

Words Are Power: Developing an Inclusive Language Workshop for Occupational Therapy Students

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Background

Inclusive Language	Underrepresented Groups (URGs)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Words or phrases that acknowledge diversity, convey respect, & promote equal opportunities^{1,2} Must be consistent with preferences of individuals & communities being discussed³ Uses empowering terms to promote respect & agency, prevent marginalization & stigma^{2,4,5} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A subgroup of a population whose representation is disproportionately low relative to the overall population⁶ Historically experienced less power & privilege in the U.S.⁶ Include racial, ethnic, religious, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic, & disability identity groups⁶ Limited power & privilege has led to "isms", oppression, marginalization⁶

Healthcare & Language

- Members of underrepresented groups (URGs) have reported differential treatment &/or discrimination when interacting with healthcare providers, contributing to mistrust in the healthcare system & health disparities^{7,8}
- Word choices can subtly or overtly cause sexism, ageism, ableism, racism, heterosexism, other types of bias^{8,9}
- Recent recognition of the importance of using inclusive language when working with URGs has resulted in language guides created by medical institutions, universities, non-profits^{6,10,11,12,13,14}

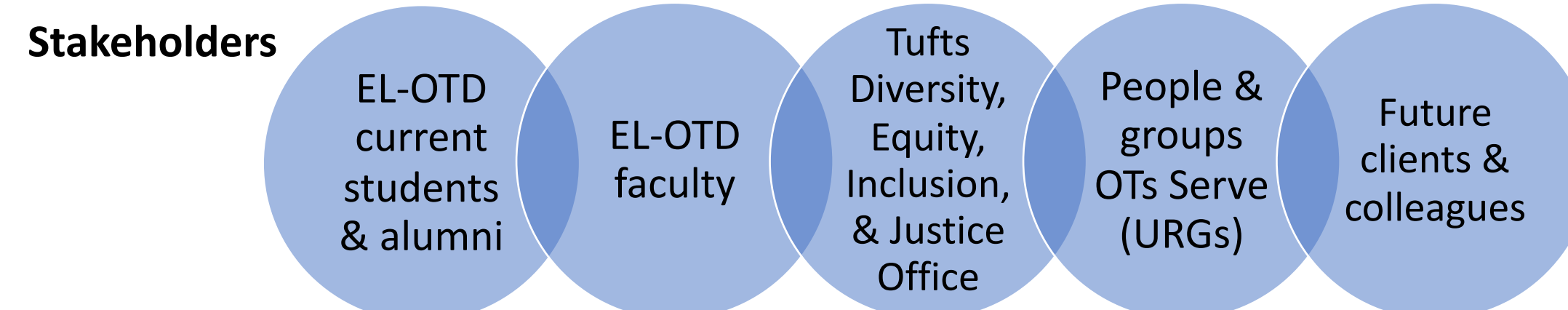
Occupational Therapy (OT) & Inclusive Language

- OT is guided by client centered-care, ethical principles, occupational justice^{15,16}
- Intentional Relationship Model* shows importance of using client's preferred communication style¹⁷
- OT organizations have expressed a commitment to diversity, equity & inclusion^{18,19}
- Existing literature on inclusive language in OT practice limited
- Need for OT educational programs to teach how language use can promote diversity, equity, & inclusion²

Gap & Need

Site & Participants

- Tufts University Department of OT, Entry Level OT Doctorate (EL-OTD) Program
- Current 2nd-year students enrolled in OTS 207: Interactive Reasoning



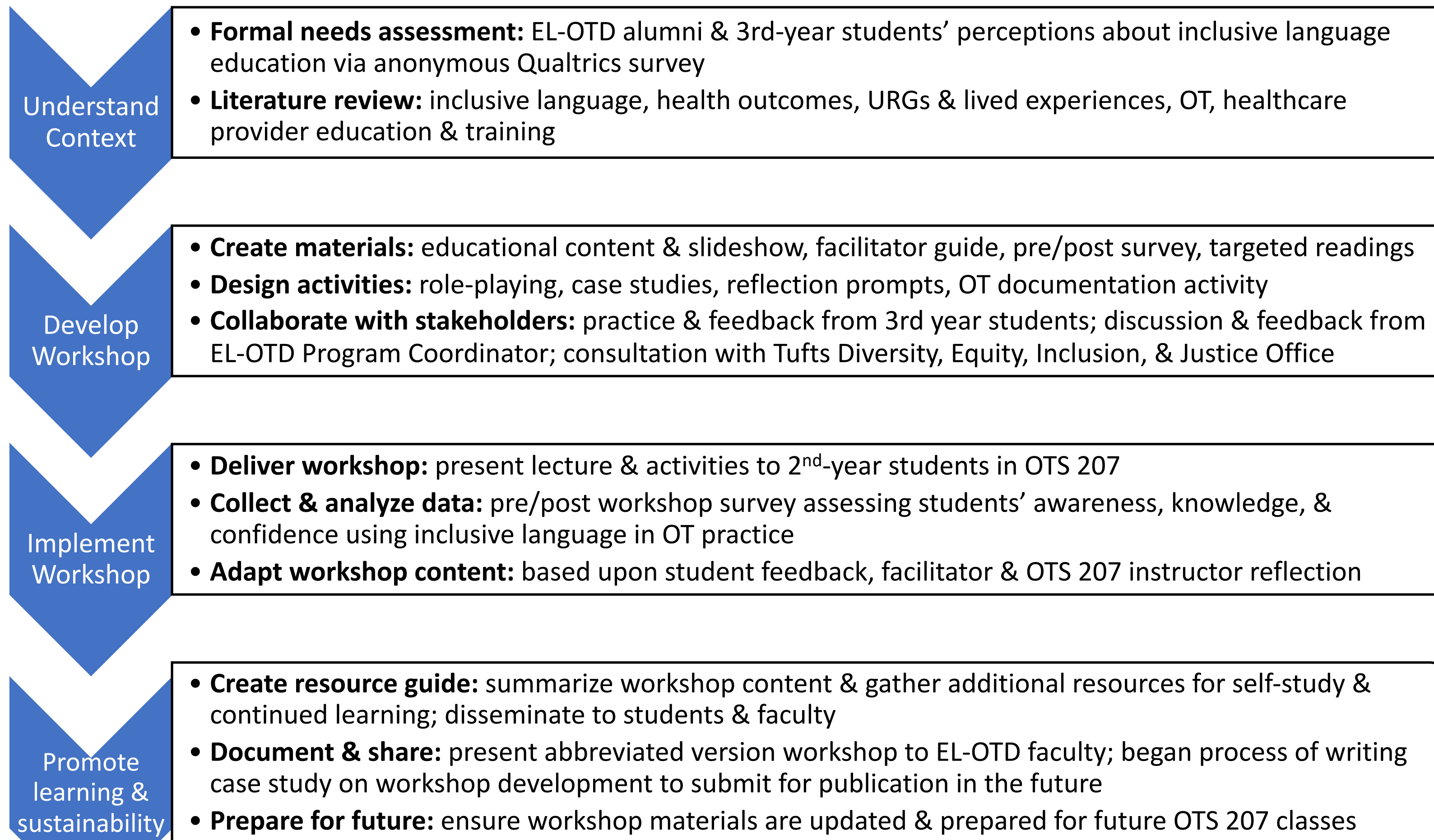
EL-OTD Program & Inclusive Language

- Currently no formal curriculum about inclusive language
- Informal conversations with students & faculty demonstrate a desire for increased knowledge & understanding of how to intentionally use language in OT practice
- Commitment to teaching principles that promote cultural humility & support of research addressing social justice with a focus on URGs²⁰

Aim & Goals

- Aim** Increase awareness of inclusive language principles & applications amongst 2nd-year students, faculty, & individuals affiliated with the Tufts Department of OT
- Goal 1** Develop a 3-hour workshop on inclusive language concepts & OT applications
- Goal 2** Present workshop to 2nd-year students in OTS 207 & collect pre/post data
- Goal 3** Embed workshop into OTS 207 & create resource guide to promote education & sustainability on inclusive language across Tufts Department of OT

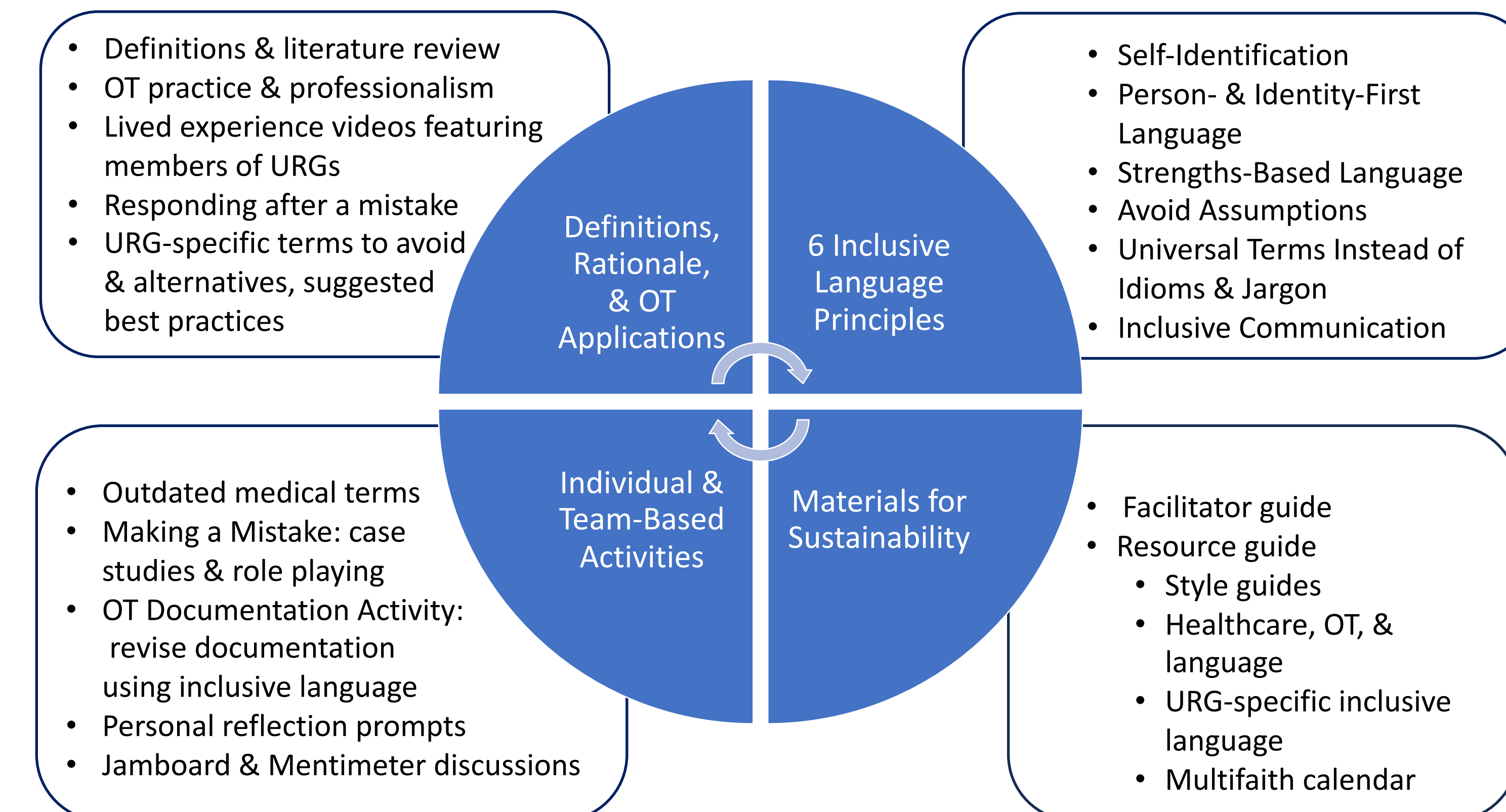
Methods



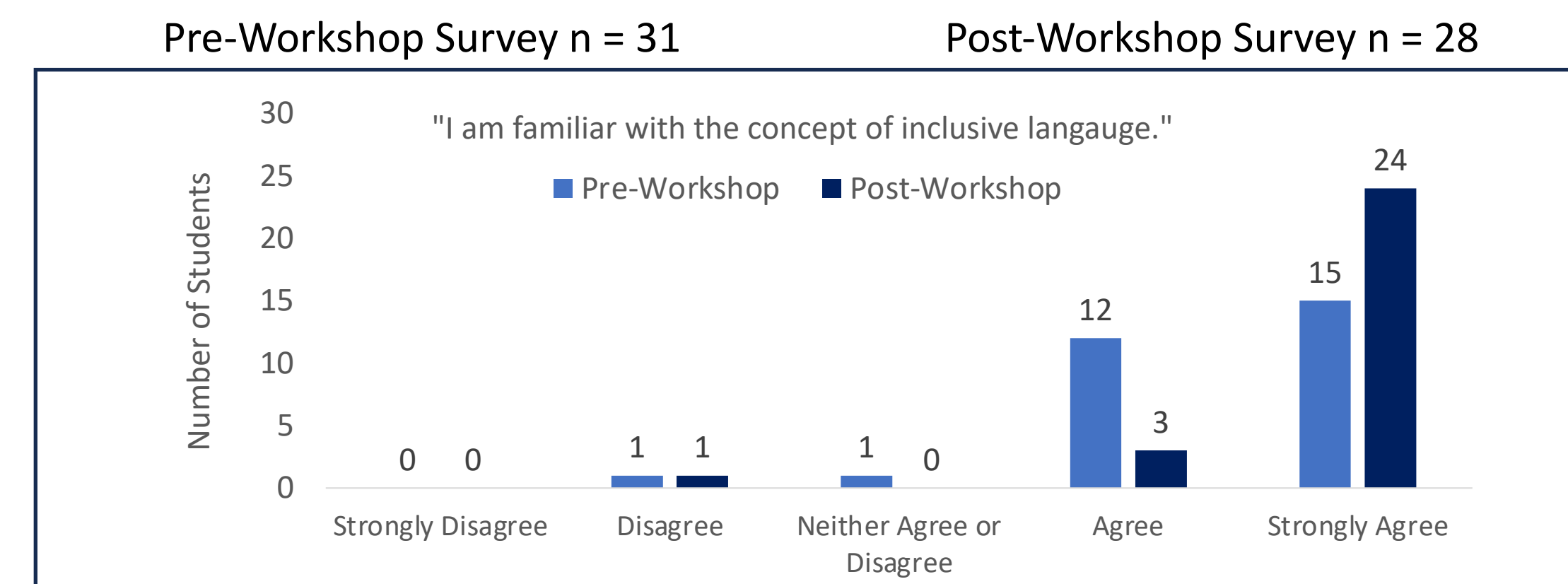
Results

Formal needs assessment: Tufts EL-OTD students & alumni indicated a need for education on inclusive language within the Tufts EL-OTD curriculum, based upon their experiences in courses, fieldwork, & employment.

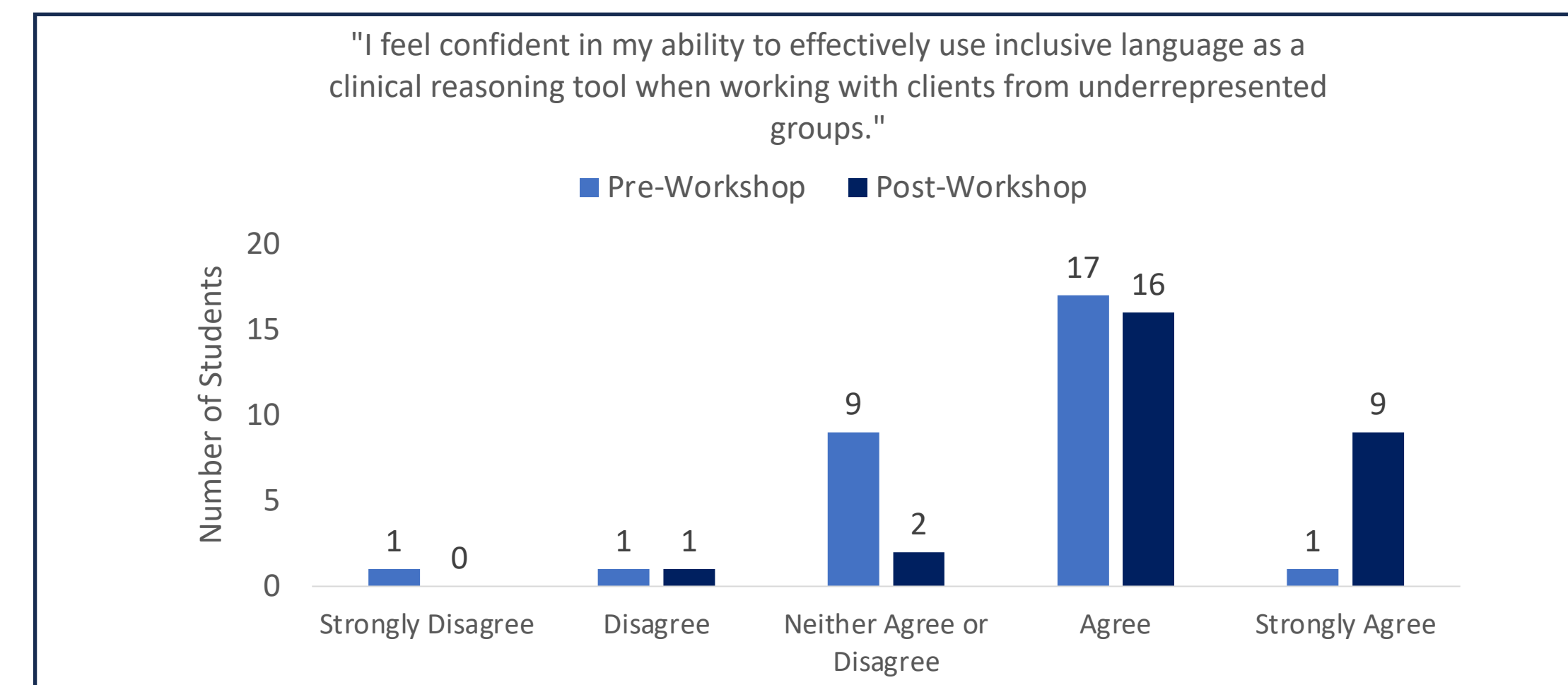
Workshop Structure	
1. Introduction & Objectives	4. Inclusive Language in OT Practice
2. Background & Inclusive Language Themes	5 OT Documentation Activity
3. Inclusive Language Concepts & Principles	6. Resources for Continued Learning



Participant Feedback



"I learned that language is dynamic, and that as OTs we must be responsible to keeping up to date about the language [we] use. It is important for us to use inclusive language to let our clients feel safe, heard, and respected. [...] After learning this material, I would continue to be more aware of the language I'm currently using."



Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions	Recommendations
Need to address gap in research about OT use of inclusive language with URGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential topic for future DEC projects Advocacy efforts at future work settings, conferences, & membership organizations
Importance of ongoing education on inclusive language in Tufts EL-OTD program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student & faculty commitment to self-study Department-wide expectations to model & use inclusive language in all EL-OTD courses
Students reported increased knowledge & confidence using inclusive language in OT practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for students to practice these skills in other courses Present workshop to future EL-OTD students
Inclusive language is a clinical reasoning tool that can promote client-centered practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students use inclusive language concepts to inform future practice Be respectful & intentional with language

References & Resource Guide: scan QR code

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to Sarah Skeels for her mentorship & collaboration throughout this process. Thank you to Mary Barnes, OT, OTD, Alex Guerrero, Geetika Mukkamala, & Morgan Grant for their feedback & support. Thank you to the 2nd-year students who participated in this workshop for their engagement & curiosity.