

SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION

ISSUE 24, OCTOBER 2018

AUT



Editors (L-R) – Valerie Wright-St Clair, Clare Hocking, Jenni Mace & Sandy Rutherford

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WELCOME TO THE 24TH ISSUE OF SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION

This issue of SPOTLIGHT features an array of research and scholarship produced by academics and postgraduate students of the Department of Occupational Science and Therapy at Auckland University of Technology. Encompassing two stalwarts of occupational therapy practice – theatre productions in mental health contexts and issuing assistive devices in acute physical health settings – along with broad understandings of how occupation contributes to health and its place within evidence-based practice, we are confident that everyone will find something of interest in this issue spotlighting occupation in practice.

Feel free to hand SPOTLIGHT on to anyone who might be interested in it or contact Deb Webster to be added to the distribution list: deb.webster@aut.ac.nz. Previous issues are available at <http://www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/health-sciences/occupational-science-and-therapy/spotlight-on-occupation-newsletter>

The transformative power of therapeutic theatre: Enabling health and wellbeing

Authors: Jenny Stemberidge de Aguilera, Clare Hocking, & Daniel Sutton

Summary: Plays staged to provide personal growth for the actors, stage hands, prompt and other participants – referred to as therapeutic theatre – have a long history in mental health settings. This study used an occupational lens to explore how pantomime productions over several years supported recovery for service users in Auckland. Qualitative interviews with six service users and four staff members involved in the productions generated insights into aspects of the occupational form of therapeutic theatre that proved to be beneficial.



Jenny Stemberidge

Comment: Undertaken as Jenny's master's research, this study revealed therapeutic theatre to be not just a creative art form, but a rich web of interconnected occupations that culminate in the performance the audience experiences. While the script determines the characters and how they will interact, the occupations encompass auditions, practice, costume and set design and construction, applying makeup, directing the performance, singing in the chorus, ushering the audience to their seats, and the many other things that need to be done. Just as the proponents of the Arts and Crafts Movement described, the performance and the participants were created through and in the doing. Key among the findings were how the months of preparation helped participants grow into their roles and gave them a voice that projected out to other aspects of their lives.

Reference: (2018). *New Zealand Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 65(2), 31-38.

Contribution of occupation to health and well-being

Author: Clare Hocking

Summary: This updated chapter in one of occupational therapy's most long-standing texts considers the ways occupation contributes to health and well-being. Written to be accessible to students, it describes how the things we do keep us alive, develop our skills and exercise our capacities. It acknowledges the ways people's patterns of occupation can undermine health, and the various influences of the physical, social and attitudinal environments in which we live. Also considered are the ideas that people can feel a sense of belonging through doing things with others, and how that can be constrained by stigma, discrimination and environmental barriers.

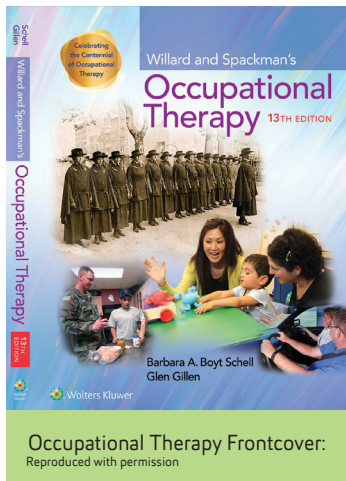
Comment: While acknowledging the American roots and context of this text, this chapter mindfully champions the work of occupational scientists in Australasia. In particular, Ann Wilcock's concepts of doing, being, belonging and becoming, and her insights into knowledge developed by ancient civilisations – that the things people do affect their physical and spiritual health – are brought forward. Occupational justice, a concept coined by Wilcock and her Canadian colleague, Liz Townsend, also features as an important explanation of ill-health consequences of being deprived of occupation. The section on belonging through doing is particularly pertinent to Aotearoa New Zealand, given the country's colonial history of alienating Māori people from the traditional occupations of their family, culture and location.

Reference: (2018). Chapter 8. In Boyt Schell, B. A., & Gillen, G. (Eds.), *Williard & Spackman's occupational therapy (13th ed.)*. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

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Occupational Therapy Frontcover:
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Occupational science: The study of occupation

Authors: Valerie Wright-St. Clair & Clare Hocking

Summary: This new edition chapter is written for students and practitioners who want to get serious about using an occupational science evidence-based practice way of thinking in their day-to-day practice. It illustrates fundamental occupational

science constructs to argue why it is important to understand both the observable and phenomenological aspects of people's occupations. In keeping with critical commentary, the authors explore the nexus between occupational science and indigenous worldviews of human occupation. Much of the chapter is dedicated to illustrating how occupational science knowledge, from three diverse research programmes, was built and systematised, in order for its translation into real-world practice. The chapter is beautifully illustrated and comes with study questions and presentation resources.

Comment: The authors breathe life into showing what evidence-based occupational science can offer occupation-focused practitioners through the use of story, novella, and illustrative research programmes from New Zealand, Canada, and the USA. A special feature, which runs throughout this edition of Willard and Spackman, is a "Centenary Piece" marking 100 years since the formal establishment of occupational therapy in the US. The chapter will be a useful resource for undergraduate and postgraduate students in the field, as well as early career occupational science researchers.

Reference: (2018). Chapter 9. In Boyt Schell, B. A., Gillen, G. (Eds.), *Willard & Spackman's occupational therapy (13th ed.)*. Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

What is the experience of providing, receiving and using short-term loan equipment?

Author: Marie Chester

Summary: Researchers have generated a wealth of information about the use of assistive devices, but not much about providing, receiving and using it. This doctoral study brings together the stories of five therapists and eight patients who found short-term loan equipment comfortable, easy or off-putting to use. The study generated new insights into what works for patients and therapists (being open to each other, having time to make good decisions) and what doesn't work (lack of connection, inflexible systems). Recommendations for practice include considering potential long-term need for equipment that supports everyday functioning, even while assessing the immediate discharge priorities.

Comment: True to hermeneutic phenomenological studies, Marie's thesis has compelling stories of this mundane aspect of practice. There are patients who reject equipment before even trying it, acceptance based on using it in hospital and finding it 'more useful' than anticipated, devices that quickly become part of the 'normal' way of doing things and leave a gap when they're suddenly recalled. It is easy to project oneself into accounts of fighting to secure equipment that will allow a patient to finalise his affairs before he dies, and sense the disappointment when patients don't remember conversations about what they do, who is there to help, and what they must manage to do on their own. Distilled from these various accounts, the findings are sensible and practical, with application well beyond the context of the study itself.

Reference: (2018). *Unpublished doctoral thesis*. Available from <https://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/handle/10292/11659>.



Dr Marie Chester

STUDY OCCUPATION

Study options for those wishing to explore participation and its relationship with health with AUT include the Specialist Readings and Special Topic papers, where students work with an academic advisor to pursue an individual learning pathway. Contact Dr Margaret Jones for details.

Entry requirements: All health professionals can enrol. Those with a Bachelor's degree can enrol direct into the Masters. Holders of a Diploma or Health Department Certificate initially enrol into the Postgrad Certificate or Diploma.

Qualification: Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma of Health Science (Occupational Practice), or a Master's degree.

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