

- **Name of the study:** Examining the Effectiveness of a Training Program for Occupational Therapists in Special Education to Develop Knowledge Translation Capabilities and Lead Initiatives for Promoting Participation-Focused Intervention for Students with Disabilities
- **Year:** 2025
- **Type of research:** research
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Abstract

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Background: Participation in meaningful activities has been defined by the World Health Organization as a central focus for intervention for children with disabilities. A significant gap exists between research knowledge and actual implementation of participation-focused intervention in the education system.

Objectives: To examine the effectiveness of a training program for occupational for "Knowledge-broker" therapists and physiotherapists to develop the role of promoting participation-focused interventions, and their ability to plan and execute systemic initiatives.

Method: Mixed-methods quantitative-qualitative research. Participants included 15 women: 13 occupational therapists (86.7%) and 2 physiotherapists (13.3%) with 4-32 years of experience in special education, 73.3% holding master's degrees. The program comprised 30 academic hours over 5 months, based on the P-KT roadmap for knowledge translation.

Research tools: Demographic questionnaire, Knowledge Brokers Role Components Survey (KBRCS) at three time points, quality assessment criteria for participation-focused knowledge transfer initiatives, interview guide for focus groups at program completion.

Findings: 93.3% of participants developed 13 initiatives for promoting student participation ($M=90.12 \pm 10.68/105$). Significant increase was found in change agent ($p<.01$). Significant "capacity builders" ($p<.05$) and "knowledge managers" actions as change in implementing strategies at micro ($\chi^2=16.13, p<.001$), meso ($\chi^2=17.19, p<.001$) and macro ($\chi^2=11.23, p<.05$) levels. Progress in readiness stages ($\chi^2=15.65, p<.001$):

at completion. Four qualitative themes: "doing/we do" to 60% "cannot" from 53% expanding understanding of participation, diverse strategies for promoting participation, professional identity as change agent, organizational factors supporting or hindering change agent actions.

Conclusions: The program is effective in developing the change agent role for promoting participation-focused intervention in the education system. The program presented a transition from conceptual-level information to instrumental-level information and successfully enabled research participants to create structured participation-promoting initiatives in their workplaces. Required: role institutionalization, resource allocation, and ongoing systemic support. The program provides a feasible model for bridging the research-practice gap.

Keywords

Participation, change agent, knowledge translation, occupational therapy, special education, P-KT roadmap

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