



Activity analysis

- Activity analysis is defined as the process used by OT practitioners that “addresses the **typical demands** of an activity, the **range of skills involved** in its performance, and the **various cultural meanings** that might be ascribed to it”





- The process of analysing activities allows the practitioner to understand the demands placed on the person who engages in the activity.
- A thorough activity analysis will allow for an understanding of the **tools and equipment needed**; **where and with whom** the activity takes place; **the sequence of steps and timing** of those steps; and the **body functions, performance skills, and body structures required** to perform the activity.



- Thus, OT professionals learn how to look not only at activities as a whole, but also at their component parts and how internal and external contexts contribute to the activities.



- An OT evaluation **begins with an occupational profile**, which is an interview with the client. During this interview, the OT gets a fuller picture of what occupations the client is struggling with, the meaning behind those occupations, and in which contexts those occupations occur. This will lead to a list of occupations, each of which will need to be analysed by the OT to determine the demands of the occupations.
- The OT will then **evaluate the client's performance** and use selected assessments to identify and measure specific client factors, skills, or environments. Comparing the demands of the occupation with client performance and environment allows the OT to identify needs.
- Occupation or activity analysis is an **evaluation of the demands of the activity**, not an evaluation of the client.

Types of activity analysis

1. Activity analysis that looks at the typical demands of an activity.
2. Occupation-based activity analysis, which “takes into account the particular person’s interests, goals, abilities, and contexts, as well as the demands of the activity itself”

The activity analysis process

1. *Activity awareness:* The first part of activity analysis is to establish what **you are truly analysing**.

Separate the activities into separate and unique activities when possible. From this, you will be able to determine which area of occupation the activity lies in, giving you a fuller picture of what is included in this activity and those surrounding it.

2. You then need to decide *what type of analysis* you will be conducting. There are essentially two types of activity analysis: (a) **occupation-based activity analysis**, which is based on a particular client and how he or she engages in the occupation in his or her contexts, and (b) **activity analysis of how the activity is typically done**, with no particular client in mind. If you are conducting an activity analysis for a client, you will conduct an occupation-based activity analysis; otherwise you will conduct a standard activity analysis.

3. *Determining the relevance and importance to the client:* This step is included only if you are conducting an **occupation-based** activity analysis. It requires the practitioner to delve into clients' understanding and definition of their occupations as well as the importance that these occupations have.

4. Identifying the steps required: This is where you break down the activity into the specific steps and the sequence and timing of each step. By listing the steps required by the activity, the practitioner is able to identify the demands of the activity.

5. *Determining the objects and properties:* Considering each of the steps of the activity, specific tools, supplies, and equipment may be needed. Identifying the needed objects allows the practitioner to understand what must be manipulated or interacted with and how. An understanding of the objects and their properties may also lead the practitioner to understand deficits in performance.

6. *Determining the space demands:* The physical environment in which an activity or occupation take place can have a great impact on performance. Some activities require specific space, noise control, and lighting in order to be engaged in. There may be times when the physical environment in which an occupation takes place may be a barrier to a client's performance. It is in understanding the physical environment in which an activity takes place that we can view how external forces play a role in occupational performance.

7. *Determining social demands:* Just as space demands can be an external influence on performance, so too can social demands. Social demands of some activities are a necessary part of engaging in an activity (such as taking turns in a game). However, in some occupations, the social demands may challenge the client to a greater extent than he or she is able to manage (e.g., expectations from others to work 16-hour days).

8. *Determining required body functions:* This step in the analysis process is often seen as the most detailed and extensive. Many of the concepts parallel those used in other professions. However, the OT activity analysis process goes further. Body functions are those “physiological functions of body systems” that include not just physical functions such as strength and mobility of joints, but also sensory, cognitive, and emotional functions. Determining the body functions required of an activity provides information regarding what is demanded of the client in regard to engagement in the occupation or activity.

- 9. Determining required body structures:* Most activities require the presence of certain body structures. Body structures are “anatomical parts of the body such as organs, limbs, and their components”. In the activity analysis process, we look at which body structures are required for the activity beyond what is required for sustaining life.

10. Determining required performance skills: Performance skills are actions that the client demonstrates. Determining the level of specific skills required allows the practitioner to better understand what is expected from the client for successful engagement.

11. Analysing for therapeutic intervention: This is the step of the process in which the practitioner evaluates an activity as well as the needs of the client so as to find possible outcomes. An activity can also be analysed in order to find ways to adapt or grad the activity to either decrease or increase the challenge for the client.

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