



## ABSTRACT

- Background:** Occupation-based practice (OBP) is a fundamental element of occupational therapy (OT) that involves the use of occupations, or everyday activities, designed to enable participation (Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process, 3rd Edition [OTPF-III], 2014). Because providing holistic, client-centered care is central to the field of OT, it is critical for the OT practitioner to facilitate and incorporate occupation-based approaches into practice.
- Objective:** The purpose of this study was to illuminate the use of occupation-based practice (OBP) in OT through the lens of University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) Level II fieldwork students using feedback from the Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience (SEFWE) form. The study aimed to identify how UMMC fieldwork educators model the use of occupation-based activities as opposed to purposeful and preparatory activities, as well as theoretical approaches used in intervention. It was important to investigate whether UMMC fieldwork sites model practice consistent with the OTD curriculum design in these areas.
- Methods:** This quality improvement study utilized a retrospective, descriptive research design to collect quantitative data using SEFWE forms completed by UMMC's OT students within the academic years 2018-2021.
- Results:** The most listed occupation-based activities were respectively ADL, IADL, and school-related education. However, the researchers identified that students most frequently listed purposeful and preparatory activities overall, including under the occupation-based heading. The biomechanical frame of reference (FOR) was most frequently marked as the theoretical emphasis in intervention.
- Conclusion:** The study concluded that students are seeing OBP modeled by their fieldwork educators, however the prevalence is not as high as expected. Some aspects of occupation-based, preparatory and purposeful activity seem to be misunderstood by students, indicating that additional clarification to these areas may be beneficial to students. Further clarification can be done through the UMMC OTD Fieldwork Coordinator's communication with the fieldwork educators or through teaching methods in the OTD curriculum.

## INTRODUCTION

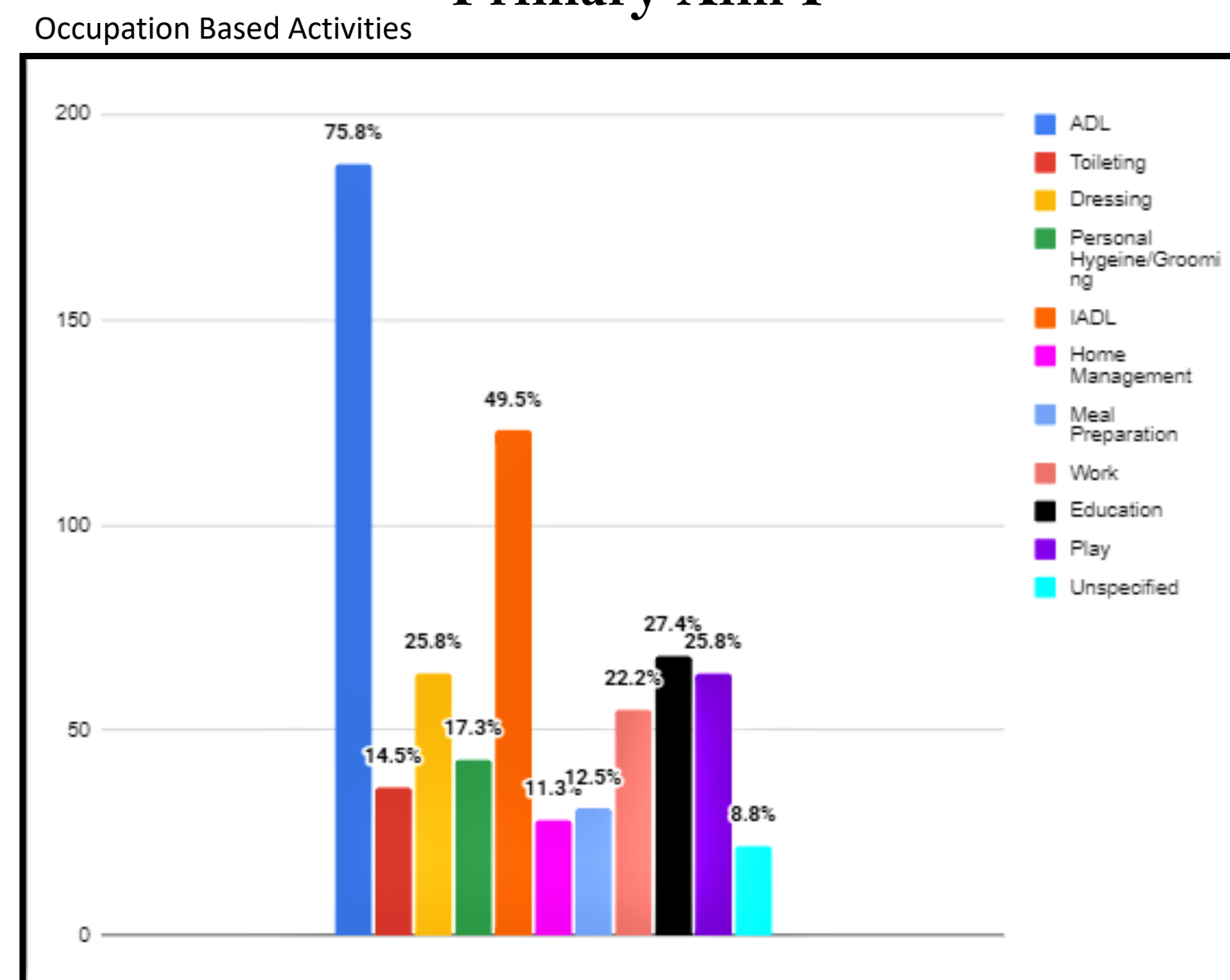
- Occupational therapy involves the therapeutic use of occupations, or everyday activities, with the purpose of enabling participation through implementation of occupation-based intervention plans (Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process, 3rd Edition [OTPF-III], 2014). Ultimately, it is the role of the occupational therapy practitioner to facilitate change that enables successful participation in an individual's valued occupations, and to promote overall health and wellness. To successfully do this, the use of occupation-based interventions are essential in nearly every case. An occupation is defined as any type of activity in which an individual participates to entertain or care for themselves and can be broken down into eight subcategories including: activities of daily living, instrumental activities of daily living, rest and sleep, education, work, play, leisure, and social participation (OTPF-III, 2014). Additionally, it must be established that OBP is closely related with the concept of client centered practice, defined as an approach in which the practitioner collects client-specific information regarding meaningful activities, past experiences, and current problems to use in intervention (OTPF-III, 2014). Because the field of occupational therapy is centered around providing holistic, client-centered care, it is critical for the occupational therapy practitioner to facilitate and incorporate occupation-based approaches into practice. Although OBP has been shown through some studies to be an effective intervention strategy in the field of occupational therapy, there is a gap in the literature relating to its use in training Level II fieldwork students. Lack of evidence regarding the implementation of OBP during fieldwork experiences is the primary concern of this study. Fieldwork is a crucial aspect of occupational therapy students' education as they are learning to apply theory to practice. While there is some evidence to support the fact that OBP is being modeled during level II fieldwork, more research would be valuable to both occupational therapy educators and students to ensure consistency between education and practice (Bergner, 2018 & Edwards et al., 2015).

## PURPOSE AND AIMS

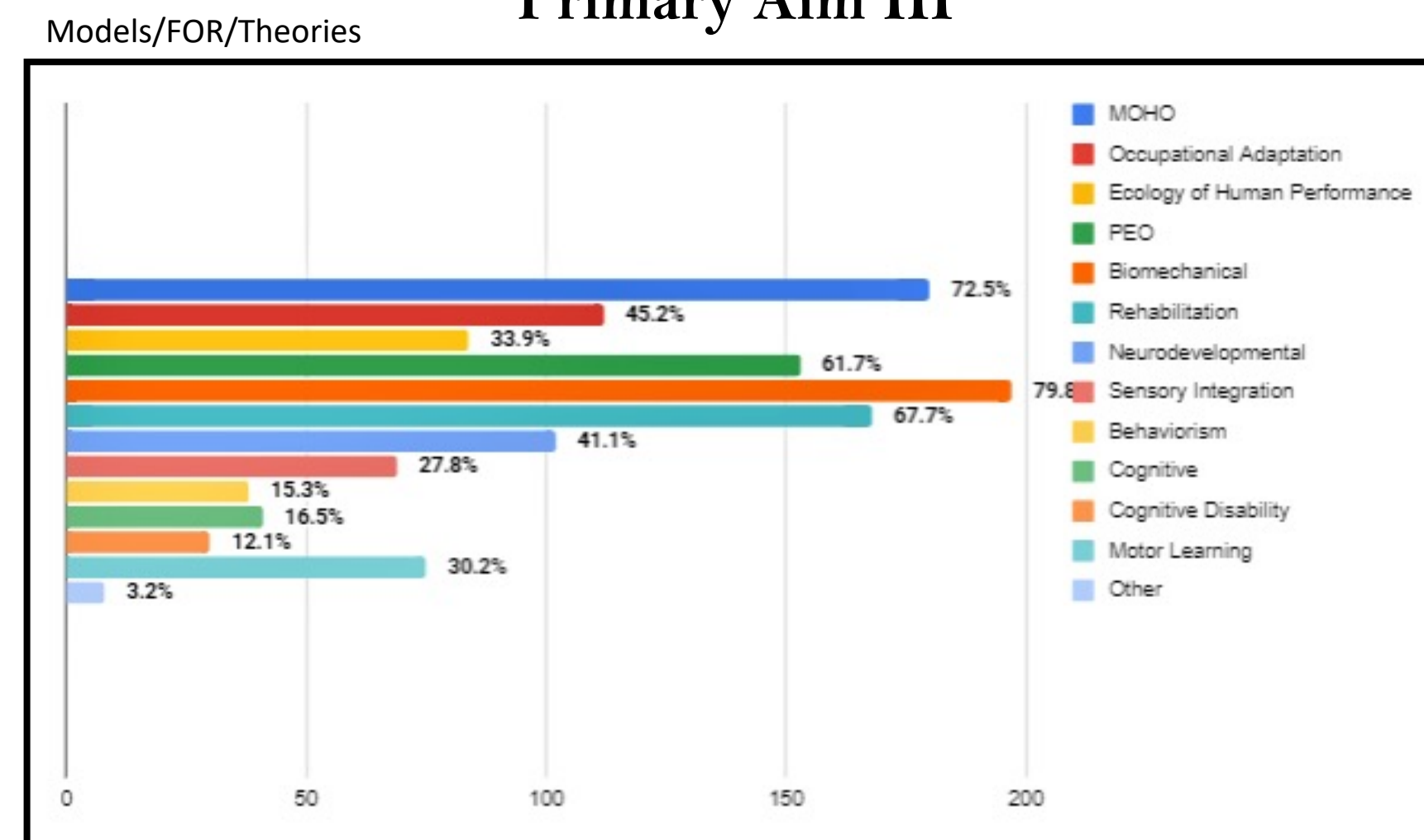
- Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to understand and explore the use of OBP in the field of occupational therapy through the lens of University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) Level II occupational therapy fieldwork students through feedback from the Student Evaluation of the Fieldwork Experience form.
- Primary Aim I:** Identify the ways in which UMMC fieldwork educators model the use of occupation-based activities as a therapeutic intervention, as reported by the fieldwork students.
- Primary Aim II:** Identify the frequently indicated purposeful and preparatory activities that are modeled by UMMC fieldwork educators.
- Primary Aim III:** Discover the theories, frames of references and models of practice that are frequently used by UMMC fieldwork educators.

## RESULTS

### Primary Aim I



### Primary Aim III



### Primary Aim II

Purposeful and Preparatory Activities

Preparatory Activity		
Activity Type	# Times marked	Total %
PAMs	119	47.98%
Thermal	63	25.40%
Orthoses	88	35.48%
Exercise	158	63.71%
Sensory	74	29.84%
ROM	25	10.08%
Stretching	18	7.26%
Manual Therapy	23	9.27%
Unspecified	14	5.65%

Purposeful Activity		
ADL	72	29.03%
IADL	47	18.95%
Sensory	35	14.11%
Ther-ex	80	32.26%
Cognitive Retraining	33	13.31%
Enabling Activities - Gross	106	42.74%
Enabling Activities - Fine	84	33.87%
Visual/Perceptual	23	9.27%
Neuromuscular	19	7.66%
Social Interaction	6	2.42%

### Cross Tabulations

	ACUTE	OUTPATIENT	INPATIENT	PEDIATRIC OUTPATIENT		ACUTE	OUTPATIENT	INPATIENT	PEDIATRIC OUTPATIENT
OCCUPATION BASED PRACTICE					PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES				
Activities of Daily Living			X		Physical Agent Modalities		X		
Education				X	Exercise			X	
Dressing			X		Orthoses		X		
Instrumental Activities of Daily Living			X		Sensory				X
PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES					FRAMES OF REFERENCE/ MODELS				
Enabling Gross Motor Activities			X		Model of Human Occupation			X	
Enabling Fine Motor Activities		X			Biomechanical		X		
Therapeutic Exercise		X			Rehabilitation			X	
Activities of Daily Living	X		X		Person Environment Occupation Model			X	

## METHODOLOGY

- Research Design:** This quality improvement study utilized a retrospective, descriptive research design to collect quantitative data. To examine implementation of OBP during Level II Fieldwork, records kept by the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator at the UMMC SHRP OT department were used, specifically, the SEFWE forms.
- Source of Retrospective Data:** The SEFWE is a form created by AOTA to serve as a tool for academic programs and fieldwork sites enabling students to provide feedback regarding their overall experience. This study specifically focused on the three therapeutic interventions in the SEFWE: occupation-based activity, purposeful and preparatory methods, as well as theoretical models.
- Inclusion Criteria:** SEFWE forms completed within the last 3 academic years (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021) by UMMC occupational therapy students were included in the study. Forms were excluded if records were not fully completed within sections pertinent to this study.
- Data Collection Process:** SEFWE forms were collected by the researchers from the Academic Fieldwork Coordinator of the OTD program hard copy fieldwork files.
- Data Analysis:** Quantitative data collected from the fieldwork records was analyzed using descriptive statistics including mean, median, mode, and frequencies. Cross-tabulations were used to compare data. Data Analysis was completed using Excel and SPSS.

## CONCLUSION

- This study provides insight to the experiences of UMMC OTD Level II Fieldwork students, and whether their clinical observations align with the current curriculum regarding the use of OBP. Specifically, our study aimed to highlight the frequency of activities listed on the SEFWE form such as occupation-based activities, preparatory and purposeful activities, and various models, FORs, and theories. Our results suggest that much of what students are seeing during the fieldwork experience is congruent with what is reported in the literature, however there is some misunderstanding of the concepts of occupation-based activity, preparatory and purposeful activity, as reflected on the completed SEFWE forms. In addition, some differences were noted in the student's observation of theories used in contrast to findings in the literature. Further clarification to these areas may be beneficial to students, whether it be through the UMMC OTD Fieldwork Coordinator's communication with the fieldwork educators or through teaching methods in the OTD curriculum.

## LIMITATIONS

- The use of occupation-based practices varied by setting, and therefore affected what types of interventions were observed by the student.
- The form included open-ended questions, making the data more specified in some forms and a lack of uniformity in the information reported.
- There was a lack of clarity and consensus in differentiating between OBP versus purposeful and preparatory activities.
- Since SEFWE forms were completed by the students after finishing their fieldwork experience, this may have introduced recall bias.
- Response bias may have been a limitation if the student only reported what they thought would have satisfied the fieldwork educator or academic FW coordinator.

## IMPLICATIONS

- The results of this retrospective study have the following implications for the UMMC Occupational Therapy department:
- The OTD curriculum should continue to provide further clarification for students when distinguishing between purposeful activities, preparatory methods, and occupation-based activities.
  - Further practice in incorporating a variety of theories, FORs, and models of practice into OBP would benefit student understanding.
  - Potentially, an updated AOTA SEFWE form would be beneficial in gathering the appropriate information regarding a student's Level II Fieldwork experience. Making suggestions and advocating for such change would be necessary from the OTD program.
  - To ensure that the student experience aligns with the UMMC OTD curriculum, the UMMC OTD Fieldwork Coordinator can include an assignment in fieldwork seminar to review how to implement OBP. A comprehensive overview on the UMMC OTD curriculum could also be incorporated in continuing education offering to fieldwork educators.