Strategies for Integrating Health Literacy into Entry-level OT Curricula: A Comprehensive Approach

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**Background: Why Does Health Literacy Matter?**

- Healthcare providers often work with persons with low health literacy without realizing that this issue limits the success of their interventions. They may also lack awareness of the serious impact that low health literacy can have, since it is associated with lower reported health status, increased hospitalizations, and increased morbidity (Levesque & Carlier, 2013).
- The current U.S. healthcare system places increased demands on consumers to manage their own health (Smith & Gutman, 2011).
- Educators in the health professions must instill a sense of responsibility in future practitioners to understand the important role they play in promoting health literacy.

**Audit: Health Literacy Content Related to Standards**

- Process:
  - Created worksheet with the 3 primary standards related to Health Literacy and boxes to fill in course(s) linked to each of these standards
  - Results summarized into a report and presented at Faculty Retreat

**Results**

- 14 courses address ACOTE Standards related to Health Literacy

**Standard: B.5.18**

- Demonstrate an understanding of health literacy and be able to teach best practices in health literacy to patients, families, and significant others, and communities to facilitate skills in areas of occupation as well as prevention, self-care, and in the public.

**Standard: B.5.19**

- Apply the principles of the teaching-learning process using educational methods to design experiences to address the needs of the client, family, significant others, colleagues, other health providers, and the public.

**Standard: B.5.20**

- Effectively interact through written, oral, and nonverbal communication with the client, family, significant others, colleagues, other health providers, and the public in a professionally acceptable manner.

**ACOTE Standards for Health Literacy and Corresponding Course Activities**

- **B.5.18** Demonstrate an understanding of health literacy and the ability to educate and train the client, caregiver, family, and significant others, and communities to facilitate skills in areas of occupation as well as prevention, health maintenance, health promotion, and safety.

- **B.5.19** Apply the principles of the teaching-learning process using educational methods to design experiences to address the needs of the client, family, significant others, colleagues, other health providers, and the public.

- **B.5.20** Effectively interact through written, oral, and nonverbal communication with the client, family, significant others, colleagues, other health providers, and the public in a professionally acceptable manner.

**Examples of courses addressing the primary content of this standard**

- **OT 302**: Foundations of Occupation-Centered Practice I
- **OT 303**: Foundations of Occupation-Centered Practice II
- **OT 305**: Foundations of Occupation-Centered Practice III
- **OT 306**: Principles of Human Performance
- **OT 307**: Environmental Competence in Action
- **OT 308**: Advanced Research Seminar
- **OT 321**: Foundations of Occupation-Centered Practice I
- **OT 322**: Foundations of Occupation-Centered Practice II
- **OT 323**: Foundations of Occupation-Centered Practice III
- **OT 324**: Principles of Human Performance
- **OT 325**: Environmental Competence in Action
- **OT 326**: Advanced Research Seminar

**Examples of courses addressing the primary content of this standard**

- **OT 336**: Occupation Through the Life Span
- **OT 335**: Occupation Through the Life Span
- **OT 334**: Occupation Through the Life Span
- **OT 333**: Occupation Through the Life Span

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**Synopsis:** Health literacy is a significant factor impacting the efficacy of healthcare services. Initiatives related to health literacy demonstrate that OTs have unique opportunities to promote health literacy and facilitate its integration into practice. It is therefore critical to explore ways in which health literacy content can be incorporated into entry-level OT curricula. Doing so will help ensure that future practitioners are prepared to meet key standards related to health literacy, including those established by ACOTE. This session will highlight strategies and methods to incorporate health literacy into entry-level OT curricula.

**Session Objectives**

- To provide an in-depth examination of best practices in health literacy and enable educators in OT curricula to develop strategies for incorporating health literacy content.

- **Purpose:**
  - OT educators in entry-level OT programs who already have knowledge of OT practice issues but could benefit from in-depth knowledge of how to teach best practice in health literacy.

- **Target Audience:**
  - OT educators in entry-level OT programs.

- **Course Activities:**
  - Scripted interview
  - Rule-play
  - Development of intervention materials
  - Interprofessional student teams in a mentoring relationship
  - Development of learning materials (e.g., presentations)
  - Practicing teach-back
  - Other active learning approaches