



**Society for the Study of Occupation: USA**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Research Conference**  
**October 23-25, 2008**

Ruth Zemke Lectureship: Clare Hocking Abstract

Clare Hocking, PhD, MHSc, AdvDip (OT), Dip(OT), NZROT  
Associate Professor, AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand  
Adjunct Associate Professor, Charles Sturt University, Australia  
Editor, Journal of Occupational Science

***The Challenge of Occupation: Describing the Things People Do***

Simply stated, occupational science is the study of human occupation. There are two elements to that definition – the human and the occupation. While the majority of occupational science scholarship and research has focused on human experiences of occupation, my focus is on occupation itself.

Drawing support for my interest from Nelson's (1988) separation of occupational performance and occupational forms as well as Clark and colleagues (1991) categorisation of the form, function, meaning and context of occupation, I propose the development of in-depth descriptions of human occupations. Using skate boarding, surfing the net, preparing a celebratory meal for the family, and tagging (a form of graffiti) as examples, I illustrate how such descriptions might synthesise historical, geographical, anthropological, sociological and critical perspectives.

In putting forward this suggestion, I consider the contribution such knowledge might make to both occupational therapy and occupational science, the ethics of studying occupations, possible research strategies and the philosophical basis of this endeavour.

**References**

- Clark, F. A., Parham, D., Carlson, M. E., Frank, G., Jackson, J., Pierce, D., et al. (1991). Occupational science: Academic innovation in the service of occupational therapy's future. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 45, 300-310.
- Nelson, D. (1988). Occupation: Form and performance. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 42, 633-641.

## PROGRAM ABSTRACTS

Nancy Bagatell, Nancy.Bagatell@quinnipiac.edu

### *Occupations of the Mind: Daydreaming in Daily Life*

In examining data from Experience Sampling Method projects in which graduate students in Occupational Therapy explored their time use and experience, I observed an interesting trend, a naming and valuing of non-observable occupations. A seemingly universal experience was daydreaming and fantasizing, a doing in the mind. Students reported that daydreaming most often occurred while engaged in other occupations, or as a secondary occupation, but quite frequently identified daydreaming as a primary occupation. Interestingly, all students indicated that daydreaming was pleasurable and important. Intrigued by these findings, I have explored the phenomenon of daydreaming and argue here that daydreaming should be considered an occupation, an occupation of the mind. While daydreaming is generally considered trivial or maladaptive and thus is often neglected in intellectual discourse, literature from various disciplines supports the notion that daydreaming is a ubiquitous experience that is purposeful and meaningful in daily life. Daydreaming has been identified as an important means of: 1) preventing boredom and loneliness; 2) amusing oneself in idle moments; 3) reducing tension and stress; 3) learning more about oneself; 4) rehearsing for future actions; 5) developing new and alternate ways of dealing with situations; and 6) creating narratives. The content of daydreams can range from the mundane to the sublime. This paper explores how occupations of the mind develop across the life span and the current research regarding the neurobiological basis for daydreaming. Examples from illness narratives, autobiographical accounts of people with disabilities, and practitioner narratives support the notion that individuals at various stages of development and with various occupational challenges engage in occupations of the mind and that these occupations hold great personal meaning.

Antoine Bailliard, antoine\_bailliard@med.unc.edu

### *Immigration, culture, and mental health: The story of a Honduran immigrant*

Latinos are the largest minority in the U.S. and are projected to grow substantially. As a group their mental health needs are poorly addressed due to culturally biased assessments, culturally inappropriate interventions, lack of insurance, discrimination, poverty, and inadequate access to services. Moreover, a confluence of barriers in language, symptom expression, and culture results in elevated rates of misdiagnoses. Immigration engenders feelings of detachment from one's environment precipitating feelings of alienation, demoralization and distress, which are key factors in the onset of psychotic symptoms. Failure to address the disparity in mental health care for Latinos will result in an increasing social and economic burden to the U.S. Though these disparities are well documented, little is known about how immigration to the U.S. impacts daily occupational participation. Indeed, understanding the subjective experience of Latino immigrants will improve our knowledge about the course of their mental illnesses. Literature on this topic is primarily concerned with demographic data failing to grasp what occupational changes are experienced and the subsequent effect on mental health. This preliminary ethnographic inquiry traces the experiences of a man from Honduras who immigrated to North Carolina in the 1990s. Having left his wife and two daughters, he worked as many hours as possible to earn enough money to return home. Though successful at first, his pursuit of the American dream soon morphed into a capitalist nightmare laden with material obsession, fear of deportation, social isolation, and mounting frustration. Lacking social support to help him cope with difficult changes in his daily routine he experienced a spiraling decline into negative habits of thought and mental illness. Though formerly inactive at church in Honduras, he came to increasingly rely on a local Chapel Hill congregation for support. The latter opened a cascade of occupational opportunities through which he found meaningful engagements. Each new occupation offered him additional opportunities to combat isolation and further integrate into a supportive social fabric. He soon developed a healthier occupational routine that eventually curtailed his perseverating thoughts. This collaborative ethnographic inquiry produced numerous insights in understanding the importance of culture in promoting wellbeing and mental health.

Roxie M. Black, rblack@usm.maine.edu

*Somali Women in Maine: Stories of Occupational Adaptation*

As Somali women refugees struggle to understand the culture of and learn to successfully participate in their host country, they experience significant changes in both their roles and occupations. The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the occupational activities of Somali women in Africa before and during the civil war, and the adaptations they have made as refugees to successfully integrate into their new communities in Maine. Additionally, the researcher sought to determine what community or social supports encourage them as they live their lives here in Maine, and what provide barriers to their successful participation.

**Methods:** This is a grounded theory, qualitative study with seven Somali women. Each woman was interviewed more than once and each interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and reviewed by the participant as a member check prior to the next interview. The first interview examined the participant's occupations while in Africa. The second and sometimes third interviews elicited stories of her move to Lewiston, Maine, her current activities, supports and barriers to participation, and her satisfaction with her current social participation status. The researcher employed the constant comparison method of analysis, using categorizing and coding to develop themes in order to build theory regarding the above. Additionally, three of the first interviews were analyzed by other therapists to provide another means of testing for trustworthiness of analysis. **Results:** The majority of participants in this study experienced multiple shifts in their contexts and occupations; from a period of general occupational balance to occupational deprivation during the war to redefinition of roles and occupations as refugees in a foreign country. Emerging themes from the data analysis that help describe the occupational adaptation experienced by the participants include: Education in Somalia and Maine, Social supports, Daring to be different, and a Future Orientation. Although these women may not represent the traditional Somali woman, they may be examples of the transitional Somali woman, a woman who is willing to take risks, embracing role and occupational changes in an effort to claim her future while successfully participating in her new community.

Jane Cronin-Davis, j.cronin-davis@leedsmet.ac.uk

*Occupations in a Secure Forensic Environment: The Meaning and Value.*

Anecdotal evidence regarding the use of occupations with patients with personality disorders in forensic settings is beginning to emerge. This evidence, however has not to date been based on rigorous research. There is a documented need to develop the evidence-base in forensic settings as there is currently little research on which to base interventions (O'Connell & Farnworth, 2007). Occupational risk factors are, however, present for people with personality disorders and these influence past, present and future occupations. This paper will report on a research project carried out with eight men diagnosed with personality disorder, who were patients in a secure forensic setting. One of the aims of the research was to investigate the occupations in the men's lives given their diagnostic category, and the environmental and legal restrictions placed on them. Additionally, the research was conducted to enable the men to have their own voice regarding their participation in occupations, as these patients are rarely asked for their views and perceptions, given their pejorative label. In-depth interviews were conducted with the men, and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to establish super-ordinate and sub-themes. The themes were interpreted from an occupational perspective. IPA as a research process allows data to speak for itself, with rich description; and privileges novelty and narrative, whilst acknowledging the temporal aspects of participants, experiences. IPA recognises the researcher's part within the research process; moreover it can provide occupational science with the opportunity to broaden its methodological base. Participants in the study were asked about their individual experiences of occupational therapy and participating in activities or occupations. They revealed much about the significance and value they placed on engaging in occupations that had meaning to them in the hospital environment. They also revealed how they looked forward to the times when they were able to participate. The men also provided information as to how these occupations made a difference to their mental health and hospital admission.

Malcolm P. Cutchin, Susan Coppola, Vibeke Talley, and Judie Svihula, mcutchin@med.unc.edu

*Preventive Home Visits for At-risk Older Adults Living in the Community*

Aging in place is now recognized as a goal of most older adults. The search for preventive methods to mitigate decline and unwanted moves from home and community is important. One such method, Preventive Home Visits (PHVs), has been utilized in parts of Europe for approximately two decades. The PHV model is based on infrequent but regular visits to an older adult's home by a trained practitioner (typically an occupational therapist or nurse). The visit is designed to assess the older person's situation and provide information and advice to optimize function and well-being. Evidence about PHV efficacy is mixed but generally supportive, and there is a distinct need to create and examine a preventive non-medical intervention model in the USA. A successfully developed and implemented approach could enhance lives and save costs. This poster communicates the development and implementation of an occupation-based PHV intervention. The PHV intervention (funded by the NIA) is being conducted in several North Carolina counties and will be evaluated to assess its feasibility and effects for a larger trial. The study is using an experimental, repeated measures design in which approximately 120 older (75+ years) community-dwelling adults who are at-risk for functional decline are randomly assigned to experimental and comparison groups. The experimental group receives the PHV intervention four times across a 12-month period. The comparison group receives a minimal intervention of two informational phone calls and printed materials about local services during the same period. An occupational therapist with the requisite training and experience in home-based evaluation and intervention is conducting the experimental intervention. We are independently administering a set of standardized outcome measures to both groups immediately pre-intervention, and again at regular intervals after each intervention. The outcome measures will cover the primary dimensions on which we hypothesize PHVs will have a positive influence: functional ability, participation, life satisfaction, depression, general health, and care utilization. Analyses will compare the differences in outcomes for the two groups as well as assess several dimensions of intervention feasibility. These data will be the basis for a subsequent, enhanced intervention and study.

Malcolm P. Cutchin, Victor W. Marshall, and Rebecca M. Aldrich, mcutchin@med.unc.edu

*Transition to a CCRC: The Role of Occupation in the Therapeutic Landscape Process*

Residential transitions of older adults are increasingly studied in the gerontological literature. While various perspectives have been brought to bear on the transition process, the concept of therapeutic landscape, along with attention to occupational patterns and shifts, can add important insights to that literature. Although underutilized in gerontology, therapeutic landscape offers a combination of geographical and cultural views on the place and well-being relationship. In our extension of recent work on the concept, the care environment presents a therapeutic landscape encounter with which the older adult must transact and adjust. The inclusion of an occupational science perspective, wherein occupations are seen as a crucial part of the person-place relationship, can further enhance the therapeutic landscape perspective of older persons and their retirement communities. To provide evidence for those claims, we present a case study analysis that attempts to combine these perspectives and examine the role of occupation in the lives of older people who moved to a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC). 116 movers completed pre- and post-move questionnaires about their levels of engagement in 20 activities. Frequency distributions, paired t-tests, and logistic regression analyses performed on the data indicate that while overall levels of activity did not change from pre- to post-move, patterns of engagement did change as a result of the move to the CCRC. Occupations that declined post-move were mostly individual occupations, and those that increased were predominantly social. Moreover, total activity engagement after the move was associated with residential satisfaction in the CCRC. Even with their limitations, the data and analytical findings suggest that occupations are an important part of the CCRC therapeutic landscape process. The nature of shifts in occupational patterns, and the types of occupations of which they consist, offer new information about older adults' residential transitions. The results reflect person-place transactions, and further exploration of occupational changes after such a move may help explain how CCRCs can work better to benefit older adults' occupations and well-being.

Elizabeth DeGrace, beth-degrace@ouhsc.edu

*Family Experiences and Health Following the Diagnosis of Autism*

The aim of this research was to explore the family's experiences of everyday life after their child had been diagnosed with autism and plan for the future. This study used a grounded theory approach to capture, analyze, describe and generate a conceptual framework capturing the family's experiences since the diagnosis of autism. Data were collected through open ended, semi structured interviews. Descriptive information was collected from a demographic survey, Family Quality of Life Survey and the Sense of Coherence Scale. From the data analysis, the Family Experiences and Health Following the Diagnosis of Autism (FEHDA) Conceptual Framework was generated and represents the experience following diagnosis of autism, the status of family health and the factors mediating family experience and family health. The FEHDA proposes the experience as a stage sensitive experience and involves the stages of paralysis, searching, and applying. Paralysis can be characterized by having a sense of being overwhelmed and experiencing inaction in thought, spirit and/or body. Families who move through paralysis enter a stage of frenetic, often hyper searching for readily available answers and solutions. The last stage, application, is the stage where the family has generated a plan for coping with and managing everyday life and parenting a child with autism. This stage includes the family's ability to evaluate and modify their plans. The stages of navigating the unknown, are inversely related to the construct of family health. Family health has been conceptualized as mental, physical and emotional capacity to successfully manage everyday tasks and generate opportunities for preservation of family quality of life. The third construct self and others, suggests the processes of navigating the unknown, are mediated by internal (family or self) and external (others) factors. The factors are interconnected and include reflection, willingness, understanding, knowledge and experience, trust, strength and hope. These factors have characteristics of coping and sense of coherence. The FEHDA Conceptual Framework proposes relationships among the family's experiences constructing everyday life and navigating family decisions that bring about various levels of uncertainty that ultimately influence family health.

Elizabeth Francis-Connolly, efrancis@emich.edu

*Mothering Taboo Talk*

Motherhood is a common occupation, it is a major occupational role for many women in the United States, yet it is this very commonality that masks the importance and complexity of this role. Research to date tends to focus on the transition to parenthood and mothering young children with little attention paid to how mothering evolves and changes through the life course as both children and mothers age and mature. The literature in occupational science has focused primarily on mothering with a disability or parenting children with disabilities (Olson & Esdaile, 2004). Arendell (2000) in her decade review of the motherhood research, challenged us to explore how mothers negotiate the activities of childrearing and how women are affected by mothering. The purpose of this study is to explore how mothering experience changes and evolves over time as mothers and their children age and mature. A qualitative methodology, specifically grounded theory was chosen for this study in that it allows for in-depth exploration of a topic with the outcome of generating a new theoretical framework or adding to existing theory. Semi-structured focus groups and in-depth interviews were conducted over a two-year period with more than forty Caucasian, married women living in the Midwestern United States. These women ranged in age from 24-59 years of age. Data analysis consistent with grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006) was performed. Although there were several themes that emerged from this study, the focus in this paper will be on the theme of "taboo talk." I have labeled this as such because I found that mothers of all ages spoke of the socio-cultural press to only share the positives of their mothering experience. There was an unwritten rule to not share the negative side of being a mother. This silence put an added strain on their mothering role and their perceptions of whether they were a good mother or not. This theme is noteworthy for both researchers and practitioners in that it furthers our understanding of the tension many women face in this major occupational role

Stacy Frauwirth, Courtney Harris, and Ann Ruderman, stacy.frauwirth@dominican.edu

*Activity Patterns and Occupational Balance: The Transition to College*

The transition to college represents an important life event for many young adults. This transition provides an opportunity for students to attempt and practice emerging adult roles. However, the transition also presents numerous life stressors that can disrupt or interfere with the college experience. New college students are often faced with increased academic challenges, the need to develop time management and independent living skills, financial pressures, and new social opportunities and pressures. These stressors may persist through the first year of college and can lead to mental health challenges, risk taking behaviors, and academic failure. College freshmen are at increased risk for depression, weight gain, eating disorders, excessive alcohol consumption and binge drinking, and risky sexual behaviors. The purpose of this pilot study was to explore the activity patterns and sense of occupational balance in first year college students, and the impact of the transition to college on activity choices, patterns, and satisfaction. Full-time, first year students at a small, private university in Northern California were invited via email during the Spring semester to participate in an anonymous web-based (Zoomerang) survey. The survey included cafeteria-style, Likert scale, and open-ended questions on activity changes upon entering college; ease of transition to college; current participation in leisure activities, paid employment, and school work; and satisfaction with schedule. 50 students, ranging in age from 18 to 25, completed surveys. Data is currently being analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics, correlation coefficients, and Chi-squares. Preliminary analysis revealed that students dropped numerous activities, including volunteer work, family activities, and sports activities, but gained few new activities. Students reported that time management; developing new social networks; and finding a balance between school, work, and leisure were the most challenging aspects of the transition to college. Social and passive leisure activities were the most frequently reported, and students who had more frequent leisure participation were more satisfied with their schedules. A Dominican graduate student will use data from this study to develop an occupational therapy group intervention for at-risk college freshmen.

Kristine Haertl, klhaertl@stkate.edu

*Writing and the Transformative Self: A Heuristic Inquiry*

Writing has been around for centuries as a key symbolic form by which we communicate and construct our individual and collective realities. Heuristics, as described by Moustakas, involves an in-depth qualitative exploration of a question of intrinsic importance to the researcher. Occasionally used in the social and psychological sciences, heuristic inquiry has unique applications to the field of occupational science. Phases of heuristic inquiry include (a) initial engagement, (b) immersion, (c) incubation, (d) illumination, (e) explication, (f) creative synthesis, and (g) validation. Each of the phases allows the researchers to analyze the dynamics of a phenomenon (in this case writing as an occupation), as it evolves over time. Over the past three years, the primary researcher studied 33 years of personal poetry and journal writing, leading to a creative synthesis and personal questions related to the intrinsic and extrinsic properties of personal writing and their influence on personal experience. This presentation will focus on phase II of a larger study, which sought to explore the role of writing in the development of the self. The primary researcher and seven co-researchers engaged in ongoing dyadic heuristic interviews over the period of a year. Participants varied in geographical location and life experience and included a 97 year old Poet Laureate, faculty members, a janitor, a retired English teacher, and a pregnant teen. Results demonstrated the powerful transformative role in the occupation of personal writing.

Within heuristic research, a “creative synthesis” as described by Moustakas (1990) is completed in order to summarize the results of the heuristic process. This presentation will include a multi—media presentation including music, poetry, and the synthesis of Phase II of the present study. A summary of research will include description of the findings of the author’s use of personal writing as well as that of in-depth heuristic interviews of life long writers, and how the occupation of writing contributes to the development of meaning, worldview, and the self.

Kendra Heatwole Shank, kendra.heatwole@unc.edu

*The Transactional Nature of Occupation: Negotiating Change and Meaning*

The cultural phenomenon of aging in place has gained visibility in the United States as the cohort of oldest-old adults increases. However, there are many things we still do not know about the relationships between home, occupation, and the aging process, or about how these relationships affect the human experience of meaning. The purpose of this study was to explore how complexities of aging in place are intertwined with the meaningful occupational performance of older women, and how person-environment transactions affect an individual's ability to negotiate meaning as patterns of being and doing change with age. A multiple case study approach using in-depth interviews and observations was employed, with three female participants older than 85. The theory of transactional occupation was used to understand how complex processes of aging in place impact the participants' ability to generate meaning through their occupations. Data from interviews and observations were coded, and emerging themes were grouped across cases and collapsed into two core concepts. The first concept involved domains of meaningful occupational engagement, which included occupations of identity, place-centered activity, and relationships. The second core concept identified processes of person-place transaction that support continued negotiation of meaning in occupation. Findings suggest that these transactional processes of place integration, active situational framing, and coordination of occupational performance enabled the women to continue to negotiate meaning in the domains of occupational engagement despite change. The findings from this study increase our understanding of how meaning is maintained over time and how it is supported by transactional processes of place and person. This paper also adds to the emerging evidence validating the transactional approach as a useful way to examine the occupations of an aging population.

Ruth Humphry and Linn Wakeford, rhumphry@med.unc.edu

*Disparities in Occupational Engagement of Children with Special Needs*

The characteristics of groups of children and their families as well as differences in the quality of services contribute to disparities in health and developmental outcomes. This paper explores the nature of developmental differences in how children with special needs learn their occupations. The study builds on the assumption that children are part of an integrated, functional system that supports the development of their occupations. It deepens our understanding of occupation by identifying how the system sometimes fails to function. For example, researchers in education report that children with special needs, in classrooms with typically developing peers, have problems interacting with their peers. This suggests that children already facing developmental challenges miss social opportunities to learn about classroom activities. This can be exacerbated if teachers are not aware of how to modify their behaviors or adaptively create learning opportunities. The authors suggest that due to dysfunction in the system children with different diagnoses may experience a range of disparities in their occupational engagement leading to less than optimal outcomes. To elaborate on the concept this study draws on 6 months of observations of 3 year olds and their teachers in an inclusive classroom. Three children were selected as contrasting case studies. Trustworthiness was addressed through triangulation of similar observations over time as well as the use of photographs and teachers comments as alternative data sources. Field notes and pictures of the children's behavior were analyzed for units of meaningful engagement (or missed opportunities for occupation). The researchers independently identified situations that invoke changes in occupational performance and then collaborated in determining what contributed to positive or less than ideal engagement. The findings include how children engaged in vicarious participation, negotiated interactions around activities, and organized actions to engage during free play-time and teacher led activities. The paper discusses the transactional nature of functional systems that create and shape changes in childhood occupations. Future research will explore how characteristics common to children with autism, Down syndrome or severe motor impairments suggest alternative strategies to enhance the developmental processes and support occupational engagement.

Moses N. Ikiugu, Moses.Ikiugu@usd.edu

*Understanding the Global Power of Occupational Performance: A Brief Exploratory study of the Characteristics of Individuals who have Changed the World*

Abstract: In an earlier study, Ikiugu, Anderson, and Anderson (2007) concluded that occupational scientists could help resolve pressing global problems such as poverty and global warming by educating individuals so that their choices and occupational performance patterns were consistent with amelioration of the issues. Ikiugu (2008) set out to create a framework to guide such education. As part of this process, he endeavored to find out whether there were characteristics that individuals could inculcate so that they were more effective in changing global events. He therefore completed a study to determine some of the characteristics of famous individuals who have significantly impacted the world in recent history. The study was completed using phenomenological and heuristic designs (Moustakas, 1990; Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). Participants were 17 individuals who were famous for having had a significant impact in the world in the 20th century. They included Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, and Pope John Paul II.

Phenomenological methods were used to analyze their speeches to determine their; personal experiences, thoughts, beliefs, values, and opinions about humanity and the world; perception of right and wrong; and human responsibility in the world. Heuristic methods including engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, and synthesis were used to analyze their biographical information. Findings indicated that actions of the study participants as they pursued their daily occupations were guided by a clear vision which was rooted on empathy, deep love for, and a sense of connectedness with humanity. This empathy arose from sensitivity born of self-enlightenment, which led to self-understanding and an acute consciousness of conditions of injustice that afflicted fellow human beings. It was concluded that a framework for education to facilitate change in occupational performance patterns for the purpose of improving conditions in the world needed to include enhancement of individual self-understanding as well as empathy for other human beings and all living things on our planet. Based on this empathy, one could develop a vision that would guide his/her choices and performance patterns as he/she pursues daily occupations, so that performance is consistent with amelioration of the global issues.

Moses N. Ikiugu and Lynne M. Anderson, Moses.Ikiugu@usd.edu

*The Validity/Reliability of Occupational Performance Measurement: A Synthesis Of Research Using the Validity Generalization Method*

In this study, we used the Validity Generalization method (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004; Schmidt & Hunter, 1977) to synthesize findings from 18 studies investigating the validity/reliability of a variety of occupational performance assessments. Our objectives were to determine: 1) an overall estimate of the validity/reliability of occupational performance measurement scores; and 2) generalizability of the validity/reliability from research to clinical settings after correction for some attenuating statistical artifacts. To achieve the above two objectives, we computed weighted mean validity/reliability coefficients of studies validating a variety of occupational performance measurement instruments; determined the attenuation of variability of the validity/reliability coefficients by sampling and test criterion measurement reliability errors; and calculated the proportion of the variance of the validity/reliability coefficients accounted for by the attenuating factors. Our sample was comprised of 18 studies in which test-retest, inter-rater, alternate measure, and predictive reliability estimates of occupational performance scores were investigated. The instruments generating scores in the studies included: the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM); Occupational Performance History Interview (OPHI-II); Assessment of Motor and Process Skills (AMPS); Role Checklist (RC); Assessment of Living Skills and Resources (ALSAR); Australian Therapy Outcome Measures (AusTOMs); Functional Independence Measure (FIM); and Hessel Analogical Reasoning Test (HART) among others. Occupational Performance assessment scores based on self-report were found to have a higher corrected weighted mean validity/reliability coefficient than is typical for instruments in social science research. This was particularly significant in the context of the emphasis on client-centeredness in the current occupational therapy paradigm which encourages collaboration with clients in the assessment and intervention process. When observed variance was corrected for attenuation by sampling and test criterion reliability errors, less than 75% of the variance recommended by Hunter and Schmidt (2004) remained. Our findings indicated that assessment scores based on self-report instruments may be the most reliable/valid. It is not clear whether such

validity/reliability can be assumed in clinical conditions that differ from research circumstances. Further meta-analysis is indicated to determine more conclusively such generalizability of validity/reliability of occupational performance assessments.

Jeanne Jackson and Florence Clark, [jmjackso@usc.edu](mailto:jmjackso@usc.edu)

*Translational Research in Occupational Science: Exploring Mediating Factors in Activity-Based Intervention and Health-Related Outcomes for Older Adults*

This paper will describe the Health Mediating Effects of the Well Elderly Study, an NIH/NIA supported clinical trial (R01 AG021108-02) investigating the efficacy of Lifestyle Redesign® for independent living older-adults. While potency of the Lifestyle Redesign® program (i.e., improving health and well-being, slowing age-related health declines, demonstrating cost effective treatment) was established in a prior NIH-funded clinical trial, the factors and processes that led to the program's success were not explored. In this new study, we endeavored to conceptually replicate our previous research and determine mechanisms that created the intervention's positive effects by exploring the biological, psychological and social factors that contributed to improving quality of life among elders. We hypothesized that the positive effects of the program were due to a set of interrelated mechanisms including active coping, healthy activity, perceived control and stress-related biomarkers, and social support. Using a semi-crossover design, 480 participants were randomized into two groups. Group A received the treatment for the first six months while Group B remained untreated. In the following six-month period, Group B received the treatment while Group A was untreated. An assessment battery measuring potential mediating and outcome variables was administered to all participants at baseline and at subsequent six-month intervals. In this presentation, I will discuss the purpose, design, and methodology of the project. Because this research project is in progress, the intent-to-treat analysis is not available. Baseline data will be presented to extent possible. This research contributes to the mission of SSO as it crosses the boundaries of theory and practice with occupation at the center of both. Our assessment of the theoretical mediating model will increase understanding about the mediating process events that link occupation to enhanced quality of life science?

Bonnie L. Kennedy, [bonnielk@usc.edu](mailto:bonnielk@usc.edu)

*Attributes of Meaningful Occupation in Real-Time*

Occupational science scholars often speak of meaning, "meaningful occupation" as essential to health, but what does "meaning" mean? Literature in occupational science and other disciplines recognize that meaning is created at the levels of civilization, community, and individual experience. Humans create both meaning and their state of health through occupation as their transaction with the environment. This study examines individuals' subjectively experienced meaning in occupations as it occurs in real time. Findings from this study could be used to design more meaningful health promoting occupations for daily living. Participants in this study carried electronic diaries daily for a week to record their appraisals of their daily occupations. They were signaled on a stratified random schedule to reply to a structured questionnaire six times per day for seven days. This Ecological Experience Sampling (EES) method provided 3195 self observations of daily activities from 143 college students. Meaningful activity was appraised on desirability, level of interest, pleasure, satisfaction, success, and challenge. Highly meaningful activities were found to be the most interesting, desirable, pleasurable, satisfying and successful experiences of occupation. Identification of these attributes of meaningful occupation sheds light on the content of the experience. Selecting and shaping health promoting occupations should take these attributes into consideration. Further testing that addresses the relative impact of each of the attributes is suggested along with broader exploration of attributes of the experience of meaningful occupation in real time.

Elizabeth Larson, blarson@education.wisc.edu

*Seeking Occupational Justice: Parents of Children with Disabilities*

Although intended to be family-friendly, parents often feel they struggle against the system to attain services for their child with a disability. The purpose of this study was to examine the experience of parents working with professionals in acquiring and maintaining services for their child. Forty-four caregivers from diverse ethnic (White, Hispanic, & Native American) and socioeconomic backgrounds participated in in-depth qualitative interviews. A semi-structured guide inquired about parents' experience with professionals who were or were not helpful, any conflicts or circumstances where they felt their perspective was "discounted", and their "ideal" professional partner. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and transcriptions' accuracy verified via audio-tapes. Transcripts were coded initially using an open-coding procedure, additional iterations of coding were used to refine the coding scheme, codes were then grouped and collapsed into categories that described key processes parents used to acquire and maintain services for their children or impediments to this work. Key findings suggest that 1) parents intended to acquire occupational justice, or a parity of occupational opportunities for their child with special needs through the services system; 2) this effort was plagued with uncertainty in discerning the right course, and plagued with negative social interactions (such as the child being viewed as a "container" of a disability rather than a whole person), and 3) this work included managing "expelling" threats (children being rejected from classes or services due to their behaviors), service gaps (between providers, between grades or due to lack of funding) and insufficient services.

Wanda Mahoney, wmahoneyot@hotmail.com

*Occupational Engagement in Adults with Moderate to Severe Developmental Disabilities*

Occupational justice recognizes that all people have the right to occupational engagement because it is through occupational engagement that people experience well-being. Occupational injustice occurs when outside forces prevent people from engaging in occupation, require participation in activities that they find meaningless, or prevent people from making choices about their occupations. People with developmental disabilities in a day program are at risk for occupational injustice because they require environmental support in order to engage in occupation. This phenomenological study explored occupational engagement of adults with moderate to severe disabilities in a day program by examining what the staff members and consumers found meaningful within the program activities and capturing how the consumers exhibited occupational engagement. This study understood occupational engagement in terms of meaning, self-choice, and motivation leading to involvement in occupation. The methods involved phenomenological interviews with 10 staff members regarding satisfying and dissatisfying experiences working with the consumers, interviews with 10 consumers with moderate to severe developmental disabilities regarding the activity groups using visual supports to enable participation, and four observations of consumers in preferred and less preferred activity groups using the Volitional Questionnaire. Strategies were employed to ensure trustworthiness of the data and analysis including dense description, data triangulation, member checks, peer review, reflexive journaling, and the use of a structured observation tool with demonstrated reliability and validity. Thematic analysis demonstrated that staff members found meaning in the day program activities through Consumer Engagement in Program Activities and Reciprocal Interaction, and the consumers found meaning in the day program activities through Doing/Active Engagement and Respectful Interaction. The consumers demonstrated occupational engagement through the following themes: Doing Activity/Initiating Action, Positive Affect, and Focused Attention. The findings demonstrated the influence of a supportive environment, choice, and relationships between consumers and staff members that may be reflective of co-occupation on occupational engagement. This information is important in order to build the body of knowledge regarding occupational engagement in an infrequently studied population, understand the implications related to such persons' occupational justice, and include the perspectives of people with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities in the study of occupation.

Amy Marshall, Christine Myers, and Doris Pierce,

*A Century of Therapeutic Use of the Physical Environment of Occupation to Influence Health*

The purpose of this study was to describe the therapeutic use of the physical context of occupation over the history of occupational therapy. Documenting century-long patterns in therapists' creation, use, and alteration of the objects and spaces of occupation to influence health strengthens understandings of the physical context of occupation and the way in which occupational science research supports occupational therapy. This study used grounded theory methods to analyze historical occupational therapy literature, including documents archived at the Wilma West Library, the Willard and Spackman's Occupational Therapy series, and the American Journal of Occupational Therapy. The sample of 75 pieces of literature was selected for its focus on the role of the physical environment in intervention, and to represent a variety of settings and populations. Coding, collaborative critical analysis, memo writing, and visual modeling were used throughout the analysis sequence, which included expert audio interview, initial coding scheme, code pilot, chronological analysis of data across all time periods from 1910s to 2000s, code revision, theoretical sampling, and theoretical saturation. Significant transformations of categories, as well as the discovery of new concepts, indicates the degree to which this grounded theory research was trustworthy. The substantive descriptive theory produced by the study will be presented, including a typology of human-object interactions, the evolution of two related key concepts from the earliest to the latest periods, and historical changes in the ways in which therapists occupied intervention spaces. A four-square typology of human-object interactions describes either constructive or non-constructive activities, completed by either therapists or clients, as well as historical changes in the objects and therapeutic activities utilized within each type. Increasing diversity and complexity in therapists' entry, creation, negotiation, and expansion of treatment space from early years to the present will be described. Professional use of the physical environment of occupation to influence health has, across the century, a fractal, self-referencing nature. Adaptation and grading of objects and activities by therapists was a strange attractor: ever-present but differently expressed throughout history. Together, these findings describe the subtle spatial gift of occupational therapists, expressed in their historical management of the physical environment.

Abbey Marterella, [abbey.marterella@gmail.com](mailto:abbey.marterella@gmail.com)

*The Meaning of Teaching in an Inclusive Art Studio: Exploring the Artist's Experience*

In the last half of the 20th century, the mental health system in the United States changed as a result of legislation designed to move people with psychiatric disabilities out of restrictive hospital settings and into the community. Although support programs exist (e.g., clubhouses, drop-in centers), many people with mental illness are still not fully integrated in their communities due, in part, to financial hardships and stigmatizing societal attitudes limiting participation. In response to these issues, a nonprofit organization in southeastern Michigan created a space where community members with and without mental illness could come together around a common occupation: art-making. The studio was not conceived of as a therapy program, but rather as a place to do art with others. This paper will describe a phenomenological study that explored the meaning of the teaching experience for artists providing instruction in this community art program. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews with four teachers emphasized reflections on the occupation of teaching. While the power of occupation and its effects on health and well-being were affirmed in this study, the findings also revealed how social complexities shape the meaning of occupation. For the teachers, the meaning of their experience was strongly influenced by their understanding of the studio's purpose and the beliefs that they held about people with mental illness. Discussion questions include: 1. What is the distinction between occupation as therapy and occupation as therapeutic? 2. How do the findings from this study affirm or shift our current understanding of occupation and occupational science? 3. In what ways can occupational science contribute to community building?

Susan C. Merrill, susan.merrill@unh.edu

*Lived Experiences of Perpetual Parents of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities*

There is a growing phenomenon of adults, who in middle- and old age find themselves continuing to provide the primary care for their children with intellectual disabilities. These parents, labeled “perpetual parents,” face their own aging while living with, and providing significant daily support to, their adult children. The research literature about perpetual parenting has explored outcomes for these families in terms of utilization of community resources, future planning, and perceptions of stress and burden. These important data contribute to awareness by service providers that perpetual parents tend to avoid community-based services and future planning and that their scores on measures of stress and burden are higher than those of their non-perpetually-parenting peers. However, practitioners and researchers know little about the lived experiences of perpetual parents as they move into old age. The purpose of this study, which is a doctoral dissertation, is to explore the lived experiences of perpetual parents, focusing on how they have structured and adapted daily routines over time and the meaning they attribute to their lifelong care giving role. The emphasis of this phenomenological study is on parents as individuals within a complex network of relationships and environments that change and evolve over the life course. The results of this study will add the parental perspective and voice to larger conversations about the issues that surround perpetual parenting and about aging with intellectual disabilities. The author constructed data for this study from three ninety-minute interviews with each of five participants. The author will present themes that emerged from analysis of participant interviews. The author hopes to generate discussion that will clarify and expand her thinking about the data in the final stages of writing her dissertation. Additionally, the author will describe the research approach guiding the study, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, and its relevance to occupational science and occupational therapy research.

Mohammad S. Nazzal and Gayle Hersch, MNAZZAL@TWU.EDU

*The Ritual of Communal Prayer: Value, Meaning and Performance*

Occupation is everything people do to occupy themselves, including self-care activities, work, leisure and play. This study explored the ritual of communal prayer as a meaningful spiritual occupation. The purpose of the study is to explore the meaning and value of prayer to ordinary individuals as well as its performance. This study attempted to answer the following questions: 1) What is the meaning and value of prayer? 2) What performance skills are required to optimally participate and perform the prayer as an activity? 3) What contextual factors are inherent to the participation in prayer? and 4) What performance patterns are related to the performance of prayer? A qualitative ethnographic methodology was utilized. The researcher conducted face to face interviews and 30 minutes participant observations while participants perform their prayer rituals. The researcher recruited 3 able-bodied adult participants for a total of 9 participants from the three religious groups, Catholic, Jewish and Muslim, using a convenient sampling method. Results of the study revealed the significant meaning and value of the occupation of prayer to these participants who identify themselves with a religious role in their lives. Participant-observation data was significant in revealing the common performance skills and patterns used in prayer rituals for the three faiths. Environment and contextual factors inherent to maximum engagement in the occupation of the prayer were also discussed. The occupation of prayer was then analyzed according to the following themes: meaning, physical performance, cognitive performance, community participation, temporality and spiritual context. The study results propose the potential of the occupation of communal prayer and prayer in general as a meaningful occupation when used with occupational therapy clients who identify themselves with previous religious roles. This study is an example of how the study of occupation from an occupational science perspective can inform the practice of occupational therapy.

Etsuko Odawara and Mari Sakaue, etsuko-o@seirei.ac.jp

*Two Old Women: Occupation of Resolving Life Crisis in Old Age*

As a person ages and accumulates life experience, the person becomes a unique occupational being. While people develop their own life styles, repeating and recreating life continuity while meeting life's events, their personalities and strategies tend to become strong, sometimes rigid. The presentation, "Two old women", is titled after an Alaskan legend of Inuit women (Wallis, 1993) who experienced a life crisis after being left by their tribe in a severe winter and instead of accepting death, they decided to survive. They chased rabbits, collected twigs and endured coldness and fatigue. Finally, the two old women returned to their tribe with new resilience and with a different social position than before. This presentation is about two old women living in contemporary Japanese society who suffered from life crisis brought on by health problems. We study their life experience to investigate the occupation of resolving life crises in old age. The data used in this research was originally collected for two different studies regarding elderly person,s occupation. Our methods were open-ended interview and participant observation. One woman, Yuki, was anxious about her future when she recognized her memory problems. She feared causing a stove fire at home and decided to move into an apartment with care service. In the new place, Yuki developed social relationships, but maintained close relationship with her family living separately. She continued enjoying hanging around with her old friends, who shared her life meanings in their old age. The other woman, Hana, because of a stroke, gave up her life and close relationships with her loved ones. Occupational therapy intervention guided her to engagement in occupations meaningful to her and her social experience. Hana recreated a new life and recovered relationships with her family and people around her. Yuki and Hana each resolved a life crisis in old age and went on to live a „meaningful existence,, (Jackson, 1996, p.339). Engaging in familiar occupations, they have recaptured disappearing or lost life continuity. In this presentation, showing similarities and difference between the two women, we analyze the occupation of resolving life crises in old age, from phenomenological perspectives.

Pollie Price, Kristine Ward, and Stephanie Miner, pollie.price@hsc.utah.edu

*Social and occupational participation in adults with spinal cord injury and the influence of occupational therapy practice on those outcomes*

Several researchers have found that engagement in occupation relates to life satisfaction and has a positive relationship to health and well-being. Cottrell found that there is a significant lack of support in addressing social, vocational and living priorities of individuals with disabilities. The authors will present data and emerging interpretations from an ongoing study investigating three research questions: 1) How do individuals living in the community 1 to 5 years post spinal cord injury characterize their occupational and social participation, 2) Where do they rate themselves according to their definition of a good life and 3) What, if any, aspects of individuals, occupational therapy service influenced their occupational and social participation and, ultimately, their life satisfaction. Data are collected through open-ended, semi-structured interviews with individuals with spinal cord injury who were referred by occupational therapists who specialize in working with individuals with spinal cord injury and/ or have been peer nominated and self-identified as practicing from an occupation-based perspective. To date, we have completed interviews with 10 individuals who range from 11 months to 5 years post spinal cord injury. Thematic and narrative analysis methods are applied to the data. Preliminary findings include social engineering; the importance of having friends, doing meaningful occupations with them, and strategies that support participation; giving back as a means of recreating identity; and adaptive strategies used to create a positive life with spinal cord injury. Important aspects of occupational therapy include collaboration and individualizing therapy, deeply listening and caring, making therapy challenging and fun, and doing with/being with. This paper promises to elucidate the participants, perceptions of social and occupational participation and the influence of occupational therapy on those outcomes. These findings may have general applicability to rehabilitation professionals beyond occupational therapists and may lead to better rehabilitation practices for individuals with spinal cord injury.

Debra Rybski, rybski@slu.edu

*Social Emotional Development in Infants and Toddlers Who are Homeless as Reported by Mothers*

Children who are homeless are reported to have mental health problems at rates of 44% compared to 18% of homed children (1, 2.) A contributing factor to mental health problems can be poor social emotional development (3.) Mothers who experience homelessness may find facilitating social emotional development a challenge when basic necessities such as securing food, shelter and clothing are priorities. Children who are homeless are at risk for occupational deprivation that limits participation in occupations essential to healthy development (4.) Despite these challenges, mothers who are homeless, find ways to engage in meaningful co-occupations with their young children (5.) Little is known about social emotional development in homeless infants and toddlers. This study investigates social emotional development in children ages 3 months-3 years, as described by their mothers, who are homeless. This paper presents: 1) the frequency of social emotional concerns, 2) types of social emotional concerns, 3) enjoyable personal child characteristics, 4) enjoyable parent-child co-occupations; and finally 5) compares the concerns, enjoyment characteristics and parent-child co-occupations between infants and toddlers with and without social emotional concerns. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional<sup>6</sup> was administered to 61 mothers of children residing in a transitional living center. Descriptive statistics and qualitative coding was used to analyze the data. Results identified a higher percentage of social emotional concerns in children who were homeless as compared to homed children found in the literature<sup>1</sup>. Types of social emotional concerns included withdrawal, aggression, and eating/sleeping difficulties. Types of enjoyable child characteristics included happy, easy, quick learner, and kind. Themes of enjoyable co-occupations in typical mother-child dyads included feeding and playing, whereas themes in social emotional concerned mother-child dyads included cuddling and rocking. These results help occupational scientists to better understand the occupational development of infants and toddlers at risk for occupational deprivation; and add insight into the occupational nature of the supports and challenges that impact positive and healthy social and emotional mother-child co-occupations. This work assists occupational therapists to develop interventions in challenging natural environments that facilitate best practice with mothers and young children.

Dikaios Sakellariou and Nick Pollard, dikaiossakellariou@gmail.com

*Exploring Narratives of Daily Life in the Context of Disaster*

Occupation, i.e. participation in daily life, is a right but access to it is often compromised, as for example after natural disasters. Natural disasters can be conceptualised as the dynamic interaction of natural hazards with underlying vulnerabilities of a population. Disasters impact the life of individuals and communities but their effect has traditionally been discussed by non-affected people. The experiences of affected people are rarely heard, precluding the possibility of constructing a common ground for understanding. The aim of this study is to construct narratives of occupation and daily life in the context of a disaster. To achieve this, this study will generate and collect data that will be synthesized into narratives, but will focus on illuminating individual experiences and how they are lived and told within the socio-political context from the unique vantage point and interpretation each informant possesses. To illustrate the multifactorial discourse arising from the different positions of each social actor, the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia will be used. Heteroglossia refers to the multiple discourses operative in every society which regulate access to resources, including power and representation. The construction of a common language does not eradicate the possibility of misinterpretation, as it perpetuates power differentials. Acknowledging heteroglossia enables us to accept reality's fragmented nature and recognize the multiple semantic networks within which individual experiences are grounded. The study will be guided by a narrative inquiry approach. Data will be generated through in-depth interviews, observation of daily practices, archival material, field notes, the researcher's reflective log and interviews with key informants. Data will be drawn together and integrated into a temporally organized whole through narrative analysis. The analysis will favour an acceptance of heteroglossia instead of the construction of a common language. Giving voice to individual experiences of occupation and daily life after a disaster is important for the development of synergistic approaches where people are enabled to participate in programme planning in culturally appropriate ways. It is in the exploration of these multiple narratives that the hope

for the establishment of a common ground for understanding and action towards access to occupation lies.

Karen Sames and Amanda Sames, kmsames@stkate.edu

*Occupying a Corner of Suburbia: OS and Anthropological Perspectives on Peace Activists in a Suburb of St. Paul, MN*

Political activism can play a very important role in shaping the politics of our country. The constitutional rights to assemble and to speak freely guarantee that as long as people have concerns about the government, they can organize and express those concerns; this activism is a sign of a healthy democracy where people are allowed to speak their minds. Every week in Eagan, MN, a small group of activists holds a roadside peace vigil. Holding peace signs and waving flags, they stand on a busy corner, braving rain, snow and road rage to reach main-stream motorists with their message of peace. The purpose of this paper is to describe what drives people to become activists and what role activism plays in the lives of the participants. This ethnographic paper is based on 8 months of participant-observation research. Field notes were analyzed for categories and themes. Drafts of the paper were shared with the participants and their feedback was incorporated into the final paper. This study shows that engagement in the vigil is a way for participants to affirm closely held values and beliefs and informs a part of their identities as activists, reenergizing them for the many other tasks they engage in as active participants in American democracy. The vigil may or may not be an effective way to influence the thinking of the general populace in Eagan. It may or may not be helping to turn the tide of public opinion against the war in Iraq. But it is having an impact on the lives of all who attend. The vigil is a uniquely beneficial activity for those who participate. It offers them a chance to reaffirm and assert the value of peace and the ideals of the peace movement in their daily lives. Participation in the vigil influences the way group members identify themselves and construct their identities as activists. And it has a surprisingly rejuvenative quality to it.

Andrea B. Sherwin, asherwin@towson.edu

*Advocacy Actions by Parents Raising a Child with Special Needs: Is There Occupational Balance?*

According to IDEA (2004), parents raising children with special needs are considered to be the primary advocates on behalf of their children. Considering this critical role, the literature in occupational therapy and occupational science related to parent advocacy actions is remarkably limited. The purpose of this study was to understand how increasing numbers of families balance the co-occupations of parenting, traditional care-taker challenges, with the emotionally draining and time-consuming task of advocacy on behalf of their child with a disability. Qualitative and quantitative data are presented from an Internet-based pretest-posttest control group study investigating parents' perceptions of their advocacy actions, barriers to advocacy, and levels of, self-determination, self-efficacy, and psychological empowerment on three measures after participation in an online training package, Advocacy in Special Education. The self-paced instructional information is based on theories of participation, social learning, and empowerment; unit topics were designed to increase participatory behaviors and empowerment: motivation, knowledge, and skills. Participants included a nation-wide sample of parents and legal guardians raising children (ages 5-21) with a variety of handicapping conditions in the United States. Data were analyzed using a statistical software package (SPSS) and parent reports were analyzed descriptively and thematically. Results from survey scores of 383 randomly assigned participants reveal significant differences between all measures after participation in the online course. Additionally, parents reported engaging in a multitude of advocacy behaviors including home and transportation modifications, written and verbal communications, and participating in parent-to-parent networking groups. Parent narrative reports analyzed using the occupational justice framework indicate a constant struggle for occupational balance between the dual parenting and advocate roles. Implications of this study are that the Internet is an under-utilized method to gain insight in family-centered practice and may be a method to encourage and promote interaction with families raising individuals with disabilities. Relative to occupational science, evidence narrating parents' advocacy actions and their perceptions of empowerment levels will enable educators and practitioners to better understand the barriers and challenges continually faced by families raising a child or adolescent with a disability.

Anne Shordike and Cheryl Carrico, anne.shordike@eku.edu

*Living with Difference: Oral Histories of Life and Disability in Kentucky*

This project, funded by a grant from the Kentucky Oral History Commission, will collect and archive oral histories of persons constrained by disability from participation in society. It will be housed both with the Kentucky Historical Society and Eastern Kentucky University. For this project, disability is defined by the World Health Organization, as an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations or participation restrictions. Persons who consider themselves disabled, or may be considered disabled by others, will share their life stories in the form of oral histories that will be made publicly accessible. As occupational therapy recognizes that narrative is one essential means for making sense of experience, this project serves both organizations and disciplines by facilitating discourse. Faculty, students and community partners are gathering these histories. Interviewers use open-ended questions to explore interviewees' life participation-what they do and have done-in relation to their experiences of disability. This project is contextualized in Kentucky's status as second-highest in the nation for population rates of disability, with nearly a quarter (22.6%) of Kentucky adults experiencing physical, mental, or emotional disability that limits activity. It is historically contextualized in society's ongoing trend toward inclusiveness in the United States, marked by the deinstitutionalization movement, the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the genesis and growth of the Independent Living Movement. As the project collects stories about participation in life in Kentucky, and how this may be impacted by disability, it will inform the historical record with the voices of those who may be constrained by disability, thus helping to mitigate the constraint. It will provide a resource for students, researchers, families, communities and any interested parties. This project, the first of its kind in the nation, will provide opportunity for understanding and discourse regarding the experience of living with disability. Discussion points may include: 1. Why a partnership with occupational scientists, occupational therapists and oral historians? 2. Negotiating IRBs with a non-anonymous project 3. Challenges of design for interview guidelines inclusive for persons of many abilities and disabilities.

Robin L. Stadnyk, rstadnyk@dal.ca

*Burning Man: Exploration of an Occupation-Focused Intentional Community*

Intentional communities are communities deliberately designed to provide shelter and social opportunities for groups of people with common values or beliefs. Voluntary simplicity, self-reliance and shared decision-making are typical of such communities. Intentional communities are occupationally rich. They include occupations that primarily address community-building and maintenance, as well as occupations that create community focus or purpose. Eco-communities, co-housing, communes, and religious communities are examples of intentional communities. Burning Man festival is an intentional artistic community whose stated purpose is to enable its members, participation in artistic and creative activity. The time-limited community of approximately 50,000 people is created and then dismantled over a month each year, leaving no trace of its existence on the Nevada desert where it takes place. Community members create themed camps as well as large, participatory art installations. Burning Man is founded on the values of participation, radical self-reliance, communal effort, and decommodification. Most journalistic, autobiographical and scholarly analyses of Burning Man focus on its radical, counter-culture ethos, its art production, or its economic (decommodified) structure. Yet accounts of this festival demonstrate that occupation is at the core of three essential elements of the festival: the extensive planning, the day-to-day participation in artistic and social events, and the community (infrastructure) maintenance aspects of this event. An occupational analysis of this event would contribute to understanding the person-environment interactions that are so central to this community. This paper will describe my evolving research about the occupational nature of Burning Man. Data will come from three sources: written accounts of participation in this event found in popular literature, photographs of event activities (in the public domain), and my own participant-observation of this event in 2008. I will examine the three occupational elements of planning, participation, and maintenance. I will also explore participants, meaning-making as they engage in these elements. Possible occupational analyses might be framed by using Ann Wilcock's ideas on doing-being-becoming, or by using Strauss and Howe's work to examine generational differences in occupational and value priorities. In the discussion

period I invite participants to contribute their occupational interpretations of my research on this intentional community.

Jayne Yatzak, jyatzak@botsford.org

*The Role of Material Objects in the Lives of People with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias*

Objects can be defined as the material things people encounter, interact with and use. The objects that we use during our engagement in everyday occupations are fundamental to the construction and maintenance of self identity. Many of the objects we interact with on a daily basis provide information about the self to ourselves and to others. Objects assist with the credible, effective performance of an identity. The belief that people with Alzheimer's disease experience a loss of self related to the disease is prevalent. As the disease progresses cognitive abilities decline and engagement in familiar occupations diminishes. The person that once was, is believed to be lost; lost to themselves and to those who know them best. Many studies have approached the maintenance of self in people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) from a sociolinguistic perspective. The use of objects in the study of self in people with ADRD provides an opportunity to explore the construction and maintenance of self with individuals who are nonverbal or in a more advanced stage of the disease. This qualitative study used the symbolic interactionism of George Herbert Mead to further understanding of the relationship between people with ADRD and their engagement with objects. This research used the method of photo novella. Photographs were then employed to elicit data during in-depth interviews. Photovovella is a means to tell a story through pictures and has been praised for its superiority to the interview-only-method of data collection. Findings highlight the continued need for the involvement of people with ADRD with their material world providing a form of "reality orientation" and meeting a need for neurological stimulation as higher level cognitive ability declines. A decrease in the physical abilities needed for active engagement was found to negatively affect the attitude about material possessions. The research emphasizes the role of objects in providing individuals with ADRD with opportunities to act, to exhibit agency and present a demonstrable self to the self and to others which occurs below the level of language. This study supports the use of material objects as another form and expression of selfhood.

Jenna C. Yeager, Janet V. DeLany, Sonia Lawson, and MaryBeth Merryman, jyeager@towson.edu

*Experience Sampling Method (ESM) and the Study of Occupation*

This presentation will describe Experience Sampling Method (ESM) (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson 1984) as an approach for studying occupation, as applied to several distinct populations. Farnworth (2003) observes that time use studies employing methodologies such as ESM enhance understanding of participation in occupations. The essence of ESM is the use of pagers or other signaling devices to trigger respondents to record aspects of current daily experience while engaged in daily life in their natural context (Scollon, Kim- Prieto, & Diener, 2003). The initial ESM research involved the use of pagers to signal participants (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson 1984), who then recorded their responses on paper logs. Technological advances have since expanded the range of options available for signaling participants and for gathering data. Examples include signal watches, personal digital assistants (PDAs), cell phones, text messaging, and handheld wireless devices such as Blackberries®. At Towson University, ESM has been used to explore the occupational patterns of teenage mothers, care givers of stroke survivors, college undergraduates, and individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. This presentation will describe the rationale for the selection of the different methods used in these studies, the contextual influences justifying the methods, and the types of data collected. It then offers a critique of the strengths and limitations of each in relation to the dimensions of the occupation examined, the scope and accuracy of the collected data, the ability of the participant to sustain involvement in the research study, and the associated logistical challenges. Based on these findings, recommendations for continued exploration of ESM as a method for naturalistic inquiry regarding the occupational engagement of a range of populations and across various contexts will be offered.

## Forum

Doris Pierce, Clare Hocking, Sheama Krishnagiri, and Pollie Price, [doris.pierce@eku.edu](mailto:doris.pierce@eku.edu)

### *What Is the True Intent of Occupational Science?*

**Proposed Focus of Forum and its Importance to the Study of Occupation:** Since its inception twenty years ago, three primary and differing intents have been expressed for occupational science: to create a new discipline focused on basic science description of occupation, to produce a unique knowledge base to inform the profession of occupational therapy, and to generate new public health initiatives through multi-disciplinary knowledge of the relationship of occupation and health. Which of these competing visions of the intent of occupational science is most accurate? Leading occupational scientists sculpt their careers in response to their perspectives on the most appropriate and valuable intent of this young science. The mission of the SSO:USA itself is responsive to intent. In this forum, the key voices and arguments for each of the three intents will be clearly articulated and rebutted. Until they are openly debated and critically examined, understandings of how the multiple intents of occupational science are shaping and stressing the development of occupational science will remain elusive.

**Rationale and Aims of the Forum:** The rationale for the forum is that a classic debate approach will be effective in fostering critical public discourse regarding the multiple, and at times, conflicting, intents of occupational science. The aims of the debate are to sharpen participants' understandings of key stances in regard to the intent of occupational science, to contribute to the development of the SSO:USA and its mission through open debate in regard to the relative value of differing intents of occupational science, and to model a revered approach to scholarly discourse within a research society. **Plan for generating and managing discussion:** This forum will use a classic Oxford-style debate format. Three accomplished occupational scientists, selected for their research career identifications with each of the three different intents, will engage in a debate ordered by the moderator. One month prior to the debate, the three debaters will exchange their opening position statements. The debate will proceed in the following sequence: three ten-minute opening statements, three five-minute formal rebuttals, three three-minute spontaneous rebuttals, and then the floor will be opened for three-minute spontaneous rebuttals by members of the audience. Strict timekeeping will be used and the tone of the debate will be spirited.

## Panel

Gelya Frank, Ruth Zemke, Nancie Furgang, Margaret A. Perkinson, Karen F. Barney, Anne Blakeney, Dikaios Sakellariou

*The NAPA-OT Special Interest Group Field School: Applying Occupation to Clinical, Social, Educational, and Political Practice in Guatemala*

In July 2008, an interdisciplinary team met for two weeks in Antigua, Guatemala to plan a field school where occupational scientists, occupational therapists, anthropologists, disability scholars and other professionals can practice and learn together. The field school is a recognized activity of the Occupational Therapy Special Interest Group of the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA), a section of the American Anthropological Association. The field school is scheduled to begin operation in Summer 2009.

The planning team will report on its conversations and collaboration with NGOs and other local partners, including Common Hope/Familias de Esperanza, the Behrhorst Foundation, the Hermano Pedro hospital, a Mayan women's weaving cooperative, an independent living center and other local partners. Members of the planning team will present the program's organization, rationale, objectives, and achievements. A short video of the project is in preparation.

The field school planners' experiences provide useful perspectives on the relationships between occupational science, occupational therapy and social transformation.

Components of the session include:

- Occupation is the Key: Building Interdisciplinary Bridges for Collaborative Practice in a Field School in Guatemala.
- Assessing the Potential for Occupation-Centered Pediatric Interventions in Guatemala: Mayan Families, Nutritional Patterns and Early Child Development
- Geriatric Long-Term Care in, Antigua, Guatemala: The Potential for Ethnography and Occupation-Based Interventions
- Occupational Justice in Guatemala: Challenges and Opportunities for Practice at the Intersection of Occupational Science, Occupational Therapy and Anthropology

The presentation will reflect on current debates about the relationship between occupational science and occupational therapy; building the knowledge base in occupational science; the role of praxis in academic disciplines; the internationalization and globalization of occupational science; ways to enhance the impact and visibility of occupational science; the relationship between occupational science and other disciplines; a political practice of occupational therapy.

## Posters

Rebecca M. Aldrich, [rebecca\\_aldrich@med.unc.edu](mailto:rebecca_aldrich@med.unc.edu)

### *Transacting Community as a Foundation for Employment*

In both popular and academic perspectives, long-term unemployment has historically been approached from one of two vantages: it has been viewed as a result of either personal deficiencies (such as a lack of education) or environmental factors (such as a lack of available jobs). Although certain disciplines have tried to integrate these explanations, their modified approaches still tend to unduly privilege either personal or societal factors as explanatory mechanisms, rather than offering holistic accounts of their interplay in fostering unemployment. As an oft-ignored subset of long-term unemployed individuals, 'discouraged workers' and their employment status are discussed in similarly dichotomous terms. 'Discouraged' workers—who want to work, but do not have jobs and have stopped looking for them—are estimated to measure up to 1 million persons during times of economic recession. To understand why these individuals stop looking for the work they desire, it is necessary to develop truly holistic explanations of the factors that influence their job searching occupations. I sought a preliminary understanding of these factors through ethnographic inquiry and participation in a faith-based community job skills program. Participant observation revealed community building as an important foundation for unemployed persons' successful job seeking endeavors. The concept of transaction provided a useful framework for interpreting the community building observed in the group. The transactions of students and staff members created a community in which students could secure individualized support: students and staff mutually shaped each others' experiences, which, in turn, created a community of problem-solving and personal assistance. These transactions provided students with more than a mere set of job skills: they offered students the chance to problematize the intersection of important personal and societal factors involved in employment, and also gave them an opportunity to rehearse job seeking occupations. This brief ethnographic inquiry suggested that transacting community filled a need in students' lives and created new opportunities for successful occupational performance. It also suggested that future research on workers' paths to discouragement ought to be considered through a lens of community, an important site of occupational transaction.

Johnnie Aven and Emily Schulz, [javen@twu.edu](mailto:javen@twu.edu)

### *Spiritual Evolution: Unexpected Outcomes of a Complementary Care Class*

A new direction in traditional medical practice is the inclusion of complementary care in intervention (1). Entry-level occupational therapy programs must discover ways to offer education in this emerging field. In response to this call, an introductory class about complementary care in occupational therapy was developed in the fall of 2007. This paper will describe outcomes of this scientifically-based experiential complementary care class taught to eleven pre- and post- professional occupational therapy students. Schulz's Model of Spirituality (2) was also used as an underlying theoretical basis for the class. Readings, youtube videos and hands-on learning were used as teaching tools. Students completed a pretest/posttest about their perspectives on the use of complementary care and spirituality in occupational therapy intervention and submitted weekly reflective journals, and discussion board postings as assignments. Open coding was used to qualitatively analyze these submissions for themes. Unexpectedly, the instructors discovered that the students, work pointed to their own personal spiritual evolution's impact on occupation. Some insights into student's daily occupations relative to their evolving spirituality and its connection to their therapeutic role were gleaned. Preliminary findings suggest that therapeutic use of self (3-4) is dependent upon the individual therapist's spiritual evolution.

Jeanine Blanchard, Florence Clark, [jeanine@usc.edu](mailto:jeanine@usc.edu)

### *A Mixed-Methods Study of Older Adults in a Lifestyle Redesign*

This poster will describe a mixed-methods study that is an extension of ongoing research funded by the National Institute on Aging entitled Health Mediating Effects of the Well Elderly Program; R01 AG021108; Florence Clark, Principal Investigator. In the parent study, the investigators propose an explanatory model encompassing the effects of an occupational therapy intervention on aging outcomes, mediated by healthy activity, active coping, social support, perceived control, positive reinterpretation-based coping, and stress-related biomarkers. This mixed-methods study is utilizing qualitative research methods to examine

the theoretical model of the parent study. Interviews with participants are being analyzed using modified analytic induction, and the results will be compared to those obtained from the quantitative analyses in the parent study. To obtain maximum sampling variation, the investigator selected 4 divergent research settings, and purposely sampled 22 participants from those settings who were differentially affected by the Lifestyle Redesign intervention of the parent study. This sampling strategy will increase the probability of finding individual differences that are not readily apparent using solely quantitative methods. There are three main hypotheses: 1) the model will be supported when examining it qualitatively; 2) there will be individual differences in the salience of different mediators; and 3) the relationships of the mediators to each other and to the outcomes will differ within and across the research settings. Research is still in progress, however the results of this study will ultimately include quantitative profiles of each of the participants and research settings, narrative summaries for each participant, a graphical model for each participant and each setting that integrates quantitative and qualitative data, a typology of the models generated, a qualitative summary of all the cases collectively, a quantitative summary of all the cases in the parent study collectively (N=480), and a summary of the correspondence between the aggregate qualitative and quantitative findings. This study will contribute to the discipline of occupational science by increasing understanding of how activity-based interventions affect older adults, adding to existing theory on how physical and social environments impact interventions, and expanding knowledge about the validity of quantitative modeling by examining individual lives.

Jess Holguin, jholguin@usc.edu

*Occupational Science and Enhancement Technology: A Critical Analysis of Occupational Potential and the Concept of 'Better than Well'*

The notion of living 'better than well' through enhancement technology is a promising concept for further developing the literature of occupational science. Specifically, the concept of better than well can be a valuable construct in the study of occupational potential. Occupational potential describes the interplay between who a person has the potential to be within the context of their capacities, life requirements, and opportunities. Better than well involves the use of disease-targeting medical technology to enhance subjective perceptions of wellbeing and/or objectively measured capacities in non-medically compromised populations. A key component in the relationship between these two concepts is the tenet within the occupational science literature stating that it is a fundamental right of all occupational beings to strive for the development and realization of their occupational potential. A logical extension of this ideal follows that further efforts should be made to identify permissible limits to which persons should be empowered in their striving to develop and realize their occupational potential. It can be argued that such limits are important to consider for the following reasons: (a) there are unresolved issues regarding what should be deemed appropriate uses of medical technology; (b) facilitating or hindering the use of technological advances calls into question the rights of individuals as autonomous beings; and (c) inequity in social and capital resources could possibly result in unfavorable shifts in societal structures that would negatively impact the majority of occupational beings. At present, these and other related issues have yet to be addressed in the literature. The intent of this critical analysis is to explore the ethical implications of either supporting or abstaining from the study of enhancing occupational potential. This analysis will argue and demonstrate that occupational science literature creates an opening for consideration of this new concept, and that there is strong evidence to suggest an obligation to do so. In sum, this analysis reveals an opportunity for the discipline of occupational science to articulate an ethically justifiable position for exploring better than well approaches in their study of occupational potential.

Suzanne Huot, Silke Dennhardt, Daniel Fok, and Debbie Laliberte Rudman, shuot@uwo.ca

*I'm not an OT, Reflections from an Interdisciplinary Occupational Science Program through the eyes of a Geographer-Come-Occupational Scientist*

Stemming from a paper collaboratively written by the first cohort of graduate students in Canada's first Occupational Science program, this presentation considers two aspects of the shared vision for occupational science we developed within the context of a doctoral course ^ interdisciplinary and internationalization. I entered this program with a Masters of Geography and an interest in international migration, making questions of interdisciplinarity

and internationalization central to my experience within this program. Working with students from different academic and cultural backgrounds offered a unique experience to consider occupational constructs within a diverse setting. This paper contributes to the vital dialogue regarding the continued evolution of occupational science by reflecting on key issues and questions related to the notion of interdisciplinarity and our connections with other disciplines. The call to be interdisciplinary has existed since the inception of occupational science, however, defining and achieving interdisciplinarity has been a struggle and some have questioned its importance. We propose that attending to questions related to the meanings of interdisciplinarity, its benefits and drawbacks, and the ways of building rich and reciprocal ties across disciplines are essential to advancing a science that aims to achieve complex understandings of occupation. The continued international growth of the discipline furthers the need for reflexivity regarding the assumptions underlying occupational research in diverse settings. Some important questions to consider include: How can we move forward in shaping an international science that does not contribute to global inequality itself, either in terms of knowledge production or within the broader political landscape? How can we build on the insights offered through the work of scholars in occupational science while avoiding a passive and wholesale import of knowledge into diverse contexts? The consideration of ontological and epistemological assumptions, the context of research, and the power of language, with respect to the dominant use of the English language within academia, are important issues relevant to this dialogue. This paper therefore emphasizes our call for continued critical reflexivity within the discipline, which involves self-reflection on how our values and academic experiences shape and are shaped by the disciplinary structures we are situated within.

M. Beth Merryman and Karen Goldrich Eskow, [bmerryman@towson.edu](mailto:bmerryman@towson.edu)

*Action Research : A Bridge to Inform Practice*

There is great interest in using research evidence to enhance practice (1). Action research involves a systematic, democratic and collaborative process to increase understanding in the active pursuit of problem solving (2). This approach has much in common with client-centered practice and is also relevant for those working to promote health and well being in various community settings. Occupational therapy researchers have identified the need for action research methods to assist in addressing the multiple complexities of community practice (3). Action research methods are relevant for interventions that affect individuals, families and populations (4). Action research using focus groups and a community development framework was used to increase understanding of factors that affect perceived family quality of life (5). This paper describes a graduate course and subsequent action research project that illustrates educational and research methods, process, and outcomes. The project included obtaining access to an at-risk elementary school, recruiting participants, conducting focus groups, and using survey data to assess and define a need. The need that emerged was the desire to increase family involvement in the school. Four graduate students were trained on focus group methods as well as conducting a needs assessment. Four focus groups were conducted, each with two student facilitators and one student providing child care as needed. The groups included parent members of the school PTA, parents who were not members of the school PTA, parents of students in the ESOL program, and parent members of the Executive Board of the PTA. Each group had between four and six members. Students generated eight guiding questions based on review of the literature and interviews with the school principal and teacher PTA liaison. Students assumed the role of leader or co-facilitator and audio-taped the groups. Incentives included snacks and free child care. Audiotapes were transcribed and reviewed individually and then collectively as a group in class to identify units of meaning which were then organized into categories and themes. The analysis further informed a final report that included proposed steps of action that was subsequently presented to school leadership. Study results and follow up will be shared.

Kathlyn L. Reed, [kreed@twu.edu](mailto:kreed@twu.edu)

*Five Meanings of Occupation in 1917: What has Changed in 90 Years?*

The intent of the paper is to compare and contrast the meaning of occupation during the past century by using selected criteria from the literature to examine the five original conditions that contributed to the development of occupational therapy literature with the five most common conditions seen today. The purpose is to explore whether significant changes have occurred in the selected criteria in relation to the meaning and application of the core ideas

about occupation. The five original conditions reported in the literature from 1900-1917 were tuberculosis, mental illness and retardation, cripples (orthopedic and cardiac), war injured, and immigrants. The five most common conditions appearing in current occupational therapy literature (2000-2007) in all categories of professional literature are stroke, brain injury, cerebral palsy, dementia, and schizophrenia. Argument Occupation is a dynamic concept that has multiple meanings to persons that may change over time within a given social system, political climate, and evolving technology. If the concept is dynamic, the application may be dynamic as well. Question one: To what extent have the original meanings of occupation been maintained through the years? Question two: If changes have occurred, are the changes significant (lost, added, reformulated) to theory and application in occupational science and therapy? Methodology included describing the conditions and contexts, summarizing the problems persons faced in daily life, dictionary definition of occupation, meaning of occupation both positive and negative, and solutions (strategies, media and methods) adopted within occupational therapy practice. The context, problems, definitions, meaning of occupation, and solutions were then compared to present situations as identified in the literature. Conclusions: Changes can be documented in the conditions, contexts, problems, definitions, meanings, and solutions between the time period associated with the developmental years of the profession and the current time period. These changes will be reported. The significance of the changes to the meaning of occupation, effect on occupational science, and application to occupational therapy practice will be put to audience for discussion. This proposal fits with the mission "to explore and expand the knowledge of occupation."

#### Closing Panel

Virginia Dickie, Ph.D, OTR/L, FAOTA, moderator

Panel participants:

Antoine Bailliard, MS, OTR/L, Doctoral Student, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill;

Abbey Marterella, MS, OTR/L, Doctoral Candidate, University of Southern California;

Daniel Molke, M.Sc.OT, Doctoral Candidate, University of Western Ontario

*SSO:USA 2008: A Stock Take of Accumulated Insights\**

*\*with deference to Dr. Clare Hocking*

Drawing from a base in published papers detailing the original goals for the discipline of occupational science and subsequent reviews of progress toward these goals, the panel will review the 2008 conference for major themes and emerging issues and trends. From our synthesis, we will identify areas where the study of occupation represented by this conference has focused and suggest additional foci where there is need for further research.