Workshop

Enabling Occupation-based Participatory Citizenship: Defining Ethical Practice in Community Development

ENOTHE Conference York, 18 Oct 2013
HAWK Hildesheim

- interdisciplinary programme for OTs, physios and speech & language therapists
- BSc degree course since 2001
- MSc degree course since 2005
Content

1. Community of Practice
2. Relevance of the Topic
3. Community Development as an Approach in OT
4. Ethics for Community Practice
5. Participatory Citizenship
6. Demands on the Value and Quality of Relationships
7. Interlinking theory and practice within an ethical/political framework for CD
Community of Practice

European Working Group “Curriculum Design on Community Development” (2008-2012)

ENOTHE Project Group “Community Development/Community-Based Occupational Therapy in Practice and Education” (2009-2010)
Community of Practice

International Student Workshop on Community Development in Health Care
organized by Ruth Zinkstok (Amsterdam), Anne-Mie Engelen (Gent) & Sandra Schiller (Hildesheim)
Relevance of the Topic

“Citizen participation is an area of occupational performance that is as valid for occupational therapists to focus on as dressing, perhaps even more meaningful for some clients.”

(Letts, 2003, 72)
Relevance of the Topic

“The mandate to ensure and protect the health of the public is an inherently moral one. It carries with it an obligation to care for the well-being of communities, and it implies the possession of an element of power to carry out that mandate.”

(Thomas et al. 2002, 1057)
Community development is one of various inherently multiprofessional approaches based on power sharing which are adopted by OTs who work with communities with the aim of supporting social change.

(loosely based on Townsend et al., 2007, 160)
Community Development as an Approach in OT

6 Characteristics distinguishing OT based on a CD approach from other forms of community-based practice:

1. Based on the assumption that opportunities for meaningful occupation (may) have an influence on health and well-being

2. Focuses on issues of exclusion vs. inclusion rather than on disease/disability vs. health
Community Development as an Approach in OT

3. Considers health as a question of opportunities for social participation (civic engagement) and thus as a question of justice

4. Is concerned with the collective dimension of occupation
   > question of shared occupations
   > potential for self-help in the social sphere
Community Development as an Approach in OT

5. Emphasizes the role of OT as an intermediary between health and social care

6. Ascribes meaning to the socioeconomic context of occupation
   - demand for a sociopolitical analysis of occupational contexts
   - demand for an acceptance of political responsibility in OT
Community Development as an Approach in OT

Questions:

1. What are ethical and political implications associated with using community development as an approach in OT?

2. How can theoretical knowledge and practical experience in this area be interlinked in a meaningful way in OT education?
“Traditionally, health care and human services ethics have focused on the individual client. Defining the community as client or partner, however, requires a different ethical approach, an approach focused on the aggregate, community, or societal level.”

(Racher 2007, 65)
“Community practice is traditionally based on utilitarianism, adheres to the axiom ‘the greatest good for the greatest number,’ and supports the position that maximizing benefits to socially disadvantaged groups ultimately benefits society as a whole.”

(Racher 2007, 68)
Participatory Citizenship

“Citizenship focuses primarily on democratic rights and mutual responsibilities, social cohesion and tolerance.”

“Citizenship is expressed through occupation with others in a social context, and is challenged by inequality, discrimination and other forms of exclusion or privilege.”

ENOTHE Citizenship Working Group (2013)
Demands on the Value and Quality of Relationships

“In community health promotion and community development, the respect for persons is extended to respect for their experience as knowledge, and their abilities and capacities as community members to contribute to decision making and planning at the community level. Respect for persons applies to all persons and supports the inclusion and participation of all community members in community endeavours.”

(Racher, 2007, 68)
Demands on the Value and Quality of Relationships

“Health care providers and researchers working in and with communities must be *truthful* and *transparent* in the work they undertake and the relationships they establish.”

(Racher, 2007, 68)
For health care professionals working with communities, this means on the one hand the responsibility to carefully establish relationships with the various members of a community and based on that to find out which needs the community and its individual members have.

On the other hand it means the willingness to engage critically in our thinking about health and well-being and how this can best be achieved within society.
Interlinking theory and practice within an ethical/political framework for CD

Two suggestions for interlinking theory and practice within an ethical/political framework for CD:

Community development cannot be regarded as a value-neutral or objective activity. It must rest on a value, ethical, moral or ideological base.” (Ife, 2010, 49)

“Any approach to community development requires a framework of social justice and human rights.” (Ife, 2010, 48)
Ife (2010): Human Rights Framework for Community Development

1. Social Rights and Social Development
2. Economic Rights and Economic Development
3. Civil/Political Rights and Civil/Political Development
4. Cultural Rights and Cultural Development
5. Environmental Rights and Environmental Development
6. Spiritual Rights and Spiritual Development
7. Survival Rights

(Ife 2010: Chapter 6)
Advantages of the framework:
Strongly rooted in an ethical discourse.
Definition of the meaning of human rights in each of the 7 areas from below, from practical experience.
The description of CD practice in these 7 areas can give OTs ideas for different multiprofessional collaborations.
Suitable as a theoretical background to student projects.

Ife (2010): Human Rights Framework for Community Development
(Townsend & Whiteford 2011): Participatory Occupational Justice Framework 2010

“The POJF 2010 is a conceptual tool for professionals to use in doing justice in everyday life – a tool to guide practice processes and prompt knowledge exchange [...] about occupation, enabling, and justice through active partnerships with professionals and the public in homes, schools, workplaces, and social and cultural institutions.“

(Townsend & Whiteford, 2011, 65-66)

“OTs adopting the POJF 2010 are “practicing critical occupational therapy“ (p. 65)

„“Critical perspectives typically raise ethical, moral, civic, and philosophical questions about injustice and the tensions or gaps between ideals and the reality of communities or populations living everyday with inequitable disadvantages or oppression [...].“ (p. 66)
POJF 2010 (Townsend, Whiteford 2011)

- Raise consciousness of occupational justice
- Inspire advocacy for sustainability or closure
- Collaborative enabling processes
- Engage collaboratively with partners
- Mediate agreement on a plan
- Strategize resource funding
- Support implementation and continuous evaluation
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6 Enablement Skills
Advantages:
The six enablement skills serve to structure practice processes, which are considered non-linear and interrelated. These processes are linked to lists of questions regarding critical reflexivity and attention to power relations. Examples from OT practice are provided.


(Whiteford & Townsend, 2011)
Small Group Discussion

4-5 persons per group.

Everybody has three differently coloured sheets of paper.

Write down your own answer to each question on the appropriate sheet of paper as a starting point.

Exchange the papers in the group so that everybody can add ideas triggered by what was already written down.

If you like, do have discussions during this task!
Small Group Discussion

1. Is citizen participation an area of occupational performance? (yellow)

2. Which knowledge, values and skills should students acquire in community development projects? (pink)

3. How can reflection on an ethical discourse be interlinked with practical project experience? (green)

Please use examples from your own experience and/or share more general ideas.
Thank you very much for your attention.

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