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## *Experiencing Interprofessional Collaboration as a Student*

LOCAL NSSLHA CHAPTER ⌚ APRIL 3, 2018 👤 CAITLIN CAMPBELL ➦ SHARE



Throughout our coursework, we hear about how important interprofessional collaboration is to ensure the best

results for our future clients. The best client outcomes can only be achieved when we, as professionals, collaborate with those in related professions to design and implement treatments that target and support goals from multiple disciplines—increasing the depth and speed with which our clients achieve their goals.

But how can we start experiencing interprofessional collaboration now?

## *Project Write to Learn*

With a **federally-funded grant** through the **Office of Special Education Programs**, the SLP and OT Departments at Seton Hall University found a solution by developing *Project Write to Learn*. This program trains SLP and OT students to collaboratively address the writing needs of children with learning disabilities.

Each year for the next five years, four SLP and four OT students will participate in the program. Students will work in dyads, consisting of one student from each department, to complete assignments.

## *Collaborating with OT*

I worked closely with Anjali Patel, an OT student, on two assignments:

1. For a case study of a student with a learning disability, we analyzed the student's IEP and developed goals that incorporated aspects from both disciplines that would help the student succeed academically.
2. We also evaluated the third grade Common Core State Standards for written expression (a combination of the writing and language strands), and listed the cognitive, linguistic, visual, motor, and sensory skills that a student would need in order to achieve the standards.

These assignments allowed us to better understand each other's areas of expertise and experience how our separate fields can collaborate toward improving student outcomes.

## *Expanding My Knowledge*

Starting the program, I was surprised by how little I had previously known about school-based OTs. It was only through working with Anjali that I learned that the role of OTs extends beyond fine motor development, and includes cognition, processing, sensory, and visuo-motor skills.

SLP and OT professionals both work toward improving students' academic success and social cognition. The difference lies within the aspects of academic and social functioning that each address:

- An OT primarily targets the motor aspects of scholastic and social skills—helping students with the motor, perceptual, and cognitive skills needed to accurately form words on a page when writing.
- An SLP focuses on the communicative aspects—helping with the selection, order, and spelling of words so that they make sense and convey the intended meaning.

It only makes sense that collaborative intervention from both SLPs and OTs is necessary to help children in schools achieve grade-level writing skills!

## *What We Learned*

In my experience, the key to bridging the gap between SLPs and OTs is to ask questions and be open to the strengths and limitations of your own profession. This demonstrates your value for your colleague's role on the intervention team. A respectful rapport will also be advantageous when you inevitably need to resolve a problem or disagreement. Understanding each other's scope and professional strengths is how we determine the best way to work together toward supporting one child's needs.

Anjali told me, "Pairing up with an SLP student on this project really helped us both gain knowledge about each other's profession and learn how to collaborate and use each other's perspectives when treating the same client."

In the end, the advantages of collaborative teaming between SLPs and OTs are endless. We can improve client performance and advance our own professional development, all at the same time!

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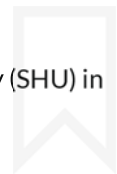


### WRITTEN BY



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