THE ASIAN EDUCATIONAL THERAPIST
ISSN: 2972-4104, Volume 2, Issue 2, Page 39 - 42

Copyright © The authors. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, including commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.

EDITORIAL ARTICLE

The Competence-Performance Model for Educational Therapists

Kok Hwee CHIA
Merlion Paediatric Therapy Clinic

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.64663/aet.36

Corresponding author's email: dr.chia@merlionpaediatric.sg

Cite as: *CHIA, K. H. (2024). The competence-performance model for educational therapists. The Asian Educational Therapist, 2(2), 39-42.*

Editorial Note: *This article was originally published in The Asian Educational Therapist without a DOI. It has now been digitally archived with a new DOI and republished for better preservation, discoverability and citation tracking. Copyediting and formatting updates were applied for improved readability and accessibility. The intellectual content remains unchanged. Readers are advised to cite the new version with the DOI.*

Note: *The author of this article serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the current journal.*

The Competence-Performance model, developed by Noam Chomsky (b.1928-present), a Laureate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Arizona and an Institute Professor Emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), distinguishes between linguistic competence (the underlying knowledge of language) and linguistic performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations). However, when the Competence-Performance model is applied to the field of educational therapy, it is referring to a different context.

From the perspective of an educational therapist, the Competence-Performance model might be applied to categorize an educational therapist's qualifications and skills as follows:

1. Competence:

This would encompass the theoretical knowledge and understanding acquired through the Master of Education (Special Education) and Bachelor of Science (Psychology) degrees. These degrees provide the foundational understanding of educational psychology, special education principles, and psychological theories that underpin effective teaching and therapeutic practices.

2. Performance:

This relates to the practical application of knowledge and skills in real-world settings. The therapist's certification in various methods and approaches such as basic counseling, Montessori method, Spalding method, Mortensen approach to mathematics learning, social skills interventions, Orton-Gillingham approach, task behavior analysis, Plan 504 design, IEP design, case management skills, and diagnostic profiling & evaluation would fall under the performance aspect. These certifications

demonstrate the educational therapist's ability to implement evidence-based practices and interventions to support students with diverse needs effectively.

In summary, the educational therapist's educational background provides the necessary competence, while their certifications and specialized training demonstrate their performance in applying this knowledge to address the unique needs of students with learning differences or disabilities.

APPLICATION OF THE COMPETENCE-PERFORMANCE MODEL IN AN EDUCATIONAL THERAPIST'S DAILY FUNCTION

The Competence-Performance model can be applied to the daily function of an educational therapist in several ways as follows:

1. Assessment of Student Abilities:

By assessing students' competence in various academic and cognitive domains, the educational therapist can tailor interventions to address specific needs.

2. Identifying Performance Discrepancies:

The educational therapist observes discrepancies between a student's competence (what they are capable of) and their actual performance (what they demonstrate), allowing for targeted interventions.

3. Designing Individualized Interventions:

Based on the competence-performance gap, the therapist can create personalized interventions to bridge the discrepancy and improve academic functioning.

4. Modifying Instructional Strategies:

Understanding a student's competence helps the therapist adapt teaching methods and strategies to better match the student's abilities and learning style.

5. Providing Scaffolded Support:

The therapist offers scaffolded support by gradually decreasing assistance as the student's performance improves, fostering independence while ensuring success.

6. Addressing Underlying Skill Deficits:

Identifying competence gaps allows the therapist to address underlying skill deficits through targeted remediation and skill-building exercises.

7. Monitoring Progress:

The therapist tracks students' performance over time to gauge the effectiveness of interventions and make adjustments as needed to facilitate progress.

8. Promoting Self-awareness:

Encouraging students to reflect on their competence-performance gaps fosters self-awareness, helping them understand their strengths and areas for improvement.

9. Collaborating with Teachers and Parents:

Sharing insights about competence-performance gaps with teachers and parents enables a collaborative approach to support students both in and out of the therapy setting.

10. Setting Realistic Goals:

Based on competence assessments, the educational therapist collaborates with students to set realistic goals that target both competence development and performance improvement.

11. Emphasizing Growth Mindset:

Framing competence-performance gaps as opportunities for growth helps students develop a growth mindset, where effort and perseverance lead to improvement.

12. Utilizing Strengths-Based Approaches:

Identifying areas of competence allows the therapist to leverage students' strengths to address weaknesses, fostering a positive and empowering learning environment.

13. Evaluating Intervention Efficacy:

Continuously evaluating the effectiveness of interventions in closing the competence-performance gap informs ongoing decision-making and ensures interventions are evidence-based and impactful.

WHAT ARE THE HARD & SOFT SKILL SETS THAT EDUCATIONAL THERAPISTS NEED IN THEIR PROFESSIONAL WORK?

Here is an overview of the hard and soft skill sets for each level of training for educational therapists:

1. Credential Level:

a) Hard Skills:
1. Basic understanding of educational psychology and learning theories.
2. Familiarity with common learning disabilities and disorders.
3. Proficiency in administering educational assessments.

b) Soft Skills:
1. Effective communication skills to collaborate with students, parents, and other professionals.
2. Patience and empathy to work with students facing learning challenges.
3. Adaptability to tailor teaching methods to individual student needs.

At the credential level, educational therapists need foundational knowledge and skills to assess and address students' learning difficulties. Effective communication and empathy are crucial for building rapport with students and their families, while adaptability allows therapists to tailor interventions to meet diverse learning needs.

2. Registered Level:

a) Hard Skills:
1. Advanced understanding of educational psychology and pedagogy.
2. Specialized training in evidence-based intervention strategies.
3. Proficiency in developing Individualized Intervention Plans (IIPs).

b) Soft Skills:
1. Strong interpersonal skills to collaborate with multidisciplinary teams.
2. Ability to provide constructive feedback and support to students and families.
3. Cultural competence to work effectively with diverse student populations.

At the registered level, educational therapists deepen their knowledge and skills in designing and implementing interventions. Strong interpersonal skills are essential for collaborating with other professionals and providing support to students and families throughout the intervention process.

3. Board-Certified Level:

a) Hard Skills:
1. Mastery of advanced assessment and intervention techniques.
2. Expertise in research-based practices for addressing complex learning needs.
3. Knowledge of legal and ethical considerations in educational therapy.

b) Soft Skills:
1. Leadership skills to mentor and supervise other therapists.
2. Advocacy skills to promote inclusive education policies and practices.
3. Critical thinking and problem-solving abilities to address challenging cases effectively.

Board-certified educational therapists have attained the highest level of expertise in educational therapy. They possess advanced assessment and intervention skills and are equipped to address complex cases. Leadership and advocacy skills are important for influencing systemic change and promoting the rights of individuals with learning differences.

In summary, each level of training for educational therapists builds upon the previous one, equipping these specialized professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to support students with diverse learning needs effectively. Hard skills provide the technical expertise required for assessment and intervention, while soft skills are essential for building relationships, collaborating with others, and advocating for inclusive education practices.