

A Montessori-Based Approach in Occupational Therapy for Persons with Dementia

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BACKGROUND

- Dementia is characterized by a “deterioration in memory, thinking, behavior, and ability to perform everyday activities” (WHO, 2019, para. 1).
- Worldwide, 50 million people are diagnosed with dementia. Approximately 5 to 8 out of 100 people have dementia (WHO, 2019).
- The goal of occupational therapy for persons with dementia is to maximize participation in valued occupations to promote health, well-being, and quality of life (Schaber, 2011).
- A common barrier in dementia care and occupational therapy for persons with dementia is disengagement from the environment (Camp, 1999).
- The culture of dementia care emphasizes deficits associated with dementia while disregarding the remaining capabilities, which further reinforces disengagement (Malone & Camp, 2007).
- The Montessori method of education was developed to create a quality environment that addresses the needs of children labeled ‘unteachable’ (Malone & Camp, 2007).
- Montessori-based approach for persons with dementia focuses on the creation of a supportive environment and places an emphasis on the client’s strengths, capabilities, needs, and interests to facilitate engagement in meaningful activities (Elliot, 2007).
- Effects of the Montessori-based approach among persons with dementia includes improved affect, enhanced constructive engagement, and reduced passive engagement (Giroux, Robichaud, & Paradis, 2010; Lin et al., 2009; Skrajner, Malone, Camp, McGowan, & Gorzelle, 2007; Orsulic-Jeras, Judge, & Camp, 2000; Orsulic-Jeras, Schneider, & Camp, 2000; van der Ploeg et al., 2013).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the capstone experience was to advocate for the role of occupational therapy in providing care for persons with dementia through developing an innovative program, which encompasses the Montessori-based approach, to facilitate engagement in meaningful occupations to promote health, well-being, and quality of life.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

- The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) addresses the following components: person (volition, habituation, performance capacity), participation, occupational identity, occupational competency, and occupational adaptation (Kielhofner, 2008).
- The Montessori-based approach in occupational therapy emphasizes the person as outlined by MOHO. Interventions are purposeful and based upon past occupations and interests to establish volition (Camp, 2018; Elliot, 2007). Procedural memory and habitual tasks are commonly preserved in dementia; therefore, using occupations that focus on habits, routines, and roles are effective (Zgola, 1987). It is essential to understand the client’s performance capacity and remaining capacities to maximize success and minimize failure (Camp, 1999; Elliot, 2007).
- The Montessori-based approach in occupational therapy was guided by MOHO, as the developed program aimed to help persons with dementia create an occupational identity and occupational competency resulting in occupational adaptation (Wong & Fisher, 2015).

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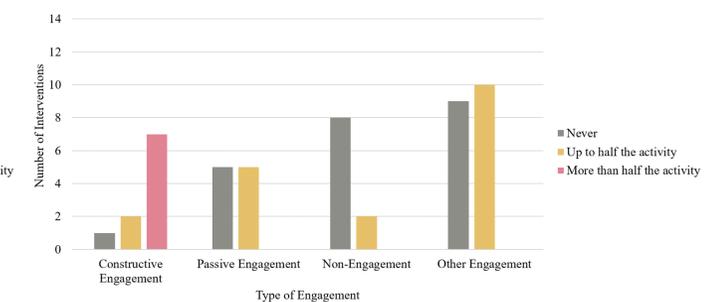
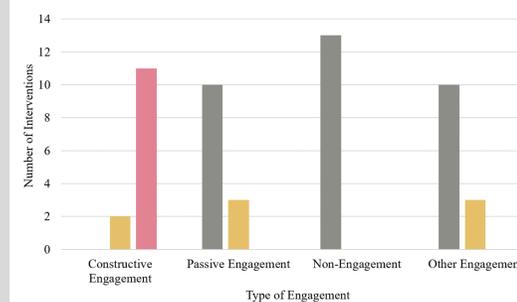
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METHODS

Learning Objective	Activities
Establish a foundation of knowledge and skills regarding dementia care in long-term care facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observed standard dementia care (i.e., nursing staff in memory support hallway, life enrichment coordinators) • Provided skilled occupational therapy services to persons with dementia. • Participated in continuing education courses
Build a knowledge base regarding the Montessori-based approach for persons with dementia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with expert mentor, Dr. Anna Fisher • Obtained certification as Montessori Dementia Care Professional • Reviewed Dr. Cameron Camp’s textbooks
Develop a program outlining the Montessori-based approach in occupational therapy for persons with dementia.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created logic model • Completed needs assessment • Developed program manual • Created outcomes measures for developed program
Implement the developed program with an aim to enhance engagement among persons with dementia and facilitate knowledge and skills among professionals involved in dementia care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained professionals involved in dementia care, including in-services and educational handouts • Identified clients to participate in program implementation • Administered outcome measures

RESULTS / CONCLUSIONS

- The level of constructive engagement (for more than half the activity) exceeded the level of passive engagement, non-engagement, and other engagement when participating in Montessori-based interventions.



- The perceived satisfaction of all trained professionals remained consistent from pre-test to post-test, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the developed program.
- Competency was achieved by all trained professionals, indicating successful implementation of the program.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

- The preliminary outcomes following program implementation of the developed program provides support for the Montessori-based approach in occupational therapy for persons with dementia.
- Further clinical research is needed to create evidence for the developed program. Recommendations include: implementing the program in diverse settings, utilizing a larger sample with increased diversity, and employing the program in a controlled environment to establish a causal relationship.
- Continued advocacy and education for professionals on the Montessori-based approach in occupational therapy to begin changing the culture of dementia care that emphasize that all individuals, despite diagnosis or capabilities, should be given the opportunity to participate in meaningful occupations.