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## Transitional Vocational Program for Persons with Low Vision and Other Visual Impairments

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# Transitional Vocational Program for Persons with Low Vision and Other Visual Impairments

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## BACKGROUND

Low Vision is a life-altering visual disability (CDC, 2015). OTs work with individuals with low vision and work in the workplace and education, however, there is no research on OTs working with individuals with low vision in work or post educational settings (Butler, 2016). Vocational and educational needs are often not being met for individuals with low vision (Barbieri et al., 2019).

## PURPOSE

To understand transitional programs that support vocational and educational development of individuals with a visual impairment and OT could enhance them.

Outcome objectives:

- Conduct a needs assessment to identify supports or barriers to future careers and higher education participants attending the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind (SALB)
- Create a sustainable deliverable for the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind transitional programs

## THEORY INFLUENCE

The Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) influenced this project. Utilizing the MOHO theory during the needs assessment helped to not only identify what the participants learned, but also their confidence and volition following the programming. MOHO's focus on this connection is key to understanding what motivates and shapes engagement (Kielhofner, 2002).

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A needs assessment was created and conducted which included a survey, observations, and interviews to assess the transitional programs at SALB

Action	Description
Observations	Observations of transitional program classes were observed through Zoom as well as in person - Interactions with staff & class participants including activity engagement and impromptu questioning occurred during observation hours
Interview Survey	The survey included open-ended and closed-ended questions with Likert scale, multiple choice, and short answers. There were a total of 32 questions on the survey. Surveys were conducted verbally <b>Topics covered:</b> 1. Career Exploration 2. Accommodations 3. Assistive Technology Education 4. Interview Practice 5. Self-Advocacy Training 6. Resumes & Applications 7. State/Federally Funded Edu/Employment Supports
Units of Study	Review of the Transitional programs units of study included reading outcome assessments and daily activities

## RESULTS

Survey Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
"I feel prepared to apply for a job"	25%	25%	0	12.5%	37.5%
"I feel prepared to go to college"	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%	0
"I was provided with assistive technology education"	25%	37.5%	37.5%	0	0
"I was provided career exploration opportunities"	0	0	12.5%	75%	12.5%
"The content was relevant to my needs when preparing for employment"	0	12.5%	0	50%	37.5%

### What To Change - Student Responses: Quotes

- "Discussing college programs available to me."
- "Create more opportunities for online learning, incorporating more technology.."
- "Add a class that talks about the pros and cons to going to college."
- "Incorporating assistive technology, teaching about accessibility ....."
- "Including Assistive technology, incorporating community resources"

### Observation Results

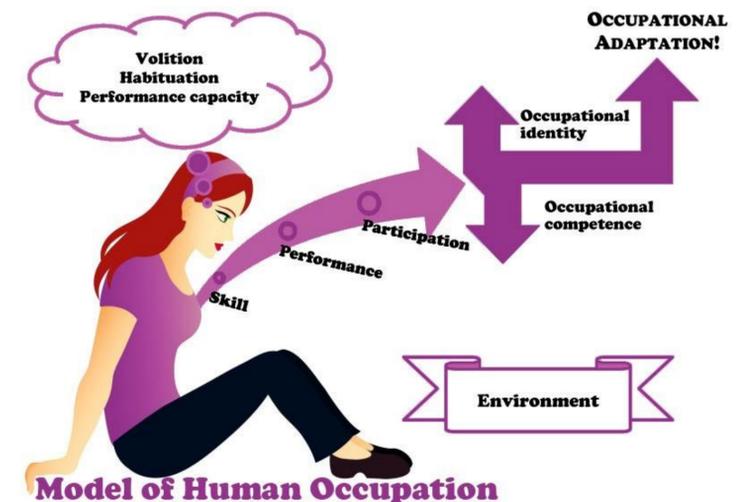
- Important employment and post-secondary education topics were covered; however, the subject could have been provided in more depth and more **holistic and client-centered**.
- Not all activities accessible to individuals with visual impairment
- Students were highly engaged during interactive activities
- Availability of assistive technology, but not often utilized

## PROJECT IMPACT

### Sustainability

- Results and OT recommendations presented to SALB Staff
  - Needs assessment survey is now a part of the program's **outcome measures**
  - OTD student supporting **creation of new transitional program** at SLAB called Level Up!
- Occupational therapy helps support more holistic and client-centered programming. Utilizing MOHO model can help to increase vocational engagement, participation, and support for individuals with a visual impairment.

## DISCUSSION



Occupational therapists working in the vocational setting add value to vocational rehabilitation by providing occupational assessment and analyzing activities. Occupation is the foundation of the occupational therapy profession (AOTA, 2020). Occupational Therapists assess, treat and rehabilitate individuals with a disability, illness or injury to increase independence or function in the worker role (The OT Practice, 2021).

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