

Listing out skills developed or improved during this service-learning experience is more challenging than I would have hoped. Most of it hinges on how difficult it has been for just about every corner of society to adjust to the new and largely unexplored concept of online real-time interaction for more than just enjoyment. The biggest problem I have found is that each new task starts to feel like the same task and starting new projects has lost a lot of its appeal. Upon deeper reflection, the skills I developed from this opportunity were less in line with the project itself and more in line with everything around the project. I learned how to make something mundane more appealing both for myself and for others, I became more assertive and less willing to show weariness or fatigue in the online setting, and I am beginning to understand how to reinstate an individual's belief in both the work that they are doing and the effects that it will have on their target audience. It is important for me to clarify that my project this semester was working with adults for the entertainment and development of kids at the Family Gym. Kids were expected to usually be between eight and nine years old but most of my takeaways were from working with the adults, not from what we ultimately did for the kids.

Making a mundane task appealing is a topic that I would expect to be targeted at kids considering where I was working and what our goals were. The problem was that for the duration of my time with Family Gym I met two kids despite working with over 15 adults. My development therefor was more on turning the mundane task of preparing a presentation for kids and the actual presentation with no audience into something that the adults present were able to take something away from. Meetings for planning the presentation turned into stories that we would adapt and use for our presentation, slide shows turned into an opportunity to teach someone PowerPoint skills or how to use more efficiently the google suite and similar products. It did not really matter that this made the project take longer to complete, we were realistically able to do prep work in 30 minutes if needed, but it made the whole experience feel productive and thus enjoyable even when the final product was a 7-minute presentation.

Fatigue is a feeling that we are all familiar with at this point. Even meetings we are looking forward to can carry a certain weight to them that makes it hard to just enjoy things for what they are. Putting on a happy face is important for kids, but it also matters for adults. Being able to put on an over-the-top cheerful attitude at the start of every meeting is a benefit that goes both ways, I have found that other people will buy into the mentality and when you are not doing it alone it becomes much more real. I distinctly remember one recording session with no kids present and during my portion of the presentation while performing some exercises I would yell out encouragement to the "kids" and one of the adults on the call started enthusiastically yelling back, the two of us went back and forth and the

mood for the rest of the call was much lighter and we had a more enjoyable breakdown after the recording.

During those recordings and throughout the prep work leading up to them, it was very easy to slip into a self-centered approach and just do the work in front of you until it is done. Similarly, it was very easy to forget that the adults working with us at Family Gym were not there for us, they had been there for a long time and would continue to be a part of that organization once we left. The feelings of helplessness, uselessness, and spinning wheels was not something that was normal, and it became clear very quickly that many of them were feeling burnt out or that the work they had put in to build Family Gym to what it was before the pandemic was going to waste. Showing up to a meeting and doing something as simple as caring was received as going above and beyond. We spent several sessions doing simple planning and brainstorming and made a lot of progress with ideas that could increase viewership and organization. The biggest takeaway from these meetings was confidence more than it was actual progress towards real goals. Confidence that things would get better, that the work had not been for nothing, and that continuing to do the work was something worth their effort.

Trying to take these semi-abstract and conceptual skills and turning them into something applicable to Physical Therapy is challenging but the core of what each was doing is relevant to that and more in everyday life. Being able to keep a mundane topic exciting could be compared to keeping patient education interactive, interesting, and memorable. Being able to turn it into more than just a lecture and finding ways to get the patient invested in their own self-care, having them look forward to sessions because it will be an opportunity to not only get better but to learn something interesting could be the difference between a successful and a lackluster experience with Physical Therapy. Pairing that with the ability to bring energy to your profession, even on the days when things do not seem to be going well. Understanding that the energy you bring to the clinic is going to be reflected in each patient you treat and that picking the right attitude to present with could mean the difference between a good and a poor session. This should hold true for any population, if you can show that you care and are invested in their treatment then the patient is more likely to care and be invested as well. Similarly, convincing patients that the work they are performing is not only beneficial, but that it is working and that they are moving towards their long- and short-term goals should be incredibly relevant in any population. Nobody wants to do something that they think is worthless, so it is on us to reinforce the progress our patients are making and show them, not just tell them, how far they have come so that their goals still feel attainable.

Connecting these skills to my future patient care starts to blur them together. There is not one specific thing that can be done to put on a happy face that does not have implications for reinforcement and enjoyment. The end product of all these skills is understanding how to be a good Physical Therapist. It should not be a stretch to say that involving patients in their care, showing them that you are invested in their treatment, and making sure that they understand the progress they are making and that their goals are still within reach are key concepts to patient treatment that would improve care. The challenge is understanding when something is too much and to reign it in or when a patient needs a little bit of extra encouragement to get through their week. Being able to find the right balance in real time, the same way I did in my meetings with Family Gym, is a skill that should bolster all the concepts we have been learning like patient centered care, avoiding the 'cookie cutter' approach, and adapting to the needs of the patient. When patients are enthusiastic about treatment, can understand why it is good for them, can read and reproduce your energy, and understand why and how they are going to reach their goals, their treatment will be better, their outcomes will be better, and thus my performance as a Physical Therapist will be better.