

**Growing occupation-centred therapists for the future:
Understanding student experiences of learning about occupation
and its place in occupational therapy practice**

Author

Roberts, M, Miller, M, Wilding, C

Published

2021

Journal Title

Australian Occupational Therapy Journal

Version

Accepted Manuscript (AM)

DOI

[10.1111/1440-1630.12784](https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12784)

Rights statement

© 2021 Australian Association of Occupational Therapists. This is the peer reviewed version of the following article: Growing occupation-centred therapists for the future: Understanding student experiences of learning about occupation and its place in occupational therapy practice, Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 2021, which has been published in final form at <https://doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12784>. This article may be used for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Wiley Terms and Conditions for Use of Self-Archived Versions. This article may not be enhanced, enriched or otherwise transformed into a derivative work, without express permission from Wiley or by statutory rights under applicable legislation. Copyright notices must not be removed, obscured or modified. The article must be linked to Wiley's version of record on Wiley Online Library and any embedding, framing or otherwise m

Downloaded from

<http://hdl.handle.net/10072/411312>

Griffith Research Online

<https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au>

Title

Growing occupation-centred therapists for the future: Understanding student experiences of learning about occupation and its place in occupational therapy practice

Abstract

Introduction:

Occupational therapy entry-level education is integral to how students obtain deep understanding of occupational therapy's core philosophy of occupation and its place in practice. However, there is a lack of research that explores occupation-centred education from the perspectives of students. Therefore, this study aimed to identify Australian entry-level occupational therapy students' experiences of learning about occupation, and its place in practice.

Methods:

A qualitative descriptive design was adopted. Overall, 20 students participated in four focus groups lasting between 45-75 minutes. Data was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analysed in two phases, using reflexive thematic analysis.

Findings:

There were three themes that encapsulated what helped students to better understand occupation and its place in practice: 1) making occupation real; 2) relating occupation to me; and 3) theory as a focussing lens. There was also a range of pedagogical strategies that helped students to better understand occupation: using active and interactive teaching and learning strategies. One additional theme indicated a challenge to helping the students understand occupation and its place practice: when practice education settings were not centred on occupation.

Conclusion:

Learning about occupation and occupation-centred practice may be facilitated by using practice examples, encouraging students to think about occupation in their own lives, teaching and applying occupation-centred theory, and employing interactive learning and teaching strategies. Student learning in practice settings where occupational therapy is centred on occupation is imperative. Further exploration of students' perspectives of learning about occupation across multiple occupational therapy programs is warranted.

Keywords:

Occupational therapy education,

Occupation-centred practice,

Students, occupational therapy,

Qualitative description,

Reflexive thematic analysis

Page Break

Introduction

Occupational therapists aim to promote the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities, and populations, through engagement in occupation (World Federation of Occupational Therapy [WFOT], 2018). The term ‘occupation-centred practice’ describes occupation as the centre of occupational therapy philosophy, theory, and practice, and central to an occupational therapist’s reasoning (Fisher, 2013; Fisher & Bray Jones, 2017). The centrality of occupation to occupational therapy is the definitive feature of occupational therapy that delineates it as unique and differentiates it from other health professions (Kielhofner, 2009).

Given the crucial role of occupation to occupational therapy is it vital that occupational therapy educators adopt an occupation-centred approach to ensure that future graduates are well prepared for occupation-centred practice (Fisher, 2013). The term occupation-centred education refers to designing all educational experiences, including assessment, so that students relate the courses they complete, and the topics they learn, to occupation (Hooper et al., 2020). Therefore, occupation-centred education is about the macro design of an entire curriculum and the everyday micro learning tasks students undertake (Hooper et al., 2020).

Although providing occupation-centred education is important, it can also be challenging to enact. For example, occupation is often “intermingled with, not carefully differentiated from, a host of other important and relevant knowledge domains” (Hooper et al. 2018, p. 7). Although there are standards that guide the incorporation of occupation into occupational therapy entry-level education programs, such as the Australian Occupational Therapy Competency Standards (Occupational Therapy Board of Australia, 2018), Accreditation Standards for Australian Entry-Level Occupational Therapy Education Programs (Occupational Therapy Council of Australia, 2018), and the Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists – Revised 2016 (WFOT, 2016), statements in

the standards are typically broad and do not always provide specific direction about how to implement an occupation-centred education program (Hooper et al., 2020). Sometimes occupation is enacted inconsistently within a curriculum as individual educators prioritise concepts they think are important for students to learn (Di Tommaso et al., 2018). There is a lack of evidence to support educators regarding the teaching methods and approaches that are most effective in implementing occupation-centred education.

Occupation is a complex phenomenon, which in turn makes it a difficult concept to teach, and for students to understand and apply (Howarth et al., 2018). Occupation is a threshold concept in occupational therapy, and threshold concepts are discipline specific concepts essential to understanding a discipline, but which are troublesome to learn (Rodger et al., 2015). A qualitative evidence synthesis (Miller & Roberts, 2020) found that occupational therapy educators used a variety of strategies to teach occupation: using orienting remarks (Hooper, 2006), using a flipped classroom format (Hooper et al., 2018), engaging in interactive lectures and experiential methods (Krishnagiri et al., 2017), and teaching occupation as a concept that is separate from its place in occupational therapy practice (Price et al., 2017). Taff et al. (2018) reported benefit from embedding occupation in assignments and written activities. Di Tommaso et al. (2018) and Hooper et al. (2018) considered that conceptual models and frameworks were vital for teaching occupation. Occupation is also taught outside of university classrooms when students participate in practice education, service learning, and community engagement activities (Hooper et al., 2018; Krishnagiri et al., 2017).

In Australia, there has been a significant amount of research that has explored student perspectives about their occupational therapy education in general, and student occupational therapists' characteristics and attributes, however there has been an absence of research about how to learn about the key concept of occupation (Roberts et al., 2020). In particular there

has been a lack of qualitative research (Roberts et al., 2020), and there appears to be a dearth of research about students' perspectives of learning occupation. Indeed, Krishnagiri et al. (2017) recommended that research about the experiences of students would help to evaluate how occupation is taught and conveyed within occupational therapy education programs. Similarly, Hooper (2006) identified there is a lack of research that explores the experiences and perceptions of students of an occupation-centred curriculum. Therefore, a study was undertaken to explore the question: What are entry-level occupational therapy students' perceptions and experiences of teaching approaches that support understanding of occupation and its place in occupational therapy practice?

Methods

Study Design

A qualitative descriptive design as described by Stanley (2015) was adopted. Using this method, descriptive themes relevant to students' perspectives and experiences of learning about occupation within an occupational therapy education program were analysed and reported. When a phenomenon is not understood in depth or has not been previously researched, like student perceptions of occupation-centred teaching approaches and methods, a qualitative descriptive approach allows for insights to be gathered about the phenomenon (Kim et al., 2016). Qualitative descriptive methodology seeks to offer a comprehensive and straightforward account of the phenomenon under investigation (Kim et al., 2016). Ethical approval was obtained from the Griffith University Research Ethics Committee (Ref no: 2018/789).

Participants

Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants; that is, they were recruited based on their availability and proximity to the researchers (Patton, 2015), however, they also had

lived experience of the topic under investigation. All students enrolled in the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy at Griffith University Gold Coast campus were eligible to participate. At the time of the study, 177 occupational therapy students were enrolled: 55 in Year 1, 39 in Year 2, 48 in Year 3, and 35 in Year 4. Participants were recruited by the student researcher (MM), who was a peer of the potential participants, via an in-class presentation for each year group. An email, which contained a copy of the Participant Information and Consent Form (PICF), was sent the day of the in-class presentation and a follow-up email was sent the day preceding the focus group. In the PICF and recruitment presentation students were advised they were free to participate, not participate, or withdraw participation without consequence. As an incentive, participants were eligible to enter a free lottery for a \$50 gift card. The lottery was managed by MM and an academic staff member who was not involved in the study. Written consent was obtained from participants before the beginning of each focus group.

Data Collection

Four focus groups (corresponding with each year group) were conducted at Griffith University Gold Coast campus. The duration of each focus group was as follows: 43 minutes (Year 1), 66 minutes (Year 2), 48 minutes (Year 3), and 75 minutes (Year 4). Each focus group was facilitated by an experienced and independent facilitator who was an occupational therapist, and who had not been involved with student education or assessment. MM took the role of note taker during the focus groups. A semi-structured schedule for asking questions was used (see Table 1), as according to Morgan and Hoffman (2017) it enables the collection of in-depth and collective understandings of the research phenomenon. The schedule also allows a facilitator the flexibility to engage in further prompting and probing in response to participants' comments. The interview schedule was formulated by MM and her supervisor

(MR), based on the aims and objectives of the study and knowledge of the literature about occupation-centred education. The facilitator was provided with a summary of the curriculum for each year level, to assist with formulating probing questions. All focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by a transcription service.

<Insert Table 1>

Data Analysis

There were two phases of data analysis. In the first phase MM and MR analysed the transcripts using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis. Phase I involved MM and MR reading each transcript multiple times and noting down initial ideas. In phase II, MM and MR used the electronic document of each transcript to read the data line-by-line and insert comments corresponding to each researcher's interpretation of the data. Following this, the two researchers discussed their approach to coding and their interpretations. In Phase III, they grouped codes into categories after searching for similarities and differences across all transcripts. All potential themes were reviewed and refined collaboratively utilising mind maps to finalise themes. In phase IV, the two researchers went back through the coded data to check for patterns for each potential theme, and then they reviewed the entire data set looking for missed data and potential themes that were relevant to the data set as a refined thematic map. Phase V involved the two researchers collaboratively working between each mind map of potential themes to refine ideas. In phase VI, MM selected relevant and comparative quotes for each theme and completed final analysis while writing her Honours dissertation.

In the second phase of data analysis, CW, (an experienced qualitative researcher, occupational therapist, and educator), reviewed the data set and the codes. After a period of data immersion, she engaged in further reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) to revise, recode, and deepen the analysis undertaken by MM and MR. During the second phase

of analysis CW and MR reviewed the themes that were developed against the first phase codes and categories.

Findings

A total of 20 students participated: Year 1 (n=2), Year 2 (n=6), Year 3 (n=5), and Year 4 (n=7). There were three themes about what helped the students to better understand what occupation is and how occupation is used in occupational therapy practice: 1) making occupation real; 2) relating occupation to me; and 3) theory as a focussing lens. There was one “domain summary” (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 593) that captured a range of strategies that helped students to better understand occupation: using active and interactive teaching and learning strategies. There was one theme about what was a challenge to helping students understand occupation and its place in occupational therapy practice: practice education settings not centred on occupation.

Making occupation real

Engaging in workplace-based learning and having interactions with occupational therapists working directly with clients needing occupational therapy services were key to helping students learn more about occupation and how it was used in occupational therapy practice. The students valued hearing about the work of occupational therapists who visited the academic environment: “having practising occupational therapists come in and having a discussion with them has been really helpful because it kind of solidified [that] what we're doing isn't just made up ... it is real” (Year 1 focus group). “We've heard from so many different occupational therapists in different fields of work” (Year 1 focus group). Hearing about the work of occupation-centred occupational therapists helped the students to better understand occupation and how it was used in occupational therapy:

What I struggled with ... was understanding what occupational-based interventions would look like, and something that helped me in first year was when we had occupational therapists come into the class and give examples of what they did throughout the day... he talked about he went surfing with a client, he walked a dog with a client, and that sort of gave me a really good perspective... surfing was active, meaningful, and purposeful for that client. So, that was really helpful to get a picture of what an occupational therapist would do, and then you can relate that back to being occupation-focused. (Year 3 focus group)

Having the opportunity to undertake workplace learning also assisted the students to consolidate their understanding of occupation and to practice using occupation in their practice.

Practice education has been really helpful, actually being out in the workforce, seeing how it's done and comparing it to what we've been learning at uni[versity] ... being able to practice the explanations and seeing how it works in the workplace has been really helpful for me. (Year 3 focus group)

“Seeing it in practice probably even helps me understand better the impact of occupation in our profession and being able to then explain it to other people in other settings because I was actually doing it” (Year 4 focus group).

Relating occupation to me

The students' experiences at university and during workplace learning challenged them to grapple with the meaning of occupation and required them to explain and discuss occupation using their own unique style, and this method of learning helped them to learn about occupation at a deep and personal level. “I think through placement experiences and relating

it back to myself and my personal experiences ... help[ed] me to understand our role and where occupation fits within our practice” (Year 4 focus group). “I think it's putting our own practice into words ... and last semester was an occupational analysis on our own occupation, so that was really good” (Year 1 focus group).

The process of being challenged to describe what occupation-centred occupational therapy looks like in a workplace setting helped the students to find their definitions of occupation. “I think it was just the fact that we're not regurgitating information. It's experiences that you learn. It's your own opinion. It's something that you've formulated in your own mind. It's not something that someone has told you and you're just believing” (Year 4 focus group).

I think after role emerging [workplace learning] ... was probably the turning point for me, where I thought, 'Okay, now I do know what that is. I can see how it's relevant here,' ... I think that kind of solidified it for me. If I can explain the importance of occupation in this context where they don't have an OT [occupational therapist], but I can still see how it's relative [relevant] to have an occupational therapist here. (Year 4 focus group)

Theory as a focussing lens

The students used occupation-centred theory to help them expand their understanding of occupation, as a framework for knowing what to do in occupational therapy practice, and as a framework for how to talk about occupation and occupational therapy.

The CMOP-E [Canadian Model of Occupational Performance and Engagement] and looking at those outside factors that are also impacting on why is this person unable to do what they want to do. Not only is it the occupation itself, but what other factors are influencing that, whether it be aspects of the environment, whether it's more person-

related, or the actual occupation itself. So, trying to combine those other things and consider them what through the planning process and the intervention process, I think it's important to consider that too. (Year 4 focus group)

Students used theoretical concepts to help them put on their “occupational lens” (Wicks, 2009) and to ensure that they were fixed upon occupation. “We've done lots of assignments that have been specifically based on occupation within occupational therapy, trying to give us that occupational lens, and that's been really helpful to have that understanding ... I guess we've always got that occupation sort of lens on” (Year 3 focus group).

I think just going back to having occupation at the forefront, and going back to the models and theories that we know where occupation is at the centre of that, and being able to look at the context itself and understand what was actually going on within that setting, and what else we could be doing in terms of occupation to improve the workplace that we're in. (Year 4 focus group)

Using active and interactive teaching and learning strategies

There students was a variety of teaching and learning strategies that the students experienced as particularly helpful for learning about occupation and occupation-centred occupational therapy (Table 2). For these strategies there was crossover with the other three themes, which illustrates that the three themes already discussed are instrumental in helping the students to learn how to do occupation-centred occupational therapy.

<Insert Table 2>

Challenge: practice not centred on occupation

As already discussed, there were several means by which the students' experience at university and during workplace learning enabled them to learn about occupation. However, when students encountered the situation in which their workplace learning setting was not occupation-centred, they felt a sense of dissonance; they recognised that the practice was not occupation-centred but they adjusted their practice to conform to the norms of the setting rather than to align with their philosophical beliefs about the importance of being occupation-centred. "I was in a very biomedical field. So, I was in hand therapy ... It's more focused on range of movement and literally just upper arm, so I think it was challenging for me to go in there having been taught at university that you're meant to act occupation-focused and then seeing what it was like in practice" (Year 3 focus group).

It was hard because I'd been taught to look at all the occupations and that it's important to have occupation balance, but I could never discuss with the client about their leisure occupations or something else they wanted to engage in, because it just wasn't the focus of the placement. And that was hard. (Year 3 focus group)

When the workplace learning setting was not occupation-centred, the students found it difficult to deliver their prepared definitions of occupational therapy, because they could clearly recognise that the definition did not match the actual practice.

It depends on the practice setting how you can use occupation in your therapy and how you can explain what is occupation to your patient. In my previous experience ... the patient comes in, and we provide some intervention, but definitely not occupation-centred, occupation-based, or even occupation-focused, and I think at that point of time it's really difficult to explain to the patient that, 'yes, we are occupational therapists to help you get back to your occupation'. (Year 4 focus group)

Discussion

Basing learning about occupation on real examples, asking students to describe occupation in their own words, focusing on occupation using theory, and using active teaching strategies to teach occupation were found to assist students to learn about occupation and how to apply it in occupational therapy. These findings confirm similar findings of other authors. For example, Di Tommaso et al. (2019) found that Australian educators similarly advocated practice education as a means of learning about enacting occupation-centred practice, that there is benefit in students “learn[ing] and develop[ing] their own perspectives” (p. 177), and that the use of occupation-centred theory is vital. Based on a study of educators in the United States of America, Hooper et al. (2018) advocated that occupation needed to be linked to other elements and content of a curriculum so that its centrality to occupational therapy could be apprehended. Themes in the present study show that the students perceived that occupation was linked to workplace learning, content learning, and philosophical foundations of practice. Thus, the findings of the present study strengthen the body of evidence about what helps students to learn how to do occupation-centred practice. Not only was there consistency in the strategies thought to be valuable in helping students learn how to do occupation-centred practice between the present study and previous studies, but this commonality was also shared by different groups of people. The student perspective reported in the present study was similar to the perspective of educators and qualified occupational therapists reported in previous studies.

Having a workplace learning experience in which practising occupation-centred therapy was not the focus of practice, created difficulty and angst for the student participants of the present study. Wilding (2011) found that occupational therapists sometimes unconsciously practiced non-occupation-centred occupational therapy due to the hegemonic influence of the therapists’ workplace. The students in the present study appear to be operating under

similarly hegemonic influences: they altered their practice to comply with accepted practice in their workplace learning settings for fear of receiving a failing grade for their assessments. Although the students' knowledge of their actions was not unconscious, the influence of the practice educators' assessment was sufficient to make them act against their stated beliefs about how to practice. Clearly, in this instance students do not have sufficient power to enact a change in practice. Rather, this finding illustrates there is a need for qualified occupational therapists to reflect upon the ways in which their practice is and is not occupation-centred, and to question themselves about the occupational therapy role modelling they are providing to students. This is important because occupational therapists have an ethical imperative to provide services that promote an occupation-centred perspective (Fisher, 2013), that therefore result in outcomes for clients that enable their participation and inclusion in the occupations they need to do, want to do, or are expected to do (WFOT, 2018).

Implications for Occupational Therapy Education and Future Research

The findings of this study suggest that there are several strategies that can assist students to learn about occupation and occupation-centred practice. For example, educators teaching stories drawn from occupational therapy practice and opportunities to simulate real-life practice are helpful. Students can be asked to analyse their own occupations and explain occupation and occupation-centred practice in their own words. Occupation-centred theories ought to be taught. Active learning strategies such as encouraging peer discussion and using interactive learning are also beneficial.

An area for future research is further investigation of ways in which to help occupational therapists practice occupation-centred occupational therapy. As highlighted in this study, occupational therapy that is not centred on occupation creates stress and difficulty

for students of occupational therapy, as it is inconsistent with the students' university education and with the philosophy, models and frameworks that underpin occupational therapy practice. In addition, the issue of non-occupation-centred occupational therapy has been a longstanding impediment to the notion of being a unified and well-represented profession (Wilding & Whiteford, 2008).

Trustworthiness

To enhance the credibility of, and reflexivity within the study, MM kept a journal to document key methodological decisions made over the course of the study, as recommended by Stanley (2015). This journal also included four focus group reflections, which were written following the completion of each focus group to note down initial ideas from the participant's responses and because data was collected in the early stages of the study. The credibility and transferability of the study has been addressed by the congruence across the research design, sampling approach, data collection and thematic analysis within the qualitative descriptive approach (Sandelowski, 2000; Stanley, 2015). Transferability is enhanced by the production of a rich description of the methodology and context of the study to promote comparison and transfer into other contexts (Anney, 2014). The focus groups were facilitated by an independent facilitator, and all data was transcribed verbatim which also contributes to enhancing the trustworthiness of the study.

Study Limitations

The study reflects experiences and perspectives from students of one Australian university. In addition, the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy taught at this university was developed in 2015, and therefore the degree is a relatively new occupational therapy program. Participants were required to recall their experiences from their previous years of study and therefore they may have forgotten pertinent information. In addition, as the data were collected via focus

groups and the students had worked together as a group for many months/years, individual students may have censored the reflections they provided to fit with group norms. MM was a student peer and also present at the focus groups, therefore her presence at the focus groups and perhaps particularly of her year level could have influenced the responses of her peers. To minimise this potential impact, students were advised during recruitment that MM would be present, so they could factor this into their decision to participate or not; additionally, MM took field notes during the focus groups rather than being involved in facilitating the discussions. This study explored the perspective and experiences of students and does not capture the perspectives of educators or other stakeholders. The perceptions of students were collected; however, learning outcomes and students' achievement of learning the degree content are not known and were not collected.

Conclusion

Learning about occupation and occupation-centred practice may be facilitated by using practice examples, encouraging students to think about occupation in their own lives and putting their ideas about practice into their own words, teaching and applying occupation-centred theory, and employing interactive learning and teaching strategies. To help students have the best chance of consolidating their learning about occupation-centred practice, practice settings in which occupational therapy practice is not centred on occupation ought to be avoided.

Key points for occupational therapy

- Using practice stories and opportunities to simulate real-life practice assist student learning about occupation-centred practice.
- Students should be asked to analyse their own occupations and explain occupation in their own words.

- Occupation-centred theories ought to be taught alongside use of active learning strategies.

Author's declaration of authorship contribution

All three authors declare that they meet the four roles and responsibilities defined by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) which includes substantial contribution to the design of the work or the analysis/interpretation of the data for the work, the drafting of this manuscript, and agreement to be accountable for the work.

Funding statement

The authors would like to disclose the contribution of the School of Health Sciences and Social Work, Griffith University who provided a small research grant to the second author.

Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the expertise of Professor Louise Gustafsson who facilitated the focus groups.

References

- Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 5(2), 272-281. Retrieved from <http://196.44.162.10:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/256/Ensuring%20the%20Quality%20of%20the%20Findings%20of%20Qualitative%20Research%20NEW.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis, *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589-597.
doi:10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806
- Di Tommaso, A., Wicks, A., Scarvell, J., & Isbel, S. (2018). Uncovering educator perspectives of occupation-centred education in Australia: A qualitative study. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 66(2), 174-182.
doi:10.1111/14401630.12529
- Di Tommaso, A., Wicks, A., Scarvell, J., & Isbel, S. (2019). Experiences of occupation-based practice: An Australian phenomenological study of recently graduated occupational therapists. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 82(7), 412-421.
doi:10.1177/0308022618823656
- Fisher, A. G. (2013). Occupation-centred, occupation-based, occupation-focused: Same, same or different? *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 20(3), 162-173.
doi:10.3109/11038128.2012.754492
- Fisher, A. G., & Bray Jones, K. (2017). Occupational Therapy Intervention Process Model. In J. Hinojosa, P. Kramer, & C. B. Royeen (Eds.), *Perspectives on human occupation: theories underlying practice* (2nd ed., pp. 237-286), F.A. Davis.
- Hooper, B. (2006). Beyond active learning: A case study of teaching practices in an occupation-centered curriculum. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 60(5), 551-562. doi:10.5014/ajot.60.5.551
- Hooper, B., Krishnagiri, S., Price, P., Taff, S. D., & Bilics, A. (2018). Curriculum-level strategies that US occupational therapy programs use to address occupation: A qualitative study. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 72(1).
doi:10.5014/ajot.2018.024190

- Hooper, B., Krishnagiri, S., & Price, P. (2020). The principles of occupation-centered education. In S. Taff, L. Grajo & B. Hooper (Eds.) *Perspectives on occupational therapy education: Past, present, and future* (pp. 117-130). Slack, Inc.
- Howarth, J. T., Morris, K., & Cox, D. L. (2018). Challenges of teaching occupation: Introduction of an occupation focused teaching tool. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 25(1), 142-148. doi.org/10.1080/14427591.2017.1397535
- Kielhofner, G. (2009). *Conceptual foundations of occupational therapy practice* (4th ed.). Philadelphia: F.A. Davis Co.
- Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C. (2016). Characteristics of qualitative descriptive studies: A systematic review. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 40(1), 23-42. doi:10.1002/nur.21768
- Krishnagiri, S., Hooper, B., Price, P., Taff, S. D., & Bilics, A. (2017). Explicit or hidden? Exploring how occupation is taught in occupational therapy curricula in the United States, *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 71(2), 1-9. doi:10.5014/ajot.2017.024174
- Miller, M., & Roberts, M.J. (2020) Teaching and learning occupation in occupational therapy education: A qualitative evidence synthesis. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Education*, 4(3). doi.org/ 10.26681/jote.2020.040313
- Morgan, D. L., & Hoffman, K. (2017). Focus groups. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data collection* (pp. 250-263). SAGE. https://dx-doi-org.libraryproxy.griffith.edu.au/10.4135/9781526416070
- Occupational Therapy Board of Australia. (2018). *Australian occupational therapy competency standards*. Retrieved from https://www.occupationaltherapyboard.gov.au/Codes Guidelines/Competencies.aspx

- Occupational Therapy Council of Australia. (2018). *Accreditation standards for Australian entry-level occupational therapy education programs*. Author.
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (4th ed.). SAGE.
- Price, P., Hooper, B., Krishnagiri, S., Taff, S. D., & Bilics, A. (2017). A way of seeing: How occupation is portrayed to students when taught as a concept beyond its use in therapy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 71*(4).
doi:10.5014/ajot.2017.024182
- Roberts, M., Hooper, B., & Molineux, M. (2020). Occupational therapy entry-level education scholarship in Australia from 2000 to 2019: A systematic mapping review. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 1-23*. doi.org/10.1111/1440-1630.12661
- Rodger, S., Turpin, M., & O'Brien, M. (2015). Experiences of academic staff in using threshold concepts within a reformed curriculum. *Studies in Higher Education, 40*(4), 545-560. doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2013.830832
- Sandelowski, M. (2000). Whatever happened to qualitative description? *Research in Nursing & Health, 23*(4), 334-340. doi: 10.1002/1098-240x(200008)23:4<334::aid-nur9>3.0.co;2-g
- Stanley, M. (2015). Qualitative descriptive: A very good place to start. In S. Nayar & M. Stanley (Eds.), *Qualitative research methodologies for occupational science and therapy*. (pp. 21-36), Routledge.
- Taff, S. D., Price, P., Krishnagiri, S., Bilics, A., & Hooper, B. (2018). Traversing hills and valleys: Exploring doing, being, becoming and belonging experiences in teaching and studying occupation. *Journal of Occupational Science, 25*(3), 417-430.
doi:10.1080/14427591.2018.1488606

- Wicks, A. (2009). Viewing the world through an occupational lens and becoming an occupation-focused occupational therapist. *Taiwan Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 2009, 27(2), 1-11. doi:10.6594/JTOTA.2009.27(2).01
- Wilding, C. (2011) Raising awareness of hegemony in occupational therapy: The value of action research for improving practice. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 58(4), pp. 293 – 299. doi:10.1111/j.1440-1630.2010.00910.x
- Wilding, C. & Whiteford, G. (2008). Language, identity and representation: Occupation and occupational therapy in acute settings. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 55, 180–187. doi:10.1111/j.1440-1630.2007.00678.x
- World Federation of Occupational Therapists. (2016). *Minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists – Revised 2016*. Forrestfield: Author.
- World Federation of Occupational Therapists. (2018). Definitions of occupational therapy from member organisations. Retrieved from <https://www.wfot.org/resources>

Tables

Table 1

Indicative Focus Group Questions

1. How do you think occupation is used in occupational therapy practice?
2. This year in your occupational therapy courses what strategies were used that helped you to understand occupation and its use in occupational therapy practice?
3. What suggestions do you have for university educators that would support your understanding of occupation and your skills in applying it in practice?
4. Is there anything you would like to share that you haven't been able to in regard to your learning about occupation its place in occupational therapy practice?

Table 2

Key learning and teaching strategies that assisted students to learn about occupation.

Teaching and learning strategy	Example of this strategy
Peer group discussion	I really enjoyed doing the reading and everything before class and then going to class and having group discussions, because that really embedded it into my knowledge, instead of sitting there listening to someone read it to me. (Year 1 focus group)
Interactive workshops	The way that we do our workshops and everything is very interactive, and I feel like I understand more. (Year 2 focus group)
Making a video describing occupation	The other assignment ... about making a video about what is occupational therapy or what is occupation. I think that was pretty interesting for us... We tried to hone in on what is occupation and what is occupational therapy to other students, other staff, and the general public. I thought that was pretty cool. (Year 4 focus group)
Occupational analysis assignment	We chose our own occupation, and then you broke it down into the different parts of the CMOP [Canadian Model of Occupational Performance], so it's really interesting to look at how deep you could go with all the different aspects, not realising how complicated just one thing we were doing in our day was. (Year 2 focus group)
Explicit course content about occupation	“Understanding the Context of Occupation” has been really beneficial... looking at the practice in the societal context and how it influences everything, and that there's pragmatic issues, and there's ethical issues, and there's all these things that can be barriers and enablers. (Year 2 focus group)
Simulated occupational therapy practice	I feel like a lot of simulations that we did in tutorials ... because we did occupational assessments, and at the heart of that we were watching someone do an occupation, and made intervention plans, and at the heart of that we were looking at someone's occupation, how they do it and how we can assist it. (Year 2 focus group)

Clinical Learning through Extended Immersion in Multimethod Simulation	First real opportunity to explain what occupation is to another health professional and becoming health professional. Yeah. Yeah, so I think that kind of helped solidified my understanding of occupation there as well. Just explaining it. (Year 4 focus group)
--	--