

Perceptions of OT & OTA Practitioners on Assistive Technology Education

Karen Dishman, OTD, OTR/L, ATP¹, Juliana Bell, OTD², Leslie J. Hardman, OTD, OTR/L³, Julie A. Duckart, PhD, OTR/L³

¹Gannon University Ruskin, Ruskin, Florida, United States; ²Gannon University, Ruskin, Florida, United States;

³Eastern Kentucky University, Richmond, Kentucky, United States

DOI: [10.5014/ajot.2024.78S2-PO32](https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2024.78S2-PO32)

Date presented: March 22, 24

Primary Author and Speaker: Karen Dishman, otlovesat@gmail.com

This presentation is a summary of our research on the perceptions of occupational therapists (OT) and occupational therapy assistants (OTA) on the categories of assistive technology (AT) provided in OT and OTA entry-level programs. For this survey study, categories of AT are defined as augmentative, alternative communication, activities of daily living, cognitive aids, computer access, electronic activities of daily living (EADL), environmental aids, learning and study aids, recreation and leisure, seating, positioning and mobility, sensory aids, and vocational aids (RESNA, 2023). Other perceptions examined included AT categories OT and OTA practitioners received training on and use most in practice. This mixed-method study used an online survey that included quantitative and qualitative questions. This research is a larger-scale follow-up to our first published study in which only OTs that were AT professionals were surveyed (Dishman et al., 2021). Preliminary results found OTs and OTAs reported having not much or little education in AT during their educational programs (OT: 69.4%; OTA: 83.3%) and desired more education in the AT categories of computer access (OT: 73.7%; OTA 75.0%), EADL (OT: 74.1%; OTA 75%), sensory interventions (OT: 70.2%; OTA: 83.3%), seating and mobility (OT: 74.1%; OTA 66.7%); recreation and play (OT: 56.9%; OTA 75.0%), environmental modification (OT: 74.1%; OTA: 75.0%), accessible transportation (OT: 65.9%; OTA: 58.3%), and technology for learning disabilities (OT: 66.3%; OTA 83.3%). Qualitative preliminary analysis shows participant recommendations for AT education, emphasizing threading hands-on experiences through the curriculum with seating and mobility categorized as most needed. Knowledge gained from this research may assist academic educators and directors in reviewing OT and OTA curricula to determine what categories of AT are provided and the amount of training each program provides.

References

- Dishman, K. M., Duckart, J., & Hardman, L. J. (2021). Perceptual of assistive technology education from occupational therapists certified as assistive technology professionals. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 75(2), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2021.041541>
- Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA). (2023). ATP exam outline. <https://www.resna.org/Certification/Assistive-Technology-Professional-ATP/ATP-Exam-Outline/ATP-Exam-Outline>