

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

Background

Low vision is a non-correctable diagnosis that affects the eyes (Mayo Clinic Staff, n.d.). Low vision is a common diagnosis among older adults and is expected to rise in the future due to an aging population. By the year 2050 it is expected that 8 million Americans will be diagnosed with some form of low vision (National Eye Institute, n.d.). Low vision diagnoses may include, but are not limited to, macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy (Turbert, 2018). Clients diagnosed with these conditions may demonstrate a decreased ability to perform ADL (Gagne & Pierce, 2017).

Occupational Therapy's Role

Occupational therapists have unique education and training that can assist clients diagnosed with low vision to increase his or her ADL efficiency (Blanchard et al., 2016). Occupational therapists may assist individuals develop compensatory strategies, such as building awareness of visual impairment and developing an appropriate scanning pattern during occupational engagement (Blanchard et al., 2016). Occupational therapists also have the ability to modify an individual's context to promote a more ideal client-context fit (Blanchard et al., 2016).

Purpose

The purpose of this capstone experience was to gain advanced practice skills in low vision. Following acquisition of advanced practice skills the doctoral capstone student will apply this information to teaching and learning at USD.

METHODS

Advanced Practice

Advanced practice skills, which were gained with an occupational therapist who specializes in low vision, were obtained at a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) in Watertown, SD. This portion of the capstone experience was primarily used to develop skills for subsequent components in the capstone experience.

Modifications to ADL Suite at SCSC

First, potential modifications were researched that would provide the best fit for clients with low vision, based upon the layout of the ADL Suite. Next, pictures of the ADL Suite were taken on an OT Department iPad. Following implementation of modifications additional pictures were taken on the OT Department's iPad.

Teaching of Occupational Therapy Students

Three classes were taught to first year occupational therapy students. Following each class session students were required to fill out a paper based survey which assessed the instructors use of experiential learning theory. Experiential learning was also implemented for the supervision of second year occupational therapy students during TRL sessions.

RESULTS / CONCLUSIONS

Modifications to ADL Suite at SCSC

Below are pictures of the ADL Suite before and after modification implementation for clients diagnosed with low vision and visual impairments. Modifications implemented in the ADL Suite include: lighting, addition of tactile cues on commonly used appliances, organization of closets and works areas to promote contrast, introduction of high-contrast tape, and additional general modifications such as enlarged font to improve ADL/IADL efficiency for clients diagnosed with low vision

Teaching and Supervision of Occupational Therapy Students

Three paper-based surveys were distributed following each class session. The following number of surveys were retrieved: 31 surveys from class 1 on 3-21, 29 surveys from class 2 on 3-25, and 31 surveys from class 3 on 3-26. Following data input into Microsoft Excel the following figure below was created. Overall, the class agreed that the doctoral capstone student incorporated experiential learning into class sessions and assisted with the learning of course content. One noteworthy take away was that the 3-21 class session demonstrated the highest averages in six of eight questions. This could likely be due to the first class content closely correlating with the advanced practice that the doctoral capstone student was apart of.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational Therapy and Low Vision

As adults continue to age there will likely be an increase in low vision diagnoses and impairments. With this increase in low vision diagnoses more individuals may face difficulty completing his or her daily routine. Occupational therapy has started to assist clients with visual diagnoses. However, occupational therapy will need to continue to become more involved due to the rising elderly population and continue to develop appropriate evaluations and treatment plans.

Benefit of Advanced Practice in Teaching

Advanced practice in this capstone experience has shown positive effects not only through subjective comments from students but also objective data gathered from surveys. Personally, as the facilitator I felt more confident while teaching lecture content that I had more experience with in a clinical setting. Although I may have had experiences during clinical fieldworks it was not at the same level as was my time during the advanced Practice component.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

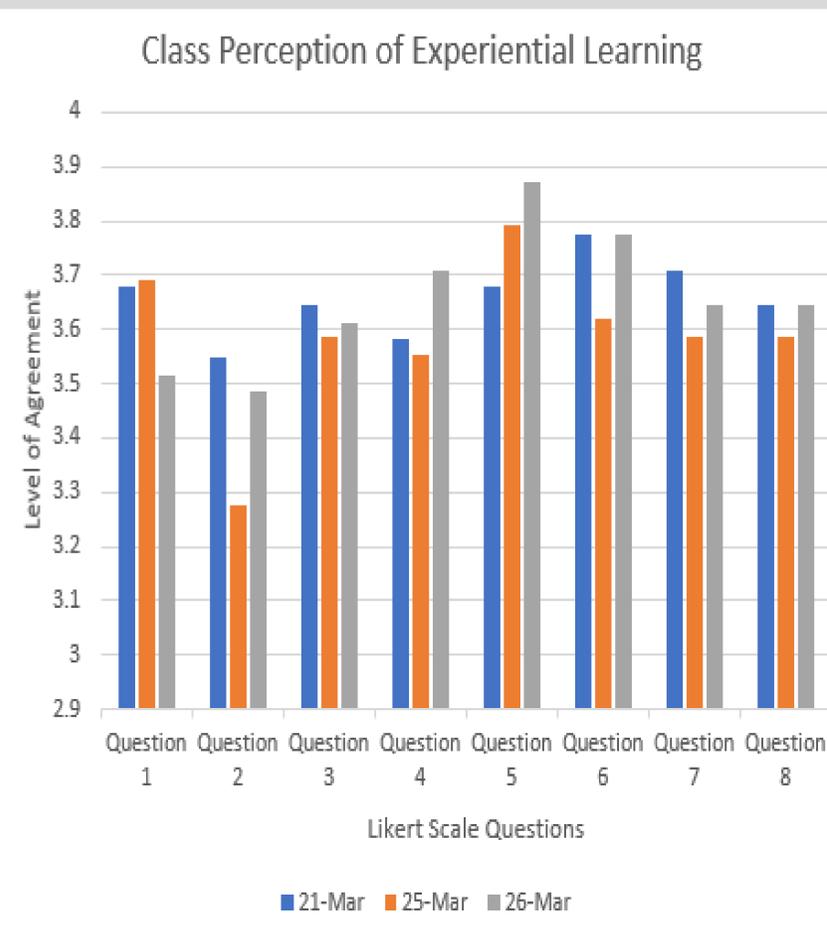
Ecology of Human Performance (EHP)

EHP is an occupational therapy theory that considers the dynamic interaction between a person and his or her context. The person context interaction creates a range of task performance, which allows a person to complete a variety of occupations. The range of task performance can either decrease or increase dependent upon the client-context interaction (Dunn, Brown, & McGuigan, 1994).

EHP is an appropriate theory to utilize for clients diagnosed with low vision. A client's task performance range will heavily rely upon the context in which the task is being completed. Occupational therapy can provide recommendations on how to adapt various contexts to allow for an optimal client-context interaction.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is a teaching theory popularized by David Kolb. This theory relies upon the learner engaging in new or novel experiences to facilitate learning of new skills. This theory relies on a cycle of steps to promote learning which include: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). This cycle can be started at any step; however, once beginning a specific step the individual must continue with subsequent steps in the cycle. This theory was heavily incorporated throughout the capstone experience.



REFERENCES

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