

**AN EXECUTIVE FUNCTION  
PROTOCOL USED IN A  
POSTSECONDARY  
TRANSITION PROGRAM**

Pilot Study  
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**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Explain the role of an OTP in providing executive functioning interventions for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in postsecondary transition programs.
- OTPs can determine which executive functioning interventions are beneficial for students with (IDD) in postsecondary transition programs.
- OTPs can appraise the pilot study to determine if the interventions and methods used to analyze the data can be used within their own practice when providing interventions and documenting change in performance.

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**BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT**

- Individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) lack executive functioning (EF) skills
- EF is a variety of skills such as, planning, initiation, working memory and self-monitoring (Adreon & Durocher, 2007).
- Transition services prepare individuals for education, employment, independent living or community participation (IDEA, 2004).

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**EXECUTIVE FUNCTION IS KEY!**

- Executive Function Skill training is needed to promote the successful transition
- Found to be one of the primary reasons for success (or lack of success) with a successful transition
- OT's role on the transition team bring a unique lens regarding EF training

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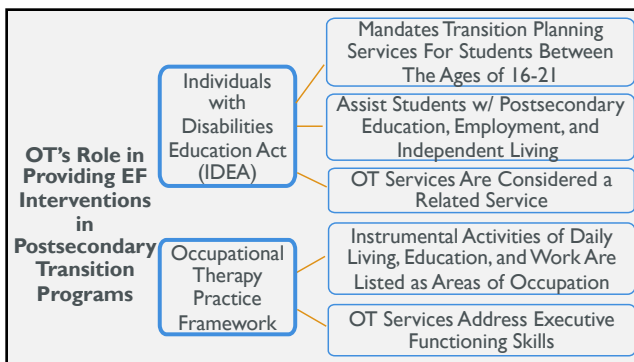
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**RESEARCH QUESTION AND PURPOSE**

- **Research Question**
  - What is the role of an OTP in providing EF interventions for students with ASD and IDD in postsecondary transition programs?
- **Project Purpose**
  - Implement interventions for students in a postsecondary transition program
  - Determine OT's role when providing EF interventions in a transition program
  - Determine what EF interventions are most beneficial for individuals with ASD and IDD

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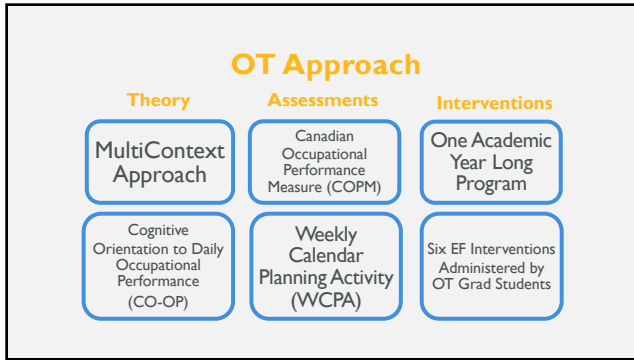
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**METHODS**

**Data Collection**

- COPM and WCPA administered before and after six interventions to obtain quantitative data
- Survey administered weekly to obtain qualitative data

**Intervention**

- Six intervention sessions were created and administered by graduate OT students
- Each session addressed a different EF skill (planning, organizing, shifting, initiation, working memory)

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**Participants**

- Six students diagnosed with ASD or IDD
- Five males and one female
- Dual enrollment transition program
- Receive OT as a related services through their IEP (IDEA Part B)
- Enrolled in a three credit college course while also receiving transition services

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**WEEKLY CALENDAR PLANNING ACTIVITY (WCPA)**  
JOAN TOGLIA, PH.D., OTR, FAOTA

- Assesses:
  - Initiation
  - Inhibition
  - Cognitive Flexibility
  - Planning and Organization
  - Working Memory

*"This activity involves putting appointments and errands into this Weekly schedule (point to the schedule). Here is a list of appointments that need to be scheduled during the week (point to the list)."*

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**WEEKLY CALENDAR PLANNING ACTIVITY (WCPA)**  
**LET'S TRY IT OUT!**

<p><b>Directions:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enter the appointments in any order in the weekly schedule.</li> <li>2. Enter the entire or complete appointment or errand.</li> <li>3. Mark the exact time needed on the weekly schedule (when it is indicated).</li> <li>4. It is more important to be accurate than to go too fast.</li> <li>5. Remember to follow the rules.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Rules:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once you have entered an appointment into the calendar, you cannot cross it out.</li> <li>2. Tell me when it is _____.</li> <li>3. Leave <u>Saturday</u> free. Do not schedule any appointments or errands on this day.</li> <li>4. Do not answer questions from the examiner during this activity.</li> <li>5. Tell the examiner when you are finished.</li> </ol>
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Tidy up and organize your apartment on one weekday between 12:00 and 4:00 p.m. (2 hours)

Volunteering at telephone help line on Thursday from 9:00-10:30 a.m.

One work shift in the mall. Possible shifts are from Sunday-Thursday, from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. or from 4:00-10:00 p.m.

Movie at the theater, at one of two showings: Sunday at 5:00 p.m. or Thursday at 6:00 p.m. (2 hours)

Pick up cellular phone from repair at the mall on Sunday, Tuesday, or Thursday from 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (half hour)

Buy sneakers at the mall before Thursday (1 hour)

Lunch with friend on Monday from 1:00-2:00 p.m.

45-minute exercise at the gym either Thursday or Friday morning

Take the dog to get vaccination at the open clinic on Wednesday morning until 10:00 a.m. (half hour).

Pick up a package from the post office branch at the mall any time before Monday afternoon at 12:00 p.m.

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# SAMPLE WCPA REPORT

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# EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING PROTOCOL

Executive Functioning Protocol

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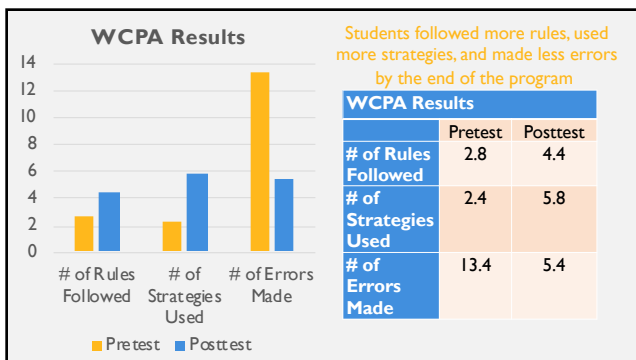
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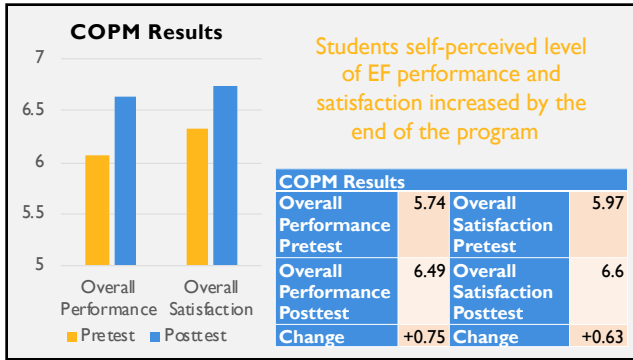
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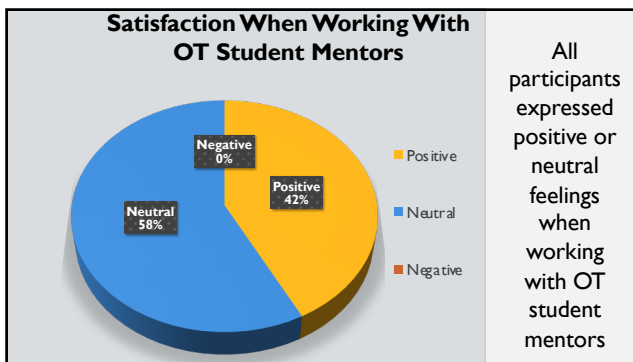
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**RELEVANCE TO PREVIOUS LITERATURE**

- Previous literature has shown that EF interventions can improve EF skills in children
- Previous literature has demonstrated the unique value of OT in postsecondary transition programs
- This research has shown the value of implementing EF interventions for young adults in a postsecondary transition program

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### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Limitations

- Small sample size
- Lack of a control group
- Limited time to implement group interventions

#### Recommendations for Future Study

- Increase sample size and/or an addition of a control group
- Increase number of interventions administered
- Allow for students to participate in a more flexible schedule
- Ability to complete sessions virtually

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### IMPLICATIONS TO OT

- OT interventions showed improvements in EF skills
- OTP's are an integral team member in a transition program
- OTP's can provide universality and access to postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities  
(Jirakovic et al., 2013).
- OTP's should address EF in postsecondary transition programs

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### SUMMARY

- Improved self-awareness of EF skills by the end of the program
- Improvements in working memory, planning, organizing, inhibition, shifting, and initiation skills
- Improvements were not seen in procrastination

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### SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

- An overall positive experience when working with OT student mentors
- Students were more interactive and attentive when mentors ran the interventions
- Perhaps a greater change will occur in students with a longer program and a more flexible schedule

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