

TOWARDS CRITICAL OT PRACTICE: REFLECTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL LITERACIES IN OT EDUCATION.

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Introduction

Critical occupational therapy is a form of practice that recognises how social injustice impact the conditions of people's lives and their occupational participation.

Practice thus aims to facilitate change at both an individual and structural level

(Hammel & Iwama, 2012).



Critical literacies

grew out of the critical pedagogy of Brazilian educator and theorist Paulo Freire who argued that human beings are 'beings of praxis' where praxis is 'a dialogical unity of reflection and action'(1990).

His approach is based on the beliefs that people are able to think critically about their situation, are able to take control of their lives, and collectively transform how they relate to the world.



Critical literacies

entails ‘asking hard and harder questions, seeing underneath, behind, and beyond texts, to understand how these texts establish and use power over us, over others, on whose behalf, in whose interests.’ (Luke 2004)



an occupational lens

- The term ‘critical literacies’ refers to a deepened consciousness of a situation that allows students to recognise, reflect on and challenge hegemonies that impact occupational well-being (Galvaan, 2015).

Critical curriculum

- The influence of a truly critical curriculum would be exhibited by its graduates through their own empowerment beyond the confines of the university (Freire & Shor, 1987)

Uncovering graduates' conceptualisations of social/occupational justice and its translation into practice could illuminate developments in the curriculum that may be required to address the development of critical literacies.

Qualitative Case Study

Aim:

To explore how the educational processes and content of the UWC OT curriculum support UWC community service OT graduates to enact occupational justice in their practice.

Methods

- purposive sample : graduates with at least 6 mo in comserve and under-resourced, rural practice contexts.
- Participant observation, document review and Semi-structured interviews
- Inductive thematic data analysis,
- trustworthiness & ethics

Practice settings and roles



Eastern Cape - 2
Northern Cape - 3
Western Cape- 4

- Six of the seven participants in this study were placed in practice settings that provided community-based services i.e. clinics and CHCs, and Level I services i.e. district hospitals.
- Mainly individual, clinical intervention. Community outreach on own initiative.

The Meaning Of Occupational Justice

Social change through occupational enablement for health & well-being'

we explained to them (the caregivers) the importance of occupation... and we reflected on how we could equipping them with skills...so that they could deliver a better service to the children.

Contextual constraints to occupational justice

**“Occupational
therapy vision
does not fit
the system’**

...they expect us to only work with clients with hand injuries and CVA's...they have poor understanding of the service that we provide... I know that OT involves so much more than just practicing in a hospital...the people are not getting the service they really need...



**‘Complex process
of
bureaucracy’**

*...you can't step on people's
toes...because when you do
that, there might not be
transport for the rest of the
year...you have to make sure
that you charm them...if you
want to help your client.*



**‘Practice-
education
gaps’**

I’m so glad that you actually came here...to have this discussion...I’ve gone through a depression because I was thinking of everything that we were taught and how passionate we were at university...I feel that I am not doing enough.

Towards critical OT

Competencies
for critical
practice?

Reflection
vs critical
reflexivity?

teaching and
learning
approaches for
'change agent'
competencies?

CURRICULUM

How effective is
the UWC OT
curriculum in
developing
critical literacies?

**WEAK LINK BETWEEN
CONCEPTUALISATION
AND PRACTICE**

were the participants
actually able to advance
occupational justice in
practice?

Implications : OT education

Critical reflexivity

understanding of how the conditions of people's lives impact their occupational rights.

Lacked the sense of agency to engage in action.

desire on the part of some participants to sustain themselves within an oppressed environment. (Freire, 1990)

For example,

while some participants felt the need to address change despite the difficulties they experienced, others stopped fighting the system for fear of victimisation and their clients' suffering the consequences.

believing that they had little ability to instigate changes in the health system, they fell silent and experienced a sense of guilt and despondency as a result.

- →Powerlessness

How do different forms of power in my practice context influence me and my practice?



Pedagogy of discomfort

(Boler and Zembylas, 2003)

incorporating affective learning into the reflective process

- *a critical self-examination among educators and students of how their passive acceptance or non-acceptance of apparent social injustices has been shaped by the status quo.*
- *aims to create awareness about unconscious values and beliefs that frame people's actions and that may help to maintain hegemony*



collaborative and inter-professional practice

valuing and understanding collective agency as relational

Possibilities-based practice skills

- negotiation and conflict resolution
- (Griffin, 2001).
- creative networking,
- political lobbying,
- writing submissions for change
- participatory action research
(Kronenberg, Pollard and Ramugondo, 2011)
- productive conversation
- action reflection learning cycle



Educator cooperative enquiry group

Design-based research

Scaffolding of critical literacies

Occupational science constructs

Hidden curriculum



Conclusion

Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful

-Paulo Freire



Thank You.

references available:

lhess@uwc.ac.za