

Model of Growth and Empowerment

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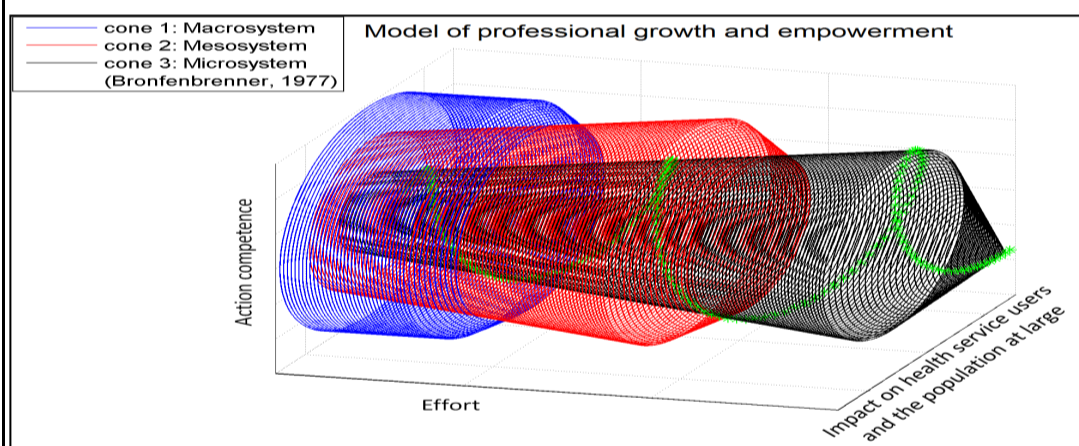
Dr Helen Buchanan, Senior Lecturer, Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Division of Occupational Therapy University of Cape Town, South Africa.

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BACKGROUND

Occupational therapy as a profession has embraced the philosophy of an evidence-based approach since the late 1990s. In 2009, ten years after evidence-based practice (EBP) was pronounced an important element of best occupational therapy practice in a position paper ratified by several organisations (CAOT & ACOTRO, 1999). In 2007, occupational therapists working in Namibia had not yet adopted EBP. Due to the paucity of knowledge Namibian occupation therapists had of EBP the researcher was of the opinion that the implementation of EBP could be enhanced by applying adult learning strategies (andragogy) within a collaborative, experiential setting. Specifically the researcher aimed to evaluate whether a collective teaching/learning approach that included action, reflection, planning and learning could enable a group of Namibian therapists to envisage the change EBP could bring to their practice and to the profession as a whole. Although several theories, models and conceptual frameworks were used to inform the study, this poster focuses on aspects concerning the Vona du Toit Model of Creative Ability (VdT MoCA) (De Witt, 2005).

Aim	To explore the interest in and feasibility of implementing EBP in Namibia	Discussion	<p>This discussion focuses on Objective 3 with specific emphasis on the VdT MoCA. The findings revealed the benefits co-researchers gained from elements of a number of the learning theories on which included opportunities for learning on propositional, experiential, individual and collective presentational and practical learning components. Although co-researchers found elements of social learning most enjoyable, they did not benefit most from this learning style. Co-researchers learnt a lot from each other but this did not necessarily change their practice or lead to professional growth. Determinants for professional growth, including competencies to become evidence-based practitioners, that emerged were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Envisaging becoming better practitioners and the intent to change; 2. Gaining action competence through acquiring knowledge and skills; 3. Inter-related socio-environmental factors which constituted either supports or barriers on macro-, meso- and micro-systems levels; and 4. Own effort. <p>Co-researchers expressed that writing reflections and searching for evidence were more difficult and less enjoyable than group discussions, yet they learned much from the former. A balance between more-enjoyable and less-enjoyable engagements enhanced commitment and growth. The effect of input (effort) from co-researchers, and the just-right challenge resulted in transformation, empowerment or growth. The importance of the influence of supportive or hindering environmental systems on motivation and action was apparent. These concepts were integrated to develop the Model of professional growth and empowerment.</p> <p>Action competence within the three ecological systems, and the effort exerted by each system determine the impact on the society. The stronger the action competence of a system, the greater the impact. However if the micro-system alone exerts effort without support of the other systems, the microsystem is likely to "break". The Model of professional growth and empowerment (see Figure below) demonstrates the relationships between these elements.</p>						
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide opportunities for experience-based exploration and capacity building for conducting searches for evidence. 2. To facilitate engagement in a process of individual and joint reflection to explore the usefulness and feasibility of practicing EBP in Namibia 3. To empower occupational therapists in Namibia by refining the concepts, principles and techniques of EBP individually and collectively . 								
Participants	Maximum variation sampling to select nine occupational therapists (hereafter referred to as co-researchers) who had attended an introductory EBP workshop and worked in Windhoek, Namibia.								
Methodology	Action research, specifically co-operative inquiry, which has potential for facilitating change in a group of people with similar interests and comparable background to the researcher.								
Analysis	Inductive content analysis and the application of open coding, focused coding and axial coding techniques to create categories and overarching themes (Creswell, 2003; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).								
Findings	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>THEMES</th> <th>CATEGORIES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Co-researchers mixed feelings about the possibilities of EBP</td> <td>1.1. Discovery of a new world 1.2. Barriers curbed success</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Shifts resulting from engagement in the inquiry</td> <td>2.1. Acquisition of knowledge and skills implementation of EBP 2.2. Shifts in perceptions of professional identity and worth</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Making EBP happen in Namibia</td> <td>3.1. Transforming practice demands action 3.2. Need for a structured approach to implement and sustain EBP 3.3. Inadequate resources curb implementation</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	THEMES	CATEGORIES	1. Co-researchers mixed feelings about the possibilities of EBP	1.1. Discovery of a new world 1.2. Barriers curbed success	2. Shifts resulting from engagement in the inquiry	2.1. Acquisition of knowledge and skills implementation of EBP 2.2. Shifts in perceptions of professional identity and worth	3. Making EBP happen in Namibia	3.1. Transforming practice demands action 3.2. Need for a structured approach to implement and sustain EBP 3.3. Inadequate resources curb implementation
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Conclusion	<p>Co-researchers initially experienced ambivalence towards EBP. Participation in the study was beneficial as co-researchers developed a vision for EBP in Namibia and gained knowledge and skills. Shifts in their understanding of EBP initiated action and effort resulting in professional growth.</p> <p>Comparison of the Model of professional growth and empowerment with the VdT MoCA, confirmed the relevance of the elements that led to change. Specifically, the VdT MoCA postulates that a positive response towards an opportunity or challenge, active engagement in an activity or occupation and (maximum) effort exerted to produce an end result lead to higher levels of action and motivation (Sherwood, 2005). The higher levels of the VdT MoCA, namely <i>Active participation/Original</i>, <i>Competitive/Situation-centred</i> and <i>Competitive contribution/Society-centred</i>, are of particular relevance in relation to the Model of growth and empowerment, and warrant further investigation.</p>								
Recommendations	<table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. For education</td> <td> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Explore action research as an instructional method in undergraduate occupational therapy education. 1.2. Explore social learning as a strategy to introduce EBP to occupational therapists and undergraduate students. 1.3. Promotion of EBP by the local occupational therapy association through providing structured courses for novices and on-going support for therapists at different stages of becoming evidence-based practitioners. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. For practice</td> <td> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Engagement in EBP should be recognised by the professional Council as a means of professional growth. 2.2. International collaboration to improve access to academic literature. </td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. For research</td> <td> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Refine the model of Professional growth and empowerment. 3.2. Inter- and intra-country studies of the impact of EBP on occupational therapy services and outcomes. 3.3. The local occupational therapy association should initiate and/or support research exploring effective and sustainable methods of providing continuing support for therapists wishing to implement EBP. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	1. For education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Explore action research as an instructional method in undergraduate occupational therapy education. 1.2. Explore social learning as a strategy to introduce EBP to occupational therapists and undergraduate students. 1.3. Promotion of EBP by the local occupational therapy association through providing structured courses for novices and on-going support for therapists at different stages of becoming evidence-based practitioners. 	2. For practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Engagement in EBP should be recognised by the professional Council as a means of professional growth. 2.2. International collaboration to improve access to academic literature. 	3. For research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1. Refine the model of Professional growth and empowerment. 3.2. Inter- and intra-country studies of the impact of EBP on occupational therapy services and outcomes. 3.3. The local occupational therapy association should initiate and/or support research exploring effective and sustainable methods of providing continuing support for therapists wishing to implement EBP. 		
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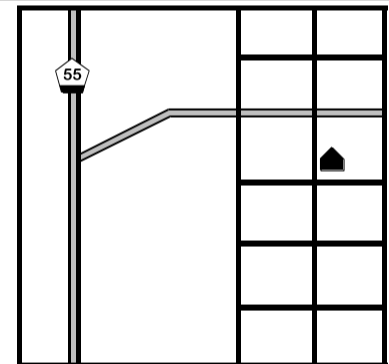
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