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## Role of School-Based Occupational Therapy Practitioners: Perspectives from Teachers and OTs

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# Role of School-Based Occupational Therapy Practitioners: Perspectives from Teachers and OTs

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## BACKGROUND

Schools are the third largest employer of occupational therapists (OTs) in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Occupational Therapists have the distinct ability to observe the child in their natural context of the school, a place where children participate in a variety of activities (Benson et al., 2015).

## PROBLEM

The problem is that there continues to be discrepancies in the understanding and utilization of OT services in the school setting that affect the perceptions of both OTs and teachers regarding the OT role in school, and service provision.

## PURPOSE

to analyze perceptions of both OTs and teachers regarding the OT role in school, and service provision

### Outcome objectives:

- Compare how teachers and OTs perceive the OT role in school-based practice as compared to the literature.
- Compare how teachers and OTs describes involvement within the classroom and general service delivery as compared to the literature.
- Learn what value teachers and OTs place on broad consultation and inclusive services.

## METHODS

This capstone project collected data with use of a survey design to explore perceptions of the school-based occupational therapist. The survey was developed using Survey Monkey. Research questions as well as the learning objectives and project objectives were used to guide this capstone project.

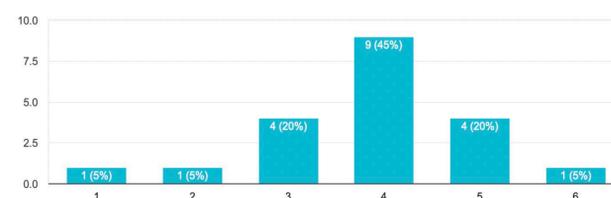
- Recruitment & Inclusion Criteria**
  - Recruited through Facebook Social Media
  - 100 projected participated consisting of teachers and OTs
  - 20 participants in total all consisting of OTs
- Sampling**
  - Snowball Sampling
- Research Questions**
  - How do teachers and OTs perceive the OT role in school-based practice?
  - How do teachers and OTs describe OT involvement within the classroom and general service delivery?
  - What value do teachers and OTs place on broad consultation and inclusive services?
- Analysis of Results**
  - Each survey question pertained to one of the four research questions
  - Participants rated survey questions on a 1-6 Likert Scale rating their perceptions on each question answered

### Theoretical Framework:

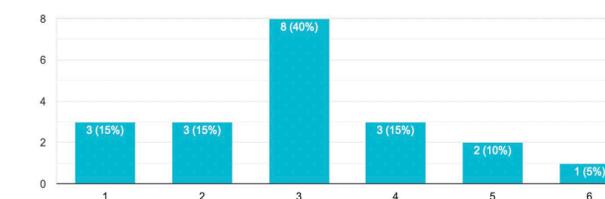
Person-Environment-Occupation-Performance (PEOP) Framework

- This model views the function of a person as a whole and considers the interactions among various components of the person.

How would you rate OTs involvement in the classroom environment?  
20 responses



How would you rate teacher involvement in OT service delivery?  
20 responses



## RESULTS

### How do teachers and OTs perceive the OT role in school-based practice?:

It was concluded that the roles and responsibilities are understood by school-based Occupational Therapists, but there is a lack of knowledge by some teachers on the scope of school-based OT practice.

### How do teachers and OTs describe OT involvement within the classroom and general service delivery?:

There is a need for improved OT service delivery in the school system as well as a need for more school-based OTs. A broadening of the realm of school-based OT practice to include mental health and social emotional functioning would also be of benefit to the practice. In addition, there is a need for improved education of school-based OT provided to OT students while in school.

### What value do teachers and OTs place on broad consultation and inclusive services?:

Pull-out service were perceived to be the most effective and beneficial method of school-based Occupational Therapy service delivery. At the same time, it can also be concluded that broad consultative services are also important and serve their intended purpose. However, because they both have an intended purpose one cannot be the sole method of OT service provision.

## Findings & Recommendations

### Findings

- Need for improvements in knowledge provided on school-based OT scope of practice
- Need for improvements in OT service delivery by broadening service outreach to include mental health
- Improved collaboration amongst teachers and OTs

### Recommendations

- Educators of Occupational Therapy students include more accurate education of school-based OT
- School-based OTs provide in-service education at the start of each school year for new and existing school staff to promote better understanding of school-based OT service provision
- Improved collaboration amongst teachers and OTs