

2018 COTA[®] Curriculum Textbook and Peer-Reviewed Journal Report

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About NBCOT

The National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc. (NBCOT®) is the national certification body for occupational therapy professionals in the United States.

The mission of NBCOT is to serve the public interest by advancing client care and professional practice through evidence-based certification standards and the validation of knowledge essential for effective practice in occupational therapy.

Currently, 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia require NBCOT initial certification for occupational therapy state regulation (i.e., licensing).

NBCOT certification programs are accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). NBCOT is a member of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE) as well as the International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities (IAMRA).



Background

The CERTIFIED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT COTA® certification examinations are “high stakes” examinations administered at over 350 sites throughout North America, its territories, and internationally, and are designed to serve the public by assuring that an individual has adequate occupational therapy knowledge for practice at the assistant level. In accordance with industry standards, NBCOT COTA certification examinations are constructed based on the results of a practice analysis study. The ultimate goals of the practice analysis study are to ensure a representative link of the test content to practice and make certain the credentialing examination contains meaningful indicators of competence while providing evidence that supports the content validity of the examination. Therefore, each item developed for the certification examination must be a valid representation of current entry-level practice. In addition to linking items to the examination outline, NBCOT volunteer subject matter experts, who play a key role in the item development process, are asked to cross-reference their content expertise with current and frequently used occupational therapy references, which further contributes to the validity of the content.

The COTA certification examinations not only serve the public, they serve the candidate as well. Passing the certification examination represents a major career milestone, allowing the new certificant to begin a professional career with the appropriate credentials. A candidate who takes the COTA examination should only fail the exam

for one reason, insufficient knowledge of OT practice at the assistant level. Therefore, as noted in the *CLEAR Principles of Fairness* (2015), the duty of the certifying body is to provide the candidate with adequate information about the testing process. This includes posting the following information on the NBCOT website: results of the practice analysis, examination test outline, test characteristics (i.e., type and number of items), computer-based testing environment, and test preparation strategies (e.g., sample items). One primary test preparation strategy is for the candidate to be aware of the common references item writers use to validate the content contained in examination items.

The COTA certification examinations not only serve the public, they serve the candidate as well.

PURPOSE OF THE TEXTBOOK AND PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL SURVEY

The validated domain, task, and knowledge statements outlined in the most recent practice analysis study serve as the outline for all NBCOT examination forms (NBCOT, 2018). NBCOT conducts periodic surveys to identify textbooks and peer-reviewed journals commonly used in occupational therapy educational programs. Results of the surveys are used when reviewing and updating the NBCOT examination item writer reference list. In fairness to examination candidates, NBCOT makes every effort to select textbooks and journal references that are familiar to the majority of candidates. Additionally, NBCOT posts the results of these surveys on its website to enable program directors and candidates to access this information.

Each year, item writers are tasked to develop examination items reflecting knowledge within specific domains of the examination outline. As items are written, the content of each item must be verified in a specific textbook or peer-reviewed journal reference. Item writers are encouraged to use reference textbooks and peer-reviewed journal articles from the NBCOT reference list. The textbooks must be the most recent edition (preferably within the last five years), and the reference must validate the knowledge needed to complete tasks associated with a particular domain of occupational therapy assistant practice.

NBCOT posts the results of these surveys on its website to enable program directors and candidates to access this information.

Table 1 indicates the top 10 textbook references NBCOT item writers currently use to validate item content for the COTA certification examinations. This list was generated from the tool NBCOT uses to author certification examination items. NBCOT notes there have been several new texts recently published specifically for the OTA (e.g., *Kinesiology for the occupational therapy assistant: Essential components of function and movement* [2nd ed.]).

It is anticipated that moving forward, such textbooks will become integrated into the item development program as NBCOT item writers become familiar with these resources.

In addition to textbooks, a small number of articles from the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* have been used by NBCOT item writers to clarify, confirm or update information appearing in entry level OT texts.

Table 1. Alphabetical Listing of the Top 10 Textbook References Currently Used by NBCOT COTA Item Writers

Textbook Title

Case-Smith, J., & O'Brien, J. C. (2015). *Occupational therapy for children and adolescents* (7th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.

Early, M. B. (2013). *Physical dysfunction practice skills for the occupational therapy assistant* (3rd ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.

Early, M. B. (2017). *Mental health concepts & techniques for the occupational therapy assistant* (5th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Jacobs, K., & MacRae, N. (Eds.). (2017). *Occupational therapy essentials for clinical competence* (3rd ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.

Lohman, H., Byers-Connon, S., & Padilla, R. L. (2018). *Occupational therapy with elders: Strategies for the COTA* (4th ed.). Maryland Heights, MO: Mosby Elsevier.

Radomski, M. V., & Trombly Latham, C. A. (Eds.). (2014). *Occupational therapy for physical dysfunction* (7th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Schell, B. A. B., Gillen, G., & Scaffa, M. E. (2014). *Willard & Spackman's occupational therapy* (12th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Solomon, J. W., & O'Brien, J. C. (2016). *Pediatric skills for occupational therapy assistants* (4th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.

Wagenfeld, A. (2016). *Foundations of theory and practice for the occupational therapy assistant*. Baltimore, MD: Wolters Kluwer –Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins.

Wagenfeld, A., & Kaldenberg, J. (Eds.). (2016). *Foundations of pediatric practice for the occupational therapy assistant* (2nd ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.

SUMMARY OF THE TEXTBOOK AND PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL SURVEY

The following information summarizes the results of the Textbook and Peer-Reviewed Journal Survey conducted by NBCOT in the first quarter of 2018. The scope of this study was to survey program directors of occupational therapy assistant programs.

METHOD

In January 2018, 223 Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) program directors (219 program directors from accredited programs and 4 program directors from developing programs) were invited via email to complete an internet-based survey. The names of the program directors and schools were obtained from a published list provided by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE®). The survey asked respondents to provide information about the textbooks and journals that are required, recommended, or not used in their academic programs.

The textbooks and peer-reviewed journals included in the survey were based on:

- responses to a similar survey conducted in 2016;
- feedback from OTA educators;
- recommendations from OTR and COTA volunteers appointed to NBCOT committees and taskforce projects;
- and an internet-based reviews of major occupational therapy publishing sites.

For ease of completing the survey, the textbook and peer-reviewed journal titles were formatted in American Psychological Association (APA) style and divided into the following categories: Administration, Management, and/or Healthcare Systems; Assistive Technology; Community-Based Practice and Health & Wellness; Comprehensive Occupational Therapy; Documentation; Gerontology-Related; Group Dynamics/Communications/Clinical Problem-Solving; Mental Health/Psychosocial; Occupational Performance/Activities-Based; Pediatric-Related; Physical Dysfunction/Physical Rehabilitation; and Practice-Based Science; Practice Standards/Ethics.

An email was sent to OTA program directors providing information about the purpose of the study, contact information for questions, the response deadline, and a link for accessing the survey. Program directors were given four weeks to complete the survey and two reminder emails were sent to encourage participation. Additionally, for respondents who submitted incomplete surveys, emails were sent on two separate occasions requesting completion. The survey respondents were asked to select the textbooks and journals from each category that are: 1) *Required* for a course; 2) *Recommended* as part of the curriculum; or 3) *Not Used* in the entry-level curriculum at their educational program. An open response entry was also available for respondents to enter any other textbook or peer-reviewed journal used as a part of their curriculum but not listed in the survey.

Survey Results

Ninety-six of the 219 OTA program directors from accredited programs responded to the survey, resulting in a response rate of 44%. Three of the four OTA program directors from developing programs responded, resulting in a response rate of 75%. Results reported are from responses of program directors of accredited and developing programs combined. Consistent with previous surveys, NBCOT defined frequently used textbooks or peer-reviewed journals as those required and/or recommended by at least 20% of the respondents. Textbooks and peer-reviewed

journals not indicated as required and or recommended by 20% of the respondents were not included in the results. In addition, textbooks and journals identified in the open-ended portion of the survey were included if 20% of the respondents indicated the textbook or journal was required and/or recommended. Frequently used textbooks and peer-reviewed journals for OTA Programs are presented in **Tables 2 through 13**, with results rounded to the nearest percentage.

Table 2. Administration, Management, and/or Healthcare Systems Textbooks		
Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Jacobs, K. (2016). <i>Management and administration for the OTA: Leadership and application skills</i> . Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	47%	5%
Solomon, A., & Jacobs, K. (2003). <i>Management skills for the occupational therapy assistant</i> . Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	12%	9%

Table 3. Comprehensive Occupational Therapy Textbooks

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Sladyk, K., & Ryan, S. E. (Eds.). (2015). <i>Ryan's occupational therapy assistant: Principles, practice issues, and techniques</i> (5th ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	46%	10%
Clifford O'Brien, J. (2011). <i>Introduction to occupational therapy</i> (4th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.	44%	3%
Atchison, B. J., & Durette, D. K. (2012). <i>Conditions in occupational therapy: Effect on occupational performance</i> (4th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.	30%	5%
Reed, K. L. (2014). <i>Quick reference to occupational therapy</i> (3rd ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.	26%	39%
Meriano, C., & Latella, D. (2016). <i>Occupational therapy interventions: Function and occupations</i> (2nd ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	17%	39%
Schell, B. A. B., Gillen, G., & Scaffa, M. E. (2014). <i>Willard & Spackman's occupational therapy</i> (12th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.	7%	13%

Table 4. Documentation Textbook

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Morreale, M. J., & Borcharding, S. (2013). <i>The OTA's guide to documentation: Writing SOAP notes</i> (3rd ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	66%	9%

Table 5. Gerontology-Related Textbook

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Padilla, R. L., Byers-Connon, S., & Lohman, H. (2012). <i>Occupational therapy with elders: Strategies for the COTA</i> (3rd ed.). Maryland Heights, MO: Mosby Elsevier.	67%	4%

Table 6. Group Dynamics/Communications/Clinical Problem-Solving Textbook

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Cole, M. B. (2018). <i>Group dynamics in occupational therapy: The theoretical basis and practice application of group intervention</i> (5th ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	53%	13%

Table 7. Mental Health/Psychosocial Textbooks

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Early, M. B. (2017). <i>Mental health concepts & techniques for the occupational therapy assistant</i> (5th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.	75%	4%
Manville, C. A., & Keough, J. L. (2016). <i>Mental health practice for the occupational therapy assistant</i> . Thorofare, NJ: SLACK Inc.	14%	6%
American Psychiatric Association. (2013). <i>Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders</i> (5th ed.). Arlington, VA: Author.	8%	45%

Table 8. Occupational Performance/Activities-Based Textbooks

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Thomas, H. (2015). <i>Occupation-based activity analysis</i> (2nd ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	57%	5%
Tubbs, C. C., & Drake, M. (2017). <i>Crafts and creative media in therapy</i> (5th ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	22%	8%

Table 9. Pediatric-Related Textbooks

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Solomon, J. W., & O'Brien, J. C. (2016). <i>Pediatric skills for occupational therapy assistants</i> (4th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.	70%	3%
Wagenfeld, A., & Kaldenberg, J. (Eds.). (2016). <i>Foundations of pediatric practice for the occupational therapy assistant</i> (2nd ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	21%	7%
Case-Smith, J., & O'Brien, J. C. (2015). <i>Occupational therapy for children and adolescents</i> (7th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.	11%	11%

Table 10. Physical Dysfunction/Physical Rehabilitation Textbooks

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Early, M. B. (2013). <i>Physical dysfunction practice skills for the occupational therapy assistant</i> (3rd ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.	82%	3%
Coppard, B. M., & Lohman, H. (2015). <i>Introduction to orthotics: A clinical reasoning and problem-solving approach</i> (4th ed.). St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier.	20%	3%
Zoltan, B. (2007). <i>Vision, perception, and cognition: A manual for the evaluation and treatment of the adult with acquired brain injury</i> (4th ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	10%	10%

Table 11. Practice-Based Science Textbooks

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
Lippert, L. S. (2011). <i>Clinical kinesiology and anatomy</i> (5th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: F.A. Davis Company.	39%	5%
Keough, J. L., Sain, S. J., & Roller, C. L. (2017). <i>Kinesiology for the occupational therapy assistant: Essential components of function and movement</i> (2nd ed.). Thorofare, NJ: SLACK, Inc.	23%	4%

Table 12. Practice Standards/Ethics Textbooks

Text Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
American Occupational Therapy Association. (2014). <i>Occupational therapy practice framework: Domain and process</i> (3rd ed.). Bethesda, MD: AOTA Press.	84%	8%
American Occupational Therapy Association. (2015). <i>The reference manual of the official documents of the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.</i> (20th ed.). Bethesda, MD: AOTA Press.	14%	23%

Table 13. Peer-Reviewed Journals

Journal Title	Course Requirement	Recommended
American Journal of Occupational Therapy	56%	37%
Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy	7%	37%
British Journal of Occupational Therapy	7%	35%
Occupational Therapy in Mental Health	4%	34%
Gerontology	3%	24%
Australian Occupational Therapy Journal	2%	31%
Occupational Therapy Journal of Research: Occupation, Participation and Health	2%	27%
Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation	1%	22%
American Journal of Psychiatry	1%	21%
Journal of Occupational Science	1%	20%

SUMMARY OF FREQUENTLY USED TEXTBOOKS

Twenty-six textbooks were cited as either required and/or recommended by at least 20% of the OTA program directors. Required textbooks indicated most often, with a response rate of 60% or higher, are as follows:

- *Mental Health Concepts & Techniques for the Occupational Therapy Assistant* (5th edition)
- *Occupational Therapy with Elders: Strategies for the COTA* (3rd edition)
- *Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process* (3rd edition)
- *The OTA's Guide to Documentation: Writing SOAP Notes* (4th edition)
- *Pediatric Skills for Occupational Therapy Assistants* (4th edition)
- *Physical Dysfunction Practice Skills for the Occupational Therapy Assistant* (3rd edition)
- *Ryan's Occupational Therapy Assistant: Principles, Practice Issues, and Techniques* (5th edition)

The textbook *Quick Reference to Occupational Therapy* (3rd edition) was required by only 26% of respondents, but 39% also indicated the textbook was recommended. No single textbook was indicated as required by 100% of the respondents. In addition, no textbooks in the Assistive Technology or Community-Based Practice sections met the inclusion criteria of being required and/or recommended by 20% of the OTA program directors. Lastly, although some program directors cited additional textbooks in the open-ended section of the survey, the textbooks were not indicated by at least 20% of the respondents and therefore, were not included in the results.

SUMMARY OF FREQUENTLY USED PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

Ten peer-reviewed journals were indicated as being frequently required and/or recommended. The *American Journal of Occupational Therapy (AJOT)* was the only journal required by more than 50% of OTA program directors. The *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy* was recommended by 37% of the OTA program directors and the *British Journal of Occupational Therapy* was recommended by 35%. Six of the journals listed were indicated as a requirement by three percent or less of the respondents. Nine journals listed in the survey did not meet the inclusion criteria of frequently used peer-reviewed journals.

Conclusion

The results of this survey provide a list of textbooks and peer-reviewed journals frequently required and/or recommended as part of occupational therapy assistant program curricula. A limitation of the study includes the response rate of program directors of occupational therapy assistant programs. Only 44% of the OTA program directors from accredited programs responded, although OTA program directors from developing programs had a significantly higher response rate of 75%. The lower response rate of the accredited programs may be due to the timing of the survey as it was distributed at the beginning of a new academic semester.

The textbooks and peer-reviewed journals identified in this survey will be used in part by NBCOT when indicating references to support content development of items selected for the COTA certification examination and associated study tools. It is important to note, as items are selected to appear on an examination, subject matter experts update references, as needed, to the most recent edition of a textbook, or to alternate or additional textbooks or peer-reviewed journals published within the last five years, in order to verify the content.

References

Gross, L. J., & Showers, B. (2015). Principles of fairness: An examination guide for credentialing boards. Council on Licensure, Enforcement, and Regulation.

National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. (2018). 2017 Practice analysis of the Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. Gaithersburg, MD: NBCOT.

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