

## OTA Curriculum Design and Student Outcomes

The conceptual model chosen by the Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) Program at River Valley Community College was that of a weaving. In this design, the “warp”, representing the supporting structure, provides the basis for the content, scope and sequence of coursework. Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning Domains (Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor) and the hierarchical levels of learning within each domain, guides decisions related to both course sequence as well as the presentation of content within a course. As examples, the course “Introduction to Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy” precedes “Fundamentals Of Occupational Therapy” and within the course “Activities of Daily Living”, basic movement principles and adaptive techniques are reviewed prior to students learning about Treatment planning as outlined in ‘therapeutic Principles’ course.

Overall, the program is developed around Kielhofner’s Model of Human Occupation (MOHO) as represented by the strongest threads of the “weft”, the fibers that join and hold the warp threads together to create a piece of woven cloth (our courses, the faculty & the students motivation).

Volitional system – Prior to entering the OTA program, applicants have demonstrated an *interest* in the field and the *motivation* to complete the pre-admission requirements. In the first year of their curriculum, students are challenged to further identify and clarify their own personal *value* system, *beliefs* and *causation* through experiential learning activities. Students are also given an opportunity to identify their *interests* in selection of Level II fieldwork placements.

Habituation system – Many of the OTA students have returned to school as adult learners. As such, the *role* of student may be less familiar to them than for a student entering the college directly from high school. It is often necessary for new *habits* to be developed and strengthened, particularly as related to study skills and time management. As the student progresses through the program they begin to shed their “student” role and *internalize* the role of a “professional occupational therapy assistant”.

Performance system – Multiple skills are demanded of the developing OTA. They include *communication* and *social interaction* skills, *process* skills, and *motor* skills. This is accomplished in the Roane State OTA program through didactic and group instruction and interactions; lab practicum’s and fieldwork experiences.

The remaining threads of the “weft” are obtained from the shared mission of the OTA program and the institution of River Valley Community College. They are:

- Communication
- Wellness
- Diversity
- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving (The ‘educated person’)

- Community
- Lifelong Learning

Graduates of the OTA program are each a distinct piece of “woven cloth”. Each graduate can be considered in terms of “student as an *open system*” whereby *input* (knowledge), *throughput* (learning process), *output* (behaviors) and *feedback* (from academic and clinical instructors) contribute to the changes required to achieve the capacity of a new *occupational behavior*, that of an entry-level occupational therapy assistant .

### **Educational Goals – Student Learning Outcome**

The educational and behavioral goals of the OTA students reflect both the Model of Human Occupation and the shared mission themes.

Upon graduation the student will:

- Establish *occupational identity* and behaviors that supports work with *diverse* populations in the evolving healthcare environment
- Demonstrate *occupational competence* as evidenced by provision of competent, quality patient care with the highest degree of professionalism and ethical behavior, including adherence to supervision guidelines.
- Employ strategies of *occupational adaptation* to promote health, *wellness*, and participation for individuals and their caregivers through purposeful activity, occupations, technology, within the framework of “best practice”.
- Demonstrate effective intra and interpersonal *communication* skills to support productive relationships with consumers, caregivers, coworkers,
- Utilize *critical thinking and clinical reasoning* strategies to address therapeutic problems as presented in working environment.
- Value and instill *lifelong learning* skills to support service competence, *community* service, and personal growth and development.