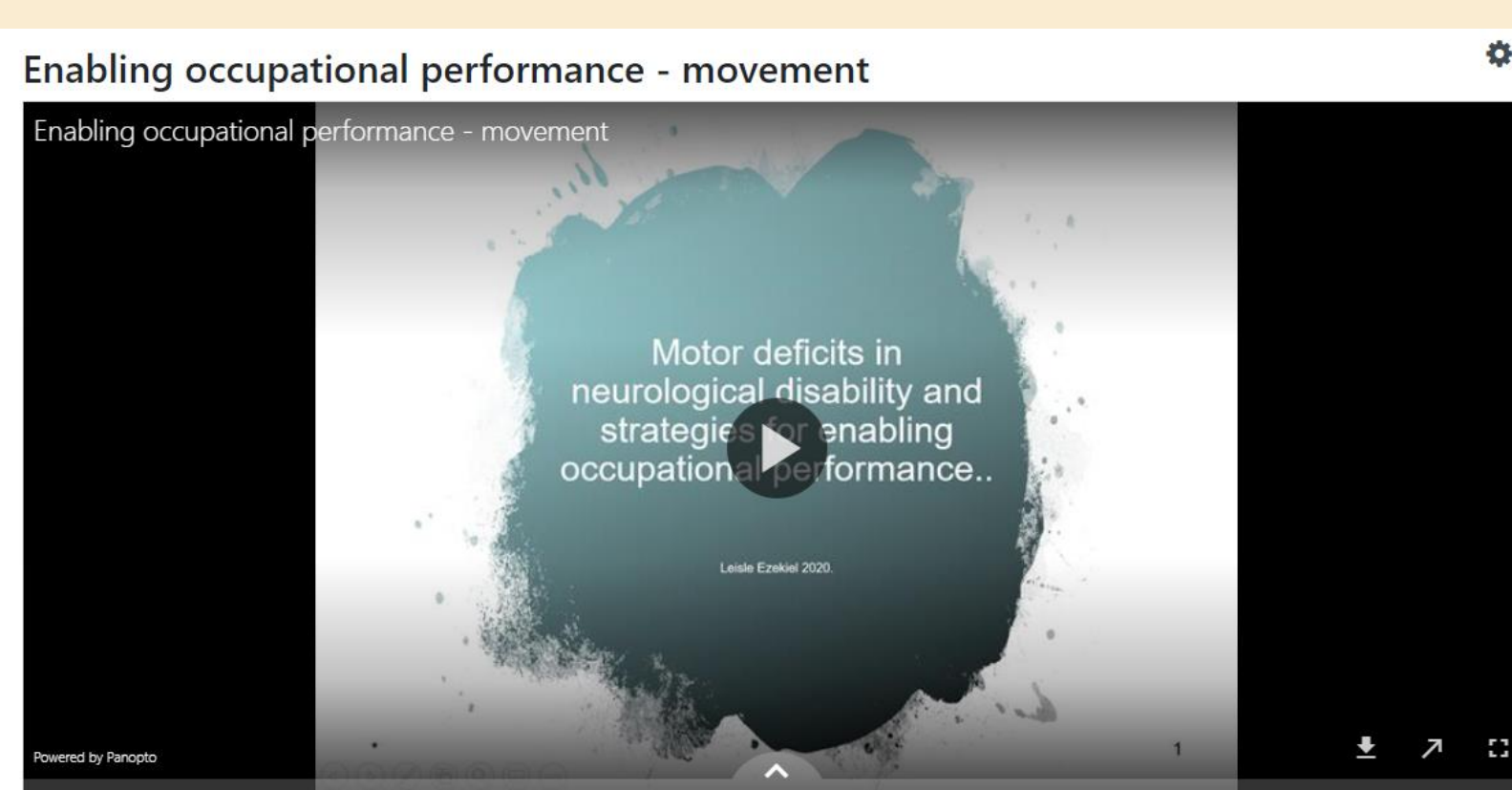
Enquiry cycle: what do you already know about this topic? What do you need to know and how will you approach the task?
Top and tailing seminars – link to previous seminar.

"I have really enjoyed being able to evaluate myself to know what else I need to learn about"

Support time management.

Be explicit about preparation requirements and time needed.
Break up learning into management chunks and use a variety of media.

"The pre-readings were helpful - Liked having to go through the slides the day before, it helped a lot towards participation and engagement with the group"



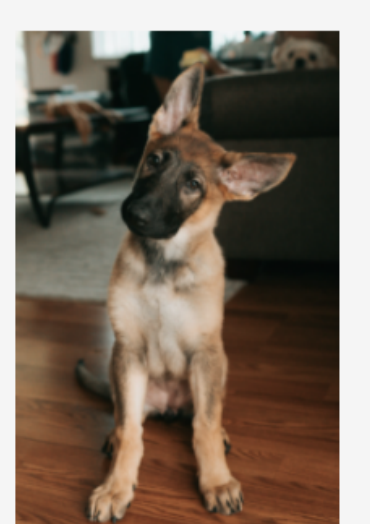
A model muddle - unpicking Occupational Therapy theory, frames of reference and models of practice.

A short presentation about OT theory

Why is there so much confusion?

The confusion partly arises because we use terms interchangeably but also because theory includes those integrated into Occupational Therapy practice and those developed by Occupational Therapists.

For example a model of practice and frames of reference are two theoretical concepts which both aid the translation of theory into occupational therapy practice but in different ways.



CONCLUSION

Applying an enquiry based approach supports active learning and group experiential learning (Goldring and Wood, 2009). The approach includes processes around self questioning and self evaluation, reflection on learning and so supports students metacognition.

The move to mostly online delivery meant careful thought was needed to optimise student engagement and active learning. Application of core strategies to support metacognition in the moodle site design, seminar plans and teaching and learning activities seemed to positively effect the students experience of the module.

Next steps: to take the most effective elements of online learning and blend with face to face delivery.

References

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Presented by Leisle Ezekiel, senior lecturer in Occupational Therapy, department of Sports, Life Sciences and Social Work.