
Department of Occupational Therapy Entry-
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Department of Occupational Therapy

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Occupational Therapy & Dyslexia Curriculum

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Occupational Therapy & Dyslexia Curriculum

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Introduction

- The role of occupational therapy in the school-based environment led to the completion of this capstone project at The Bridge at The Christ School in Orlando, Florida. The Bridge is specialized for children with dyslexia. The focus area of this project includes program development and education.
- The prevalence of students with dyslexia ranges from 5% to 20% in the United States or commonly reported as 1 in 5 students.
- The Bridge program started one classroom of students with dyslexia in 2020 and has now grown more than 5 times the original amount.
- An educational curriculum was created to address executive functioning and visual deficits that can be implemented by teachers or occupational therapists.

Figure 1
Students at the Christ School



Capstone Site Description

- The Bridge at the Christ School is a private Christian school in Orlando, Florida with a specialized curriculum tailored to meet the needs of students with dyslexia.
- Accredited in 2022 by Orton-Gillingham Academy
 - Kindergraden-5th grade
 - 1:10 teachers to student ratio
 - 1:5 small breakout group individualized instruction
 - 1 occupational therapist
 - 1 speech language pathologist

Summary of Needs Assessment

- Phonological processing and explicit reading interventions are being provided by the The Bridge. The need for skilled occupational therapy interventions were identified with the hiring of a school-based occupational therapist.
- The Bridge Program more than tripled in student census within 3 years.
- Teachers expressed a need for classroom-wide activities that they can implement during downtime.
- Minimal resources available with occupational therapy lens on dyslexia.

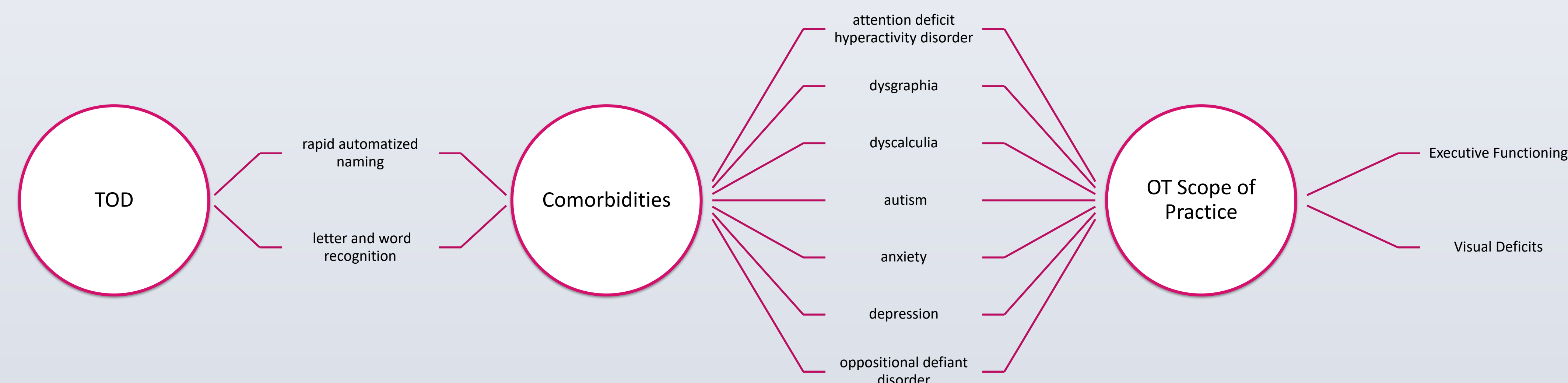
Figure 2
The Christ School



Literature Review Summary

- Dyslexia, commonly known as a reading disability, is a learning disability with deficits in phonological processing.
- Commonly comorbid with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, autism, anxiety, depression, and oppositional defiant disorder (Dominguez & Carugno, 2023; Chung et al., 2022; Germano et al., 2010; Hussain & Soares, 2022)
- A new assessment quickly gaining popularity for diagnosing dyslexia is the Test of Dyslexia (TOD) (Mather et al., 2024).
- Analysis of dyslexia, the TOD, and commonly comorbid diagnosis of dyslexia revealed domains which fall into the scope of practice for occupational therapist: executive functioning and visual deficits.

Figure 3
Analysis of the TOD and common comorbidities of dyslexia



Capstone Project Description & Outcomes

Occupational Therapy & Dyslexia Curriculum (OTDC)

The focus areas of my project was program development and education. A curriculum for students with dyslexia was created targeting executive functioning and visual perception. A teacher guide was developed and included an outline on how to grade each activity up and down.

Figure 4
Table of contents for the OTDC



Figure 5
Teacher guide from the OTDC

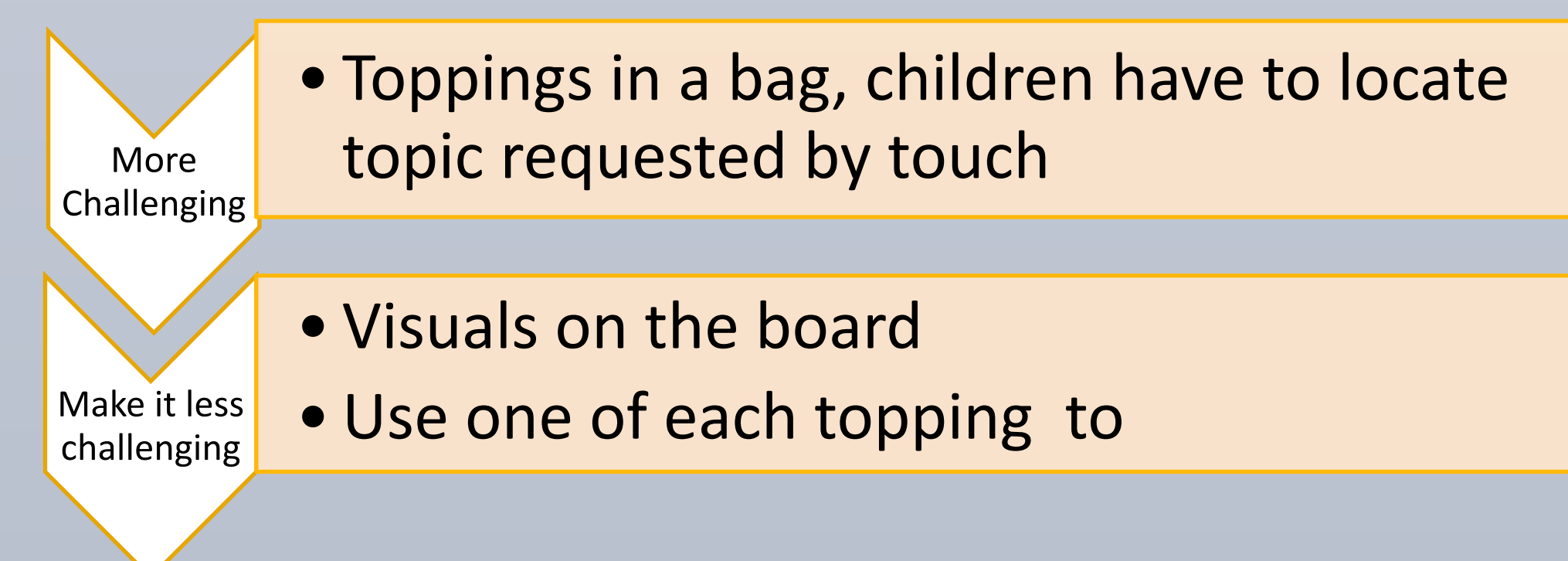
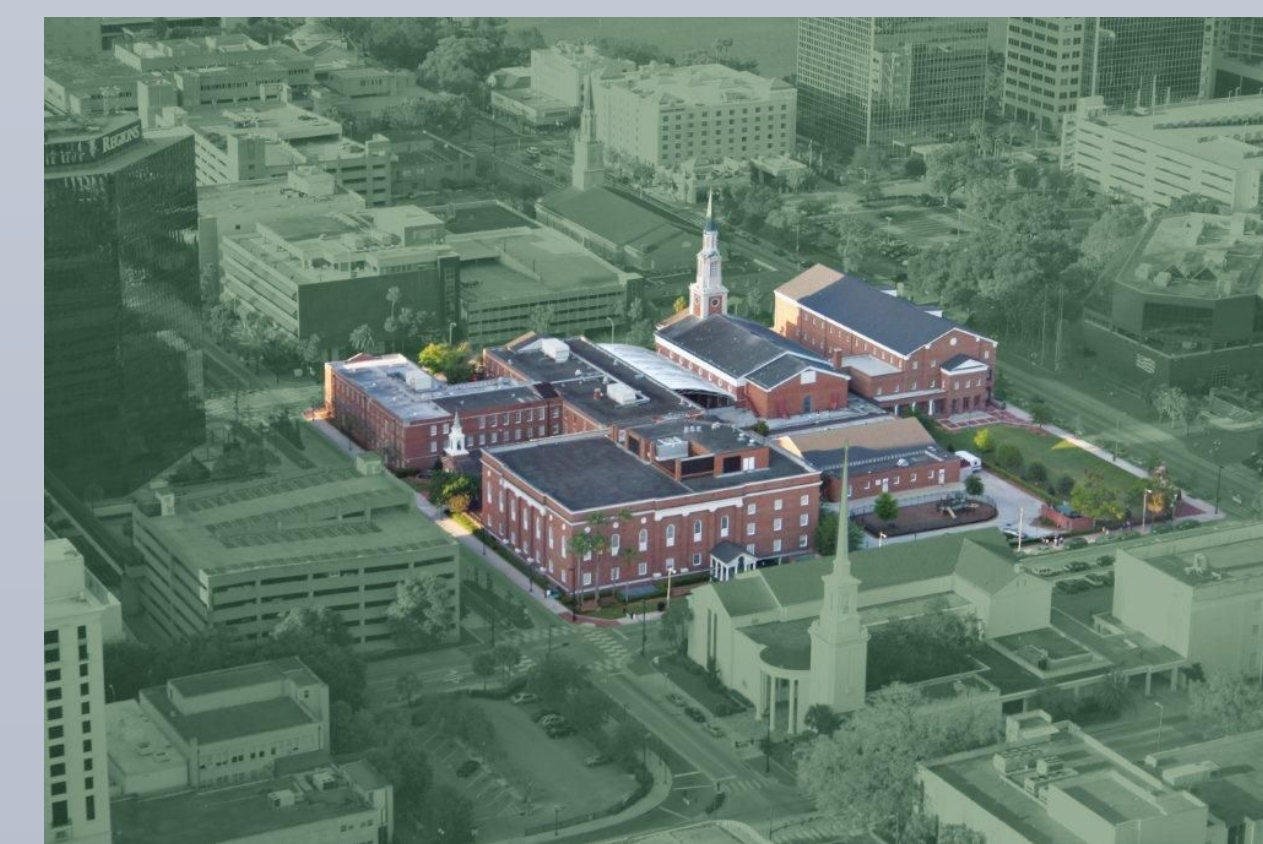


Figure 6
The Christ School



Capstone Goals Achieved

- Developed a school-based occupational therapy curriculum targeting executive functioning and visual deficits for students with dyslexia.
- Developed educational materials for parents on accommodations that can be implemented into an individualized education plan (IEP) and a summer packet for upper and lower elementary grades.
- Gained clinical skills by administering assessments, clinically reasoning evaluations, implementing targeted interventions, implementing sensory integration theory, and communicating with parents/caregivers.
- Gained research experience by participating in several research projects by collecting data, piloting projects, and refining novel assessments.

Implications for OT Practice

- Occupational therapists, with their unique skill set, play a crucial role in the comprehensive treatment of children with dyslexia. Their expertise extends beyond handwriting, encompassing executive functioning and visual skills, which are key areas where children with dyslexia can benefit from skilled intervention.
- The project has successfully developed a practical resource, tailored for occupational therapists, that can be readily used for targeted interventions in executive function and visual deficits. This resource is designed to be easily integrated into their practice, enhancing their ability to support children with dyslexia.
- Occupational therapists are equipped to support teachers by using classroom-wide interventions and explicit instruction on how to grade activities up and down, thus expanding the reach of occupational therapy interventions.

Figure 7
Students at the Christ School



References & Acknowledgments

With gratitude, I would like to extend my sincerest appreciation to Dr. Kiefer for guiding and supporting me throughout this capstone project. I am also grateful to the Bridge at the Christ School, whose passion for serving kids with dyslexia has been instrumental. Lastly, I thank my family for always motivating me to aim higher.

References Available Upon Request

The outcome of this project is the education of the teachers to implement therapeutic activities in the classroom, thus expanding the reach of occupational therapy based intervention.