



# SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION

DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE AND THERAPY

ISSUE 3

## Welcome to the third issue of *Spotlight on Occupation*

Internationally, knowledge about humans as occupational beings and occupational science is flourishing. The Australasian Society of Occupational Scientists (ASOS) is our regional society, bringing together Australians and New Zealanders who are interested in occupational science and occupationally focused practice.

ASOS aims to promote occupational science at all levels, facilitate interdisciplinary discussion, support basic and applied research and provide a means for rich communication on relevant topics.

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EDITORS VALERIE WRIGHT-ST CLAIR, CLARE HOCKING, AND JENNI MACE (L-R)

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## The Theory of Navigating Cultural Spaces

**AUTHOR:** Nayar, S.

**SUMMARY:** Navigating Cultural Spaces is a theory about how Indian immigrant women engage in domestic, community and paid occupations for the purpose of creating a place, for themselves and their families, in New Zealand.

Grounded theory methodology was employed to uncover the everyday occupations used in the transition to a new environment and the subsequent settlement process.

In-depth interviews and observations of participants performing daily occupations were conducted with 25 Indian immigrant women, residing in New Zealand between 6 months to 20 years.



In Navigating Cultural Spaces the women perform activities in ways that reflect either the Indian or New Zealand cultures, or a combination of the two.

Their actions were influenced by the people, objects and social spaces that constituted the environment in which they engaged in occupations.

**COMMENT:** This study challenges occupational therapists to move away from practice in traditional health care settings and to create roles in which to facilitate the wellbeing of immigrants by supporting them to successfully establish themselves in the community through their everyday activities.

Reference: (2009) *The theory of navigating cultural spaces*. Doctoral thesis. <http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/handle/10292/733>

## Studying Occupation

**LECTURER:** Clare Hocking

AUT offers two papers focusing on occupation, both available on campus or by distance.

Participation and Health explores the relationship between the things people do and their health, which involves understanding why people do what they do, and how that contributes to competence and satisfaction, builds identity, conveys culture, and structures society.

Enabling Participation explores how occupation can be put to work to restore and promote health.

### QUALIFICATION:

- Certificate of Proficiency
- Honours degree
- Postgraduate Certificate or
- Postgraduate Diploma of Health Science (Occupational Practice), or a
- Masters degree

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS:** All health professionals can enrol.

Those with a Bachelors degree can enrol direct into the Masters, holders of a Diploma or Health Department Certificate initially enrol into the Postgrad Certificate or Diploma.

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## Honours Degree Project

**NADINE MESNAGE:** How elders experience being in a residential care setting.

Universal design is based on the idea that it is not our impairments that restrict us, but society and the way it is constructed.

The aim of this study is to uncover elder's lived experience of being in the aged care setting, with a particular focus on understanding how the setting design affords and/or restricts elder's occupational choices.

Using an interpretive, qualitative methodology informed by Heideggerian phenomenology, two new and two established residents in an aged care facility in Auckland will be interviewed.

A conversational style of questioning will be used to elicit stories of being in the setting, with a focus on particular moments or events as they were lived.

**COMMENT:** As well as adding New Zealand data to the occupational science literature, this study holds the potential to inform practice with individuals, communities or social organisations.



## An interview with Ulla Kroksmark, Goteborg University, Sweden.

### VISITING SCHOLAR

Ulla Kroksmark came to New Zealand and AUT University to "see something more" in the international occupational science community. She has an enduring interest in working with children and young people with different disabilities.

Ulla agrees with Betty Yerxa in thinking that occupational science should feed into occupational therapy practice.

"My understanding is, if we know more about how people live in general, and then we can be better placed in understanding how to support people with disabilities.



Even before I knew there was something called occupational science; that has always been my view. I would like to think occupational science can be a basic science for occupational therapy."

As a researcher, Ulla has developed expertise in the Time Geographic Method including its practical application in understanding people's routines and pattern of engagement in occupations as a way of guiding practice. The potential for the method to inform occupational science is in its "capturing the continuity of engagement in occupations across the whole day and over many days..."

Often when we ask people about what they do, it is a snapshot. Perhaps the most important thing the method offers is it helps the participants understand their day and time use. It provides a foundation for engaging in dialogue with people and helping them see the occupations they need support for."

Interviewed by Valerie Wright-St Clair, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

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*References for time geographic method:*

Kroksmark, U., Nordell, K., Bendixen, H. J., Magnus, E., Jacobsen, K., & Alsaker, S. (2006). Time geographic method: Application to studying occupations in different contexts. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 13(1), 11-16.

## Broadening horizons: A professional resource for occupational justice

**AUTHOR:** Mace, J & Hocking, C. (Eds.).

**SUMMARY:** Broadening horizons is a small book written and edited by staff and students of AUT University's undergraduate occupational therapy programme. The content highlights service proposals written for a final year paper, 'Promoting occupational justice and participation'. Students work together with a community organisation to develop programmes that will enhance health and citizenship of an identified group that experiences occupational disruption, disadvantage, or injustice. The five examples in the book include: Developing a programme for women experiencing homelessness; Developing a primary care role for mental health and wellbeing; English speakers of other languages – Resources for learning to drive in New Zealand; Developing a parenting programme for Year 7 and 8 students; Moving towards occupation-based practice on acute wards.

**COMMENT:** The purpose of publishing these ideas is to do exactly as the title suggests; to broaden horizons. As Liz Townsend puts it in her foreword "if you wonder what occupational therapy might do if it's not just about disability, I urge you to read on" (Foreword).

*Reference: (2010). Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University of Technology.*

NB: This book will soon be available to download free on <http://www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/health-sciences/occupational-science-and-therapy/publications>



MACE, J & HOCKING, C (EDS.)