



Life Skills Development and Role of Occupational Therapy for Adults with Special Needs

Canary Brooks, OTS¹, Dr. Tonia Taylor, ¹ and Renae Bennett²
University of Mississippi Medical Center¹ and Itawamba Crossroads Ranch



OVERVIEW OF CAPSTONE SITE

Itawamba Crossroads Ranch (ICR) is a non-profit organization that is progressing to provide adults with special needs a safe and comfortable environment to assist with life skills and interaction with volunteers and peers. IRC was developed based on a vision to provide opportunities for special needs adults to thrive, not merely exist. The mission statement behind this vision is "To provide high functioning, special needs adults a safe, loving environment with supervised independence. Our goal is to provide activities and learning experiences which will focus on each resident's abilities, not disabilities."



LITERATURE SUMMARY

- Participants accelerated skill consolidation, self-determination, and maintenance, and autonomy by being actively involved in formal curriculum sessions during the day and less structured sessions in the evening (Kingsnorth, Rudzik, King, & Mcpherson, 2019)
- Active support being associated with optimal outcomes and customizing to fit the needs of participants receiving service. staff should reflect knowledge, skills, and cultural competency to embrace affirmative support of the residents trusted in their care (Bigby & Beadle-Brown, 2016).

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- **Phase I:** A questionnaire was conducted via facetime with ICR founder and executive director, Renae Bennett, regarding the needs of the capstone site. Based on the findings, the primary gaps included the need of enhancing independence of ADL/IADLS and guidance for coping strategies, and mannerism effective communication.
- **Phase II:** A semi-structured interview was created to target the special needs population. Prior to retrieving data, the capstone mentor emphasized the importance of incorporating better structure, organization, and guidance for the benefit of the capstone site and future residents. Common findings included the need of assisting with organization, memory, and task completion followed by various ADL task.

PROJECT GOALS / OBJECTIVES

P Purpose	Provide structure and function to enhance the well-being, independence, and social activity of adults with special needs.
G Goal	Implement a sustainable program by providing a protocol to fulfill the needs of capstone site.
O Objective	Teach, program, and advocate to help with the sustainability of the development of the capstone project.

Goal 1: The capstone student will develop a daily activity independence program at Itawamba Crossroads Ranch within 14 weeks.

- Student will conduct the Phase II Needs Assessment with ranch volunteers, residents, and/or caregivers.
- Student will create a design based on the disabilities and expectations from the data collected from Phase II Needs Assessment.

Student conducted the Phase II Needs Assessment with ranch future residents and/or caregivers utilizing a 5 question-questionnaire based on their personal needs that have or needed to be met. After conducting the Phase II Needs Assessment, student created a design based on the disabilities and expectations from the data collected from the given assessment. Through completion of above task, student developed a daily activity independence program at Itawamba Crossroads Ranch within 14 weeks.

Goal 2: The capstone student will develop a program that focuses on education and benefits of a daily activity independence program for family/caregivers of participants for 7-8 weeks.

- Student will conduct educational sessions to family/caregivers to increase knowledge on the benefits of independent living for adults with special needs.
- Student will obtain the resources needed to increase knowledge and resources on adapting to independent living as a family member.

Student conducted educational sessions to family/caregivers to increase knowledge of the benefits of independent living for adults with special needs. Student obtained resources and information from related facilities such as Mustard Seed (Brandon, MS) and Brookwood (Georgetown, TX) to increase knowledge and resources on adapting to independent living as a family member. Through completion of above task, student developed a program that focused on education and benefits of daily activity independence program for family/caregiver participants for 7-8 weeks.

Goal 3: The capstone student will implement a sustainable daily activity independence program within setting for 7-8 weeks.

- Student will instruct future residents on how to independently perform self-care and household task.
- Student will educate future residents on coping mechanisms to maintain agitation and stress during a difficult task.

Student instructed future residents on how to independently perform self-care and household task by providing instructional learning sessions utilizing visual aids. Student educated residents on coping mechanisms to maintain agitation and stress during a difficult task. Capstone student implemented a sustainable daily activity independence program within setting for 7-8 weeks.

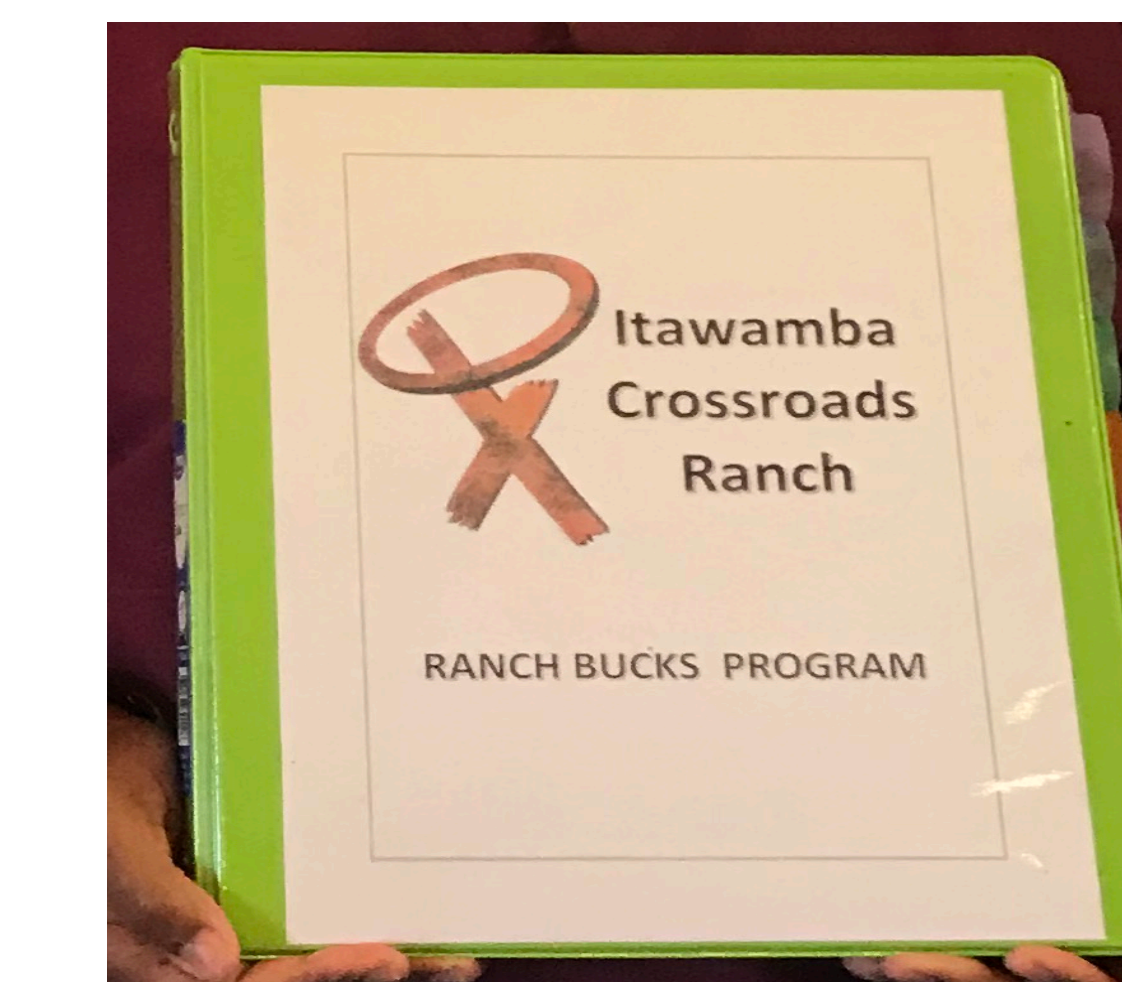
Goal 4: The capstone student will demonstrate efficacy of daily activity independence programming through program evaluation.

- Complete post-program questionnaire with director, staff, and volunteers at the site.
- Create a program guide and educate appropriate personnel to facilitate continued implementation.

Student conducted semi-structure interview to complete a post-program questionnaire with director, staff, and volunteers at the site. Student created and completed a program guide/protocol and educated appropriate personnel to facilitate continued implementation. The capstone student demonstrated efficacy of daily activities independence programming through program evaluation.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

The project developed as a result of researching the literature, assessing the needs, and collaborating with executive director of Mustard Seed, Inc. Based on those task, an existing program was modified and implemented for the needs of the capstone site and future residents. Ranch Bucks is a point-based incentive program to assist with developing life skills and empowering to change negative behavior. The staff and volunteers were presented with a protocol manual to assist with future implementation. Information detailed within the manual includes an introduction, description, guideline, inventory form for purchased merchandise, and point log for point management.



PLAN FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

The evaluation plan is a process for assessing the outcome/impact of the capstone project. This process will provide a description on how the project will be assessed for goal accomplishment. In addition, it will offer preliminary considerations for different types of assessment instruments that may be used or developed during the experience. Based on research and education, observation and interviewing would be more beneficial to measure the outcomes of this particular capstone project. Referencing to the previous goals and objectives, the ultimate long-term goal is to improve the independency of adults with special needs in a new, residential environment. Along with that goal, it would be important to address the structure, behavior, education, and benefits of the participants, family/caregivers, and the organization.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

- My professional and personal knowledge of working with adults with special needs has increased. Under the supervision and guidance of the staff members of Itawamba Crossroads Ranch, I was able to modify and implement a program, Ranch Bucks, focusing on the well-being, independence, and social activity with the future residents of Crossroads Ranch.
- As an occupational therapy student, the role of occupational therapy in a special needs setting in the following: a consultant, practitioner, and advocate.
- The capstone mentor, staff, and volunteers perceived the protocol manual as a tool that would be sustainable and useful for continuing implementation.