

The Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process

Fact Sheet for Special Education Leaders

The *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework (OTPF)* was adopted by the American Occupational Therapy Association's Representative Assembly in 2002. The OTPF **does not** alter the scope of occupational therapy. The OTPF **does**:

- Clarify the profession's domain and unique focus on engagement in occupations to support participation in context
- Outline the process of evaluation and intervention that is linked to the profession's focus on and use of occupation

Occupation is defined as:

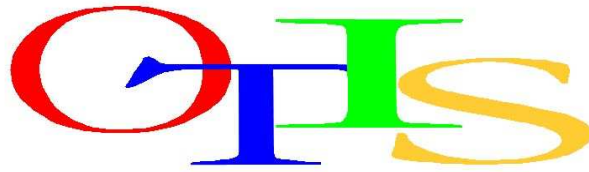
[A]ctivities...of everyday life, named, organized, and given value and meaning by individuals and a culture. Occupation is everything people do to occupy themselves, including looking after themselves,...enjoying life,...and contributing to the social and economic fabric of their communities...(Law, Polatajko, Baptiste, & Townsend, 1997, p. 32)

Domain of Occupational Therapy

- **Performance in Areas of Occupation**; areas include activities of daily living (ADL), education, work, play, leisure, and social participation
- **Performance Skills** are differentiated from underlying body functions and include motor, process, and communication/interaction skills
- **Performance Patterns** are recurring behaviors related and include habits, routines, and roles
- **Contexts** that influence performance include cultural, physical, social, personal, spiritual, temporal, and virtual
- **Activity Demands** relate to a specific activity and are different than physical and social contexts
- **Client Factors** are physiological abilities or structures that reside in a person and include mental, sensory, physical, and physiological abilities

Process of Occupational Therapy: Evaluation, Intervention, and Outcome

- **Evaluation** is focused on finding out what the student wants and needs to do and identifying factors that act as supports and barriers to performance
 - Occupational profile
 - Analysis of occupational performance
- **Intervention**; information from the evaluation is integrated with theory, frames of reference, and evidence and is coupled with clinical reasoning to develop a plan and carry it out
 - Intervention plan
 - Intervention implementation
 - Intervention review
- **Outcome** of occupational therapy process is engagement in occupation to support participation



Comparison of processes:

Traditional	OTPF Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reason for referral and background information indicated teacher concerns and previous intervention experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational profile describes student's interests, strengths, needs, and priorities and assists therapist in forming a preliminary hypothesis regarding possible reasons for identified problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment focused on impairment, e.g., fine motor deficit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment focuses on actual functioning and considers context, activity demands, and student factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP was used as intervention plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervention plan describes unique contribution of occupational therapy in assisting student to reach his or her educational goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions focused on correcting impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions include the therapeutic use of purposeful, occupation-based activities in order to improve student's performance in the classroom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of IEP goals typically occurred annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress toward outcomes is reviewed regularly, intervention plan is reviewed and modified if necessary, and future action is determined
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OT services provided indefinitely or until student no longer making progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected outcomes of OT intervention clearly identified and communicated and include increased engagement in occupation

What special education leaders can do:

- Examine OT practice in your district for components of the OTPF
- Become familiar with the critical components of the OTPF
- Assist occupational therapists in shifting focus from the impairment level to performance and participation
- Utilize intervention plans during the employee evaluation process as you would a teacher's lesson plan
- Provide and support opportunities for occupational therapists to integrate the OTPF into practice

Reference

American Occupational Therapy Association. (2002). Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 56, 609-639.

The OTPF can also be purchased as a separate document from AOTA's online store at <http://store.aota.org/aotastore/default.asp?>

This fact sheet was created by Sara Woodward, OTIS Co-Chair and special education administrator, for a presentation on the OT Practice Framework at the WOTA Annual Conference in 2005. It was adapted for our Ask OTIS column and appeared in the April, 2007 WOTA Newsletter (Volume 65, Number 2).

OTIS (Occupational Therapists In Schools) is a standing committee for the Washington Occupational Therapy Association (WOTA) that was set up to help support therapists in school-based practice.