



## Accessibility Awareness, Interest, and Knowledge of Occupational Therapy Students

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to assess whether the incorporation of an environmental assessment for accessibility, as part of an "Activity Analysis" course, would enhance new students' knowledge, competence, awareness, and interest in accessibility issues for people with disabilities. In this research, we included an out-of-class training of environmental assessment for accessibility. One hundred and two 1st-year occupational therapy students at Tel Aviv University participated in this research. Of the 102 participants, 56 experienced the training and 46 did not but attended the regular Activity Analysis course. The students explored a typical community environment, of accessibility. There was no significant difference in the results of the Accessibility-Knowledge Competence Awareness and Interests before and after the Activity Analysis course in the control group. The findings of the current study support the contribution of teaching 1st-year.

**Keywords:** Accessibility; Curriculum; Occupational therapy

### Introduction

Occupational therapy students the principles and practices of accessibility for people with disabilities, by improving their knowledge and level of competence at this early stage of their professional lives. Further studies are needed, however, to determine the optimal course of implementation in order to enhance awareness and interest in the subject of accessibility one of the most important aspects of maximizing an individual's performance in their daily activities is a supportive environment [1]. Professional organizations in occupational therapy have acknowledged this idea. In Western nations, the implementation of laws and regulations designed to combat discrimination against people with disabilities, particularly those pertaining to accessibility, has provided hope to those who stand to benefit. Disability is defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) as the result of the interaction between people with impairments and the environmental obstacles that prevent them from fully participating in society [2]. As a result, health professionals' educational approach needed to be reevaluated in order for students to fully comprehend these ideas. Opportunities to learn about the complex challenges that people with disabilities face in everyday life can be beneficial to students enrolled in health profession programs. An occupational therapy education program's objective is to incorporate these concepts into the curriculum, but this presents unique challenges [3].

### Method

Additionally, occupational therapy educators must deal with the challenge of providing a curriculum that enables students to apply theoretical knowledge to the complexity of actual service situations. Problem-based learning, clinical experience, and simulation are some of the teaching methods utilized by health programs in general and occupational therapy in particular to close this gap. It has been recognized that simulation learning makes it easier to put theory into practice in a controlled and secure setting [4].

In their classes, occupational therapy instructors employ both more

active learning methods and more conventional lecture methods like "chalk and talk." They "use instructional methods that can be broadly classified as teacher-centered (e.g., lectures) or student-centered" and "develop teaching styles based on their pedagogical beliefs." Students' perspectives on the value of course material can be influenced by educators' construction and presentation methods [5]. Therefore, there is a positive correlation between improved academic performance outcomes and student-centered methods that involve active learning. In ways that lectures and in-class activities alone cannot, these methods help students integrate and analyze information [6]. Occupational therapy students who received multiple and flexible methods of instruction, such as course application through labs and fieldwork, gained a better understanding of the information than students who only received the traditional lecture-based approach, according to a study that investigated the effectiveness of a universal course design in an occupational therapy curriculum.

### Results

Most first-year students are unaware of how much mobility technology affects the lives of people with disabilities. Students are better able to comprehend the difficulties associated with accessibility for people with disabilities and are more motivated to seek solutions if they are provided with the opportunity to physically encounter everyday environmental obstacles. As a result, students in several studies have been required to use wheelchairs for mobility. This not only made the students more aware of the consequences of disability,

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