**Therapeutic Media: A suggested method of activity analysis and interpretation of patient responses**

**L. Watson, 1971**

**1. Measurable Elements**

Inherent in any activity there are elements which can be measured. For example, physical resistance can be measured in grams. These measurable elements evoke a certain response from the person performing the activity. Physical resistance, for example, evokes strength. Ability to respond adequately to these elements results in task fulfilment; failure to do so results in frustration. These measurable elements can be referred to in toto as the structure of an activity.

Here is a tentative breakdown of the structure of activity:

1. Elements evoking physical response
2. Resistance - measured in grams, kilos, etc. - evokes strength
3. Reach - measured in metres - evokes joint range
4. Repetition - measured in units, tens, etc. - evokes endurance
5. Intricacy - measured in number of members of the body employed simultaneously - evokes coordination
6. Elements evoking mental response
7. Complexity (simple to complex) - measured in number of steps in activity and time lag between steps - evokes memory, organisation, delay of gratification
8. Abstraction (concrete to abstract) - measured in quantity and quality of problem solving and decision making - evokes planning, concentration, initiative, ability to abstract principles and apply them
9. Predictability (prepared to unprepared) - measured in the number and quality of uncontrollable elements which may result in failure - evokes frustration tolerance

**2. Observable Responses**

There are other factors which can enhance fulfilment, increase frustration or tip the balance between these two. These are personal factors which are observable in the response of the patient.

The roots of these observable responses can be unrelated to the activity, e.g. a feeling of wellbeing, a dislike of the Therapist; or they can be related to the activity, e.g. an interest in, aptitude for or aversion from. They can also be related to the sexual identity or social and cultural factors.

The observable response itself can be seen in:

1. The quality of the product
2. The fluency or time taken
3. The emotional response e.g. enjoyment, aggression, indifference

**3. Synopsis**

The Occupational Therapist should distinguish between frustration due to inability to cope with the structure of an activity and frustration due to personal factors. She should identify the positive personal factors which enhance fulfilment. This will enable her to assess the patient's true abilities and grade the structure accordingly. It will enable her to guide the patient towards that area (sociologically) of activity which, by virtue of positive personal factors, will offer him maximum fulfilment.

To do this, the Occupational Therapist must analyse activity into measurable elements and place it on a scale of values. Using this as her reference point, she must observe the response of the patient. The pattern of the responses can be interpreted to pinpoint the patient's abilities, interests, aptitudes, aversions, etc. Treatment can then be instituted.

**4. Conclusion**

This suggested method is not yet practical. The following steps should make it so:

1. Ascertain the validity of the tentative breakdown of the structure of activity as presented here;
2. Establish a scale of values for each of these;
3. Evolve a method of analysis of activity so that its place on these scales can readily be ascertained;
4. Define the personal factors;
5. Develop a formula for recognising the significance of patterns of response.