Occupational therapy students are too young to empower clients in participatory citizenship

ENOTHE 2013: Citizenship: exploring the contribution of Occupational Therapy

Rianne Jansens & Jet Lancée
Zuyd University of Applied Sciences Heerlen
Occupational Therapy Department
Empowering participatory citizenship, still relevant?

- Paradigm change from a medical reductionistic model to social and learning model
- Importance of client’s wishes and values, the social and physical environment was incorporated in MOHO
- ICIDH II ---- ICF
- Attention to client-centred practice
- Enabling social change through focus on social injustice and political reasoning
- Guiding Principles on Diversity and Culture
Some current societal issues in Europe and elsewhere

- Globalisation, multicultural society
- Demographical changes
- Financial and economical crises
- In different countries nationalistic movements, political right wing parties are in favourite
- Pressure on health care and welfare (financially, change of roles and responsibilities)
- Movement of a state who cares for citizens to a start where participation becomes the core business
- The importance of safety policies. With consequence of increasing control measures
- The need for more social cohesion

...etc.

Changes in society are affecting peoples’ health and well being, the accessibility to health care and welfare, education and employment, the quality of life
Importance of OT enabling participation

- Participation and relation with well-being/health
- Code of ethics, statements of WFOT
- Evolution of the profession

OT has a role to play
OT students should be able to

- To build partnerships with different social actors
- Having knowledge of social institutions and their procedures
- Understanding the way of being, the meaning of occupations and what social participation means for the client(group)

(Fransen et al., 2013 p. 2)

Communication* skills, competences on diversity and cultural, enabling skills,...
OT students at Zuyd

Academic year 2013-2014, Dutch program

- 149 students, 26% male and 74% female
- 84% Dutch nationality, 12% German, 4% others
- youngest student 16;5y – oldest student 43;7y
- large group: 5 year of highschool, general theoretical background

Big transformation from OT student to OT professional who can enable social participation/participatory citizenship.
What’s the problem?


Critical thinking, the highest level is neccessary to become a cultural competent professional. (Whiteman & Velde 2002)

Competences on Diversity and Culture are complex and can be achieved by students to a certain level (Stomph, 2010)

Interest en knowledge in societal issues are limited.
What to do?

Step by step, starting with **awareness** for societal issues and stimulating an **open mind**

Challenges for OT education:
- Creating curiosity for others
- Raising awareness for the diversity of context of clients
- Stimulating interest in events, politics, societal issues
- Improving questioning, reflecting, critical thinking
- Using educational attractive approach
- Stimulating students to think and look with OT glasses
Project about assessment for fall prevention for frail elderly living at home

Reading an article from a news paper about the aging population and the consequences for society

- what can it mean for the participation of client(group)?
- what can it mean for OT services?
- how do you judge quality of a news paper article?

Stories on video of elderly people about their life and societal issues (by students with fieldwork practice)

Analysis of the occupational performances with MOHO will be extended with the meso and macro levels issues for this group. Talking about experiences of grandparents

Discussion of the core values of occupational therapy related to the project
Theoretical course about quality of care

- Face to face talk: personal opinion about concept of quality

- Lecturer about politics and the influence on people’s daily life

- Stimulating students to raise questions about relationships (cooperative, conflict)

- Debate on quality of care in the current Dutch context
OT services for homeless people in Germany

• Inspired about the concept of occupational injustice

• Research project on meaningful activities for homeless people in Aachen

• Being fascinated, wanted to share their experiences and knowledge, drawing attention for this group e.g. discussions, flashmob,...etc.
Look what’s going on!

Goal: stimulating students to look “outside”

Plan: a group of students with two teachers develop some interesting actions about sociological processes and sociogeographical topics. What does it mean for client (groups) and for Ot services?
What have learned from these initiatives so far?

- Implementing new initiatives together with students
- Innovating the content and didactical approach
- Relating new information, events, discussions to possible personal experiences
- Disseminating the best practices step by step and use a systematic approach e.g., PDCA cycle
- Integrating the attitude/skills/knowledge in other modules
- All lecturers of the module should be involved
Conclusion

• Too young or just young?

• Participatory citizenship is primarily a learnt activity  (Fransen et al., 2013 p.2)
  ➢ for the client(group)
  ➢ and for students
Thank you for your attention

Zuyd University of Applied Sciences, Heerlen the Netherlands
Occupational Therapy Department

Rianne Jansens rianne.jansens@zuyd.nl
Jet Lancée jet.lancee@zuyd.nl
References