

Certification Examination Readiness Tool
for the
CERTIFIED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT COTA®



A Publication of the
National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, Inc.

“This tool really helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses. After using this I developed a structured study plan.”

- NBCOT® Exam Candidate

“I used this tool as a part of a class assignment before the students went out on Level II fieldwork. The tool helped to formulate fieldwork goals and objectives.”

- Academic Fieldwork Coordinator

“Doing this calmed my nerves... I realized that I had covered most of these skills already. It gave me confidence to continue with my exam preparation.”

- NBCOT Exam Candidate

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This tool contains the validated domains, tasks, and skills resulting from the 2007 NBCOT® practice analysis study. **The tool is designed for candidates planning to take the NBCOT CERTIFIED OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSISTANT COTA® examination January 2009 onwards.** It is one of several official NBCOT examination preparation tools - including study guides and online practice tests - developed to assist COTA exam candidates with their test preparation.

In line with certification industry standards, the foundation of the NBCOT certification examinations is based on a practice analysis study. NBCOT periodically conducts practice analysis studies as a basis for developing, maintaining, and defending the content validity of its certification examinations. The last practice analysis study – conducted by NBCOT in 2007 – identified the domains and tasks performed by COTA practitioners, along with the knowledge and skill required to perform them. Results from the study were used to construct the COTA examination test blueprint that will guide examination development for the NBCOT COTA certification examinations beginning January 2009.

About This Tool

This tool lists the validated domains, tasks, and skill statements used to guide examination development for the COTA certification examinations beginning January 2009.

To the right of the skill statements, there is a series of columns and corresponding checkboxes, titled:

- I have performed skill independently
- I have performed skill under supervision
- I have observed other practitioners performing skill
- I have no experience with skill

How To Use This Tool

This tool can be used in two ways to help assess readiness for the certification examination:

1. To review the validated domains, tasks and skill statements used by NBCOT item writers during the examination item development process:

- ▣ Example of how a COTA exam item is developed:

Domain: 01 Gather information and formulate conclusions regarding the client's needs priorities to develop a client-centered intervention plan

Task: 01.02 Contribute comprehensive information regarding the impact of current condition(s) and context(s) on the client's occupational performance in order to assist the OTR in formulating an intervention plan.

Skill: c) Identifying activities to enhance the client's occupational performance

Exam Item: A COTA is planning intervention for a 5-year-old child who has moderate autism. Which environment is MOST BENEFICIAL for promoting the child's play skills?

- A) In a clinic that has a variety of brightly colored mechanical toys
- B) At a familiar location with several developmentally-appropriate toys*
- C) In a secluded area with multiple age-appropriate games and action toys
- D) During a group activity that fosters sensory stimulation and free play opportunities

2. As a self-evaluation tool, the user may choose to indicate their level of experience for each skill by marking the corresponding checkbox.

Example of self-evaluation:

<i>Skill</i>	<i>Performed independently</i>	<i>Under supervision</i>	<i>Observed others</i>	<i>No experience</i>
01.04 Provide information to the OTR regarding the need for referral to other professionals or services in order to facilitate comprehensive, quality care.				
a. Communicating with other team members and community organizations	√			
b. Recognizing the parameters of other service delivery models (e.g. criteria, least restrictive environment, acuity)		√		

Disclaimer: Using this tool cannot guarantee your success on the NBCOT® certification examination. However, candidates may consider using the tool to guide their test preparation strategies or as a basis for discussion with their program director or fieldwork educator.

01 GATHER INFORMATION AND FORMULATE CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE CLIENT'S NEEDS AND PRIORITIES TO DEVELOP A CLIENT-CENTERED INTERVENTION PLAN

Performed independently
Under supervision
Observed others
No experience

Skill

Skill	Performed independently	Under supervision	Observed others	No experience
01.01 Gather information on an ongoing basis using appropriate tools, procedures, and protocols in order to identify factors that impact participation in occupation.				
a. Conducting oneself in a therapeutic manner to gather essential data				
b. Gathering client history related to engagement in occupations				
c. Administering assessments in accordance with protocols				
d. Identifying client needs, problems, concerns, and priorities about occupations and daily life activity performance				
e. Identifying factors that support or hinder occupational performance				
f. Recognizing and responding to unexpected client responses while gathering information				
01.02 Contribute comprehensive information regarding the impact of current condition(s) and context(s) on the client's occupational performance in order to assist the OTR in formulating an intervention plan.				
a. Identifying appropriate frames of reference and models of practice				
b. Analyzing activities for the selection of occupation-based interventions consistent with client roles, habits, routines, and current abilities				
c. Identifying activities to enhance the client's occupational performance				
d. Determining factors that impact occupational performance				
e. Interpreting the importance of contextual factors that impact engagement in occupation				
01.03 Collaborate with the OTR, client, and relevant others using a team approach in order to prioritize client centered goals throughout the continuum of care, guided by evidence and the principles of best practice.				
a. Identifying the client's priorities and desired outcomes				
b. Identifying the need to continue, modify, or discontinue services based on the client's responses to intervention				
c. Communicating with the client and team members about client goals and outcomes				
d. Determining frequency and duration of intervention based on expected outcomes				
e. Following discharge and transition planning procedures				
01.04 Provide information to the OTR regarding the need for referral to other professionals or services in order to facilitate comprehensive, quality care.				
a. Communicating with other team members and community organizations				
b. Recognizing the parameters of other service delivery models (e.g. criteria, least restrictive environment, acuity)				

02 SELECT AND IMPLEMENT EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO SUPPORT PARTICIPATION IN AREAS OF OCCUPATION (e.g. ADL, EDUCATION, WORK, PLAY, LEISURE, AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION) THROUGHOUT THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Performed independently
Under supervision
Observed others
No experience

Skill

Skill	Performed independently	Under supervision	Observed others	No experience
02.01 Implement the treatment plan by using critical reasoning to select interventions and approaches consistent with general medical, neurological, and musculoskeletal conditions and client needs in order to achieve functional outcomes within areas of occupation.				
a. Conducting oneself in a therapeutic manner to facilitate change based on a client's general medical, neurological, and/or musculoskeletal condition				
b. Selecting and implementing compensatory, remedial, biomechanical, and/or preventive interventions as related to general medical, neurological, and/or musculoskeletal conditions				
c. Facilitating individual and group occupation-based activities consistent with a client's general medical, neurological, and/or musculoskeletal condition and current abilities				
d. Using facilitation and handling principles and techniques consistent with general medical, neurological, and/or musculoskeletal condition				
e. Adhering to protocols for applying physical agent modalities				
f. Selecting, designing, fabricating, and/or modifying common splints based on general medical, neurological, and/or musculoskeletal conditions and client needs				
g. Selecting, designing, fabricating and/or modifying adaptive equipment or assistive devices based on medical, neurological, and/or musculoskeletal conditions and client needs				
h. Adhering to protocols for implementing interventions for facilitating chewing and swallowing specific to general medical conditions.				
i. Teaching positioning and physical transfer techniques consistent with activity demands, client abilities				
j. Using neurobehavioral techniques for skill development				
02.02 Implement the treatment plan by using critical reasoning to select interventions and approaches consistent with developmental level, pediatric conditions, and/or congenital anomalies and client needs in order to achieve functional outcomes within areas of occupation.				
a. Using occupation in a therapeutic manner to promote function based on a client's roles, habits and routines, and developmental abilities				
b. Conducting oneself in a therapeutic manner to facilitate change consistent with developmental needs				
c. Selecting and implementing interventions consistent with developmental level, pediatric conditions and/or congenital anomalies				

Skill	Performed independently	Under supervision	Observed others	No experience
d. Using developmentally based methods and techniques to facilitate group activities				
e. Using facilitation and handling techniques during interventions consistent with developmental level, pediatric conditions, and/or congenital anomalies				
f. Using sensory integrative interventions and sensory modulation techniques				
g. Selecting, designing, fabricating, and/or modifying common splints based on developmental level, pediatric conditions, and/or congenital anomalies and client needs				
h. Selecting, designing, fabricating and/or modifying adaptive equipment or assistive devices based on developmental level, pediatric conditions, and/or congenital anomalies and client needs				
i. Adhering to protocols for implementing interventions for facilitate chewing and swallowing specific to developmental level, pediatric conditions, and/or congenital anomalies				
j. Teaching positioning and physical transfer techniques consistent with developmental level and activity demands				
k. Using neurobehavioral techniques for skill acquisition consistent with developmental level, pediatric conditions, and/or congenital anomalies				
l. Using prevocational and vocational exploration processes and procedures				
02.03 Implement the treatment plan by using critical reasoning to select interventions and approaches consistent with psychosocial and cognitive abilities, and client needs in order to achieve functional outcomes within areas of occupation.				
a. Using occupation in a therapeutic manner appropriate to psychosocial and/or cognitive abilities, client roles, habits and routines				
b. Implementing therapeutic interventions appropriate to psychosocial and/or cognitive abilities, client roles, habits and routines				
c. Conducting oneself in a therapeutic manner to facilitate change based on psychosocial and/or cognitive abilities				
d. Using compensatory, remedial, and/or preventive techniques consistent with psychosocial and/or cognitive abilities, client roles, habits and routines				
e. Selecting, designing, fabricating and/or modifying adaptive equipment or assistive devices based on psychosocial and/or cognitive abilities				
f. Planning and facilitating group activities consistent with psychosocial and/or cognitive models of practice				
g. Responding in a therapeutic manner to the needs of a client or caregiver during psychosocial interventions				

Skill

Performed independently
Under supervision
Observed others
No experience

02.04 Maximize accessibility to and mobility within a client's contexts by recommending environmental modifications in order to optimize occupational performance and/or enhance quality of life.				
a. Identifying accessibility and risk factors				
b. Identifying and resolving mobility, seating, assistive technology, and durable medical equipment needs				
c. Making basic environmental modifications				
d. Educating the client and relevant others about the safe and effective use of environmental modifications, seating and mobility devices, durable medical equipment, and assistive technology				
02.05 Modify intervention methods and techniques based on the client's needs and responses in order to promote occupational performance.				
a. Identifying the need to adjust intervention techniques, adapt the environment, and/or grade the intervention activity				
b. Adjusting the intervention technique in response to variances in anticipated outcomes				
c. Adapting the environment to support participation during the intervention				
d. Grading the intervention activity based on expected progress and/or unexpected physical responses				
e. Responding appropriately to unexpected occurrences during intervention				
02.06 Apply the principles of health promotion, wellness, prevention, and/or educational programming based on client and community needs in order to serve as a resource for occupation based program activities.				
a. Contributing information to identify the service needs for various populations				
b. Advocating for services and resources for various populations				
c. Conducting individual and group health promotion and wellness program activities				
d. Collaborating with community based agencies				

03 UPHOLD PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROMOTE QUALITY IN PRACTICE

Performed independently
 Under supervision
 Observed others
 No experience

Skill

03.01 Maintaining ongoing competence by participating in professional development activities in order to provide effective services and promote quality care.				
a. Creating an appropriate professional development plan				
b. Engaging in professional development activities				
c. Adapting to change in the OT scope of practice				
d. Applying professional literature to the improvement of practice				
e. Determining service competency needs with guidance of the OTR				
03.02 Upholding professional standards by participating in continuous quality improvement activities and complying with safety regulations, laws, ethical codes, facility policies and procedures, and guidelines governing OT practice in order to protect the public interest				
a. Complying with federal, state, and other types of regulatory laws and rules				
b. Identifying policies and procedures that are specific to agencies				
c. Implementing safety and risk management techniques during intervention				
d. Incorporating federally mandated guidelines into intervention plans				
e. Designing and implementing safeguards in an environment to promote safety				
f. Organizing time and services				
03.03 Document occupational therapy services using established guidelines in order to verify accountability and to meet the requirements of practice settings, accrediting bodies, regulatory agencies, and/or funding sources.				
a. Organizing documentation accurately and in accordance with practice settings, regulatory agencies, or funding sources				
b. Differentiating among financial systems for reimbursement purposes				
c. Communicating effectively through documentation				
d. Adhering to applicable regulations and guidelines related to documentation				

Skill

Performed independently
Under supervision
Observed others
No experience

03.04 Articulate how occupational therapy contributes to beneficial outcomes for clients and relevant others based on evidence in order to promote quality care.				
a. Clarifying the role, responsibilities and scope of practice for OT practitioners.				
b. Developing and disseminating information about OT services				
03.05 Supervise occupational therapy students, paraprofessionals, and volunteers in accordance with professional guidelines and applicable regulations in order to support the delivery of appropriate occupational therapy services.				
a. Delegating tasks and responsibilities to supervisees as appropriate				
b. Communicating and collaborating effectively with supervisees				
c. Assessing the competence of supervisees				
d. Incorporating competency-based learning activities				
e. Developing remedial plans				

