

THE WINDS OF CHANGE ARE ADVANCING

ARE WE RECEPTIVE OR RESISTANT?

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Definition of Occupation
- Studying Occupation using Alternative Approaches
- Practical Application
- Implications for Practice

INTRODUCTION

- The **big** question: What is occupation?
- The **next big** question: How can it be studied?

WHAT IS OCCUPATION?

Dominant Perspectives ('Status Quo')

- Occupations = everyday activities that human beings engage in (AOTA, 2014)
- Occupations = ADL, productivity, play/leisure (Kielhofner, 2008)

OR

Alternative Perspectives

- *Occupations = subjective, lived experiences* (Pierce, 2001; Doble & Santha, 2008; Reed et al., 2011)
- *Occupation = 'process of doing + meaning'* (Royeen, 2002)

LET'S TAKE WALKING AS AN EXAMPLE..

What is the meaning of walking?

Is it simply an act of 'functional mobility'?

Human occupations are NOT everyday activities but everyday experiences..



Photo credit: M. de Bruyn

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

- Occupations are not units that can be measured
- Occupations are not quantifiable
- Creating categories for occupation is problematic
- Occupations are highly complex
- Occupations are multi-dimensional
- Occupations are lived experiences

SO WHAT?

- If occupation = lived experience
- The study of lived experience = phenomenology (Moran, 2000)
- Understanding meaning = interpretative phenomenology (Heidegger, 1962; Borell et al., 2014)
- Occupation can be studied using phenomenology (Reed et al., 2011)
- But major limitation in OT literature & research using phenomenology

BUT HOW?

- Job-seeking = phenomenon of interest
- Methodology selected = IPA (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009)
- I= interpretative
- P= phenomenological
- A =analysis
- Strongly influenced by philosophy of Heidegger and Gadamer

AND THEN?

- Single case study = 1 job-seeker
- 3 interviews based on IPA = multiple points in time
- Interpretation = collaboration
- Data analysis = +++ effort with many steps
- Rich data emerged on how job-seeking is understood

i.e. the meaning of job-seeking for an individual in the UK

BUT WHAT ABOUT..?

Strengths

- Rich understanding of occupation emerges
- Researcher and participant interpret together
- Shift from 'everyday' being → reflective being

Limitations

- Rigour = effort and time (Clarke, 2009)
- Phenomenological interviewing = requires practice and skill (Walker, 2009)
- More appropriate to significant experiences

AND NOW WHAT?

- Implications for practice
- How often do you ask pts/clients :
“What is X like for you?”
“Can you tell me more about..”
“What do you mean when you say..”
- Cross-cultural application

BUT WHAT IF WE DON'T WANT TO..

- Change requires reflection, effort, constant thought
- Resistance to qualitative methodologies? ("soft" science)
- Categories are seen as helpful
- Threat to professional identity

CAN WE AFFORD NOT TO?

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