

BECOMING AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST: CRITICALLY THINKING ABOUT WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BRING IN CONTEXTS OF DIVERSITY



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Why this focus?

Spaces which contributed to learning:

- Equity & diversity groups as an OT class
- Student activist movements:
#RhodesMustFall #FeesMustFall #OccupyFHS
- Practice learning spaces



Research aim: To share experiences of navigating spaces of diversity & how reflections and learning have shaped us as aspiring OTs

QUESTION

What are OT students insights into forming relationships with and relating to diverse groups of people within academic and the practice contexts?

Qualitative Research

- Autobiographical self-study (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001)
- 2 focus group discussions
- Reflections on our experiences of learning and living in a university context
- Thematic data analysis

Findings

THEME

The ongoing work of digging deeper and looking further

CATEGORY 1

We don't enter spaces empty, we bring all that we are

CATEGORY 2

Navigating spaces of diversity towards building consciousness

CATEGORY 3

Adopting an equity lens to frame thinking, relating and doing

Findings

Category 3: Adopting an equity lens to frame thinking, relating and doing

...but its people within the university and within the system uhm the harshness that they experience within the system uhm that was designed for... not for them. It was designed from, from, ja, from a history that favours white people (p4 T1)

Findings

Category 3: Adopting an equity lens to frame thinking, relating and doing

At the end of a session, when people are like “actually, what are you doing?” you know, it [when we are positioned as the expert] limits what can happen and create barriers for our own growth, we can’t be challenged because we are “experts”, but when we bring down these walls, then we invite critique in terms of “how we are relating to you?”, you know people can say “there was a disconnect in this session, you didn’t reach us (p7 T2)

Discussion / Conclusion

- Student protest spaces and curricular activities
- Becoming and remaining aware of **intersectional identities & positionality** (Galvaan & Peters, 2017)
- Ongoing reflexivity as an unfolding **Occupational Consciousness** (Ramugondo, 2015)
- **Critical Occupational Therapy**: intentional practice to promote social justice (Hammell & Iwama, 2012)

References

Bullough Jr, R. V., & Pinnegar, S. (2001). Guidelines for quality in autobiographical forms of self-study research. *Educational researcher*, 30(3), 13-21.

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Hammell, K. R. W., & Iwama, M. K. (2012). Well-being and occupational rights: An imperative for critical occupational therapy. *Scandinavian journal of occupational therapy*, 19(5), 385-394.

Ramugondo, E. L. (2015). Occupational consciousness. *Journal of occupational science*, 22(4), 488-501.

Photos:

Kasibe, W. (Photographer). (2017, October 24). Timeline Photos: People on plaza. Cape Town

Kasibe, W. (Photographer). (2017, January 11). Timeline Photos: Rhodes Must Fall. Cape Town