**Faculty Member:** Lynne Murphy, EdD, OTR/L

**Background:**

AOTA has identified rehabilitation, disability and participation as a key practice area for the 21st century. And as our population ages and medical advances promote a longer life, it is vital that occupational therapists address quality of life. Neurological impairments can make participation in instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) such meal preparation, health maintenance, and community involvement a challenge. In addition, these limitations can influence quality of life for individuals with these impairments.

To be able to address these issues with clients, therapists need to develop complex problem solving skills – a therapist’s “clinical reasoning.” Clinical reasoning is a complex cognitive process that is utilized by occupational therapists in the evaluation and intervention process with every client. It is a vital skill to ensure successful fieldwork performance and competent practice. However, clinical reasoning is difficult to teach and learn in a classroom setting. Research opportunities will be explored in measuring and facilitating student clinical reasoning, with a focus on the effectiveness of instructional methods.

**Research Interests:** Quality of life, IADL performance, neurological conditions, pedagogy, clinical reasoning.

**Research Skills:**

Mixed-methods research, quasi-experimental studies, use of SPSS

**Research Directions:**

a) Examine IADL and quality of life with individuals with neurological impairment. This project will be for 2-4 students who will assist in the development and implementation of an intervention group, potentially those with stroke, aphasia, or other community-based “survivor” groups. The focus will be on improving their IADL skills through a group process format. Functional measure as well as quality of life measures will be used.

b) Pedagogy and clinical reasoning: Measures of clinical reasoning and critical thinking will be utilized to examine how clinical reasoning develops over time in occupational therapy students. Using specific instructional methods or types of courses, the research will focus on how we can quantify and measure development of this skills.