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The occupation of the occupational therapy practitioner: Channelling cultural humility through reflection and reflexive practices.

Dr. Michelle Perryman-Fox , Dr. Virginia Stoffel, Dr. Karen Morris, Prof. Diane Cox

INTRODUCTION

Occupations are a critical tool of our profession, yet, we rarely identify with the ‘*occupation*’ of being an occupational therapy practitioner. The dominated lens of education is recognised as white, western able-bodied perspectives (Dirette, 2018). The culture of the profession is therefore based upon these shared knowledge, beliefs, values, assumptions, perspectives, attitudes, norms, and customs acquired through our education and engagement in our professional occupations. This poster outlines theory which acknowledges occupational agency, the negotiations of the occupational therapist and the impact upon the health and wellbeing of the practitioner. The intent is to call for the profession to embody humility within the teams and services that we work with and for. It finalises with providing an opportunity using the performance profile to project humility within our interactions.

THE THEORY

Therapist’s consistent negotiations identified the impact of and the implications upon the occupation of the occupational therapist (Perryman-Fox, 2021). The concept of “Occupational Agency”;” the negotiation which accounts for human engagement in occupation and the performance outcomes of it” (Perryman-Fox, 2021 p.358). This lends insight to understanding the historical experiences, interactions such as our values, habits, roles, routines meaning and perceptions, skill, capacity, and transitions when choosing occupations that are true to our professional values. It is acknowledged these are part of an internal system and perceived external structures (see figure one for the dynamic visual).

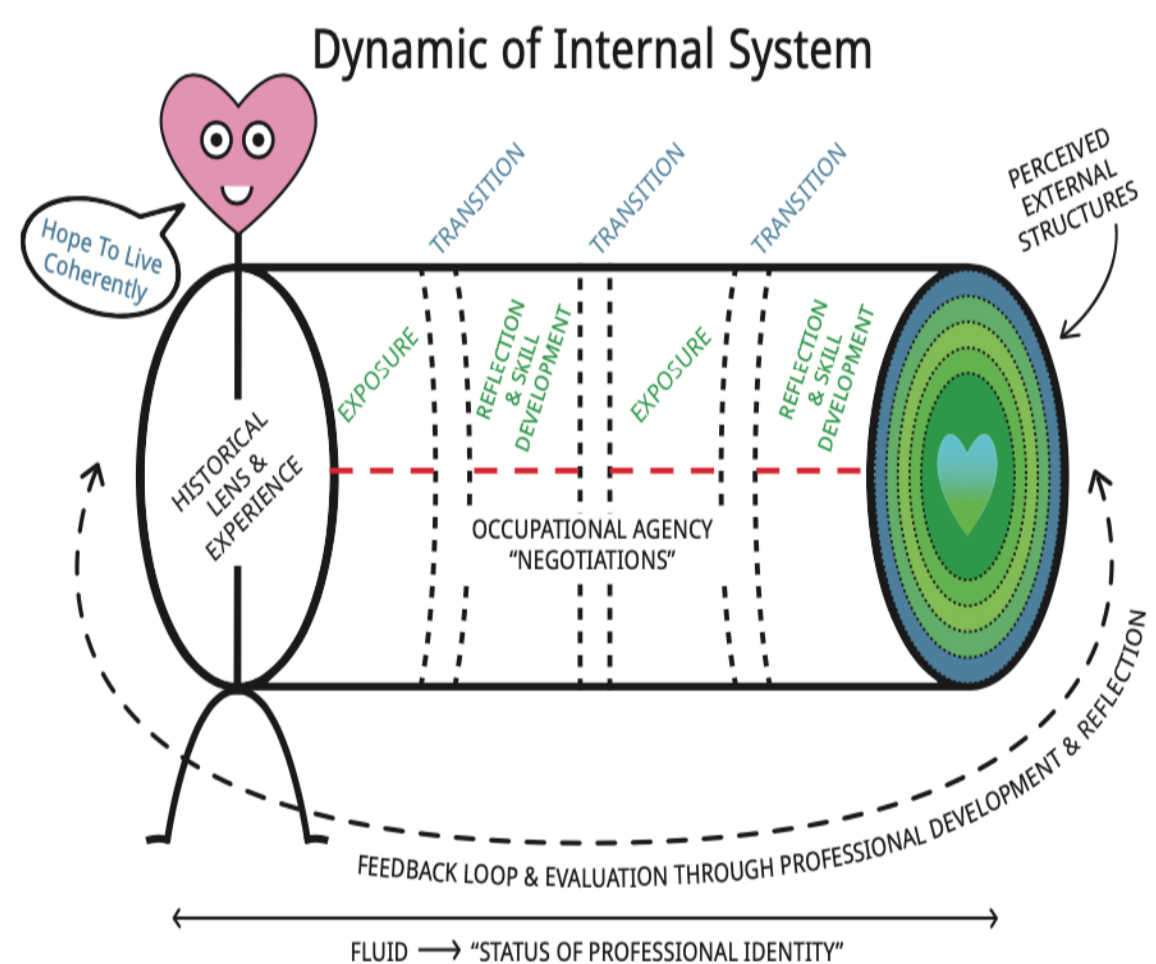


Figure One: Visual of the Dynamics of the internal system (Perryman-Fox, 2021 p. 298)

Therefore, the occupation of the occupational therapist is essential to enable the purpose and premise of being and becoming an occupational therapist. In reckoning with the negotiations, it is acknowledged that the interactions we encounter have implications upon our health and wellbeing and henceforth our identity, how we communicate and the interactions within our teams and the clients we intend to serve. An opportunity therefore lies in interacting with feedback we receive through reflection, reflexivity, and professional development opportunities.



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SO, WHATS CULTURAL HUMILITY GOT TO DO WITH IT?

Culture is not a place nor a people, not a fixed set of values beliefs or behaviors, but an orientation to being in the world that is demonically created and re-created in the process of social interaction and historical context. (Jenkins 2015 cited Munoz and Blaskowitz 2019). How we interact with our environment and our experiences enables a culture of derived social principles. However, it is essential to acknowledge that we all have multiple interactions which stimulate a unique occupational being and we all experience negotiations and transitions, therefore, we hold expectations within our interactions. By embodying cultural humility, “ability to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-orientated (or open to the other) in relation to aspects of cultural identity that are most important to the [person]’ this provides opportunity to readdress power imbalances within the occupation of being an occupational therapist. To recognize that cultural differences lie not within the clients, but within our interactions of our occupation as an occupational therapist and therefore, the client-therapist relationships (Beagan & Chacala, 2012; Hammell, 2013).

WHAT IS REFLECITON AND REFLEXIVITY?

Reflection occurs when a person chooses to stop and engage in an in-depth review of events, whereas reflexivity uses reflection to find strategies to question our attributes, theories in use, values, assumptions, prejudices, and habitual actions, in order to understand our complex roles in relation to others (Bolton and Delderfield, 2018) which is where an opportunity lies.

AN OPPORTUNITY THE PERFORMANCE PROFILE

The Performance Profile technique provides understanding and quantifying perceptions of experiences and measuring these against action (Butler, 1999a, 1999b). The Performance Profile is a natural application of Kelly’s personal construct theory, Doyle and Parfitt (1997 p.116) stress ‘*Essential to the development of Performance Profiling strategy is Kelly’s assertion that whilst people can interpret situations in a similar manner, fundamentally, they are unique in their interpretation of events*’. This enables the opportunity to review our negotiations as therapists and revise our actions for professional or personal development to embed the value of our occupations. It is important to acknowledge that, experience is shaped by our social identities; class, gender and ethnicity that are also patterned collectively (Cree and Macaulay, 2002).

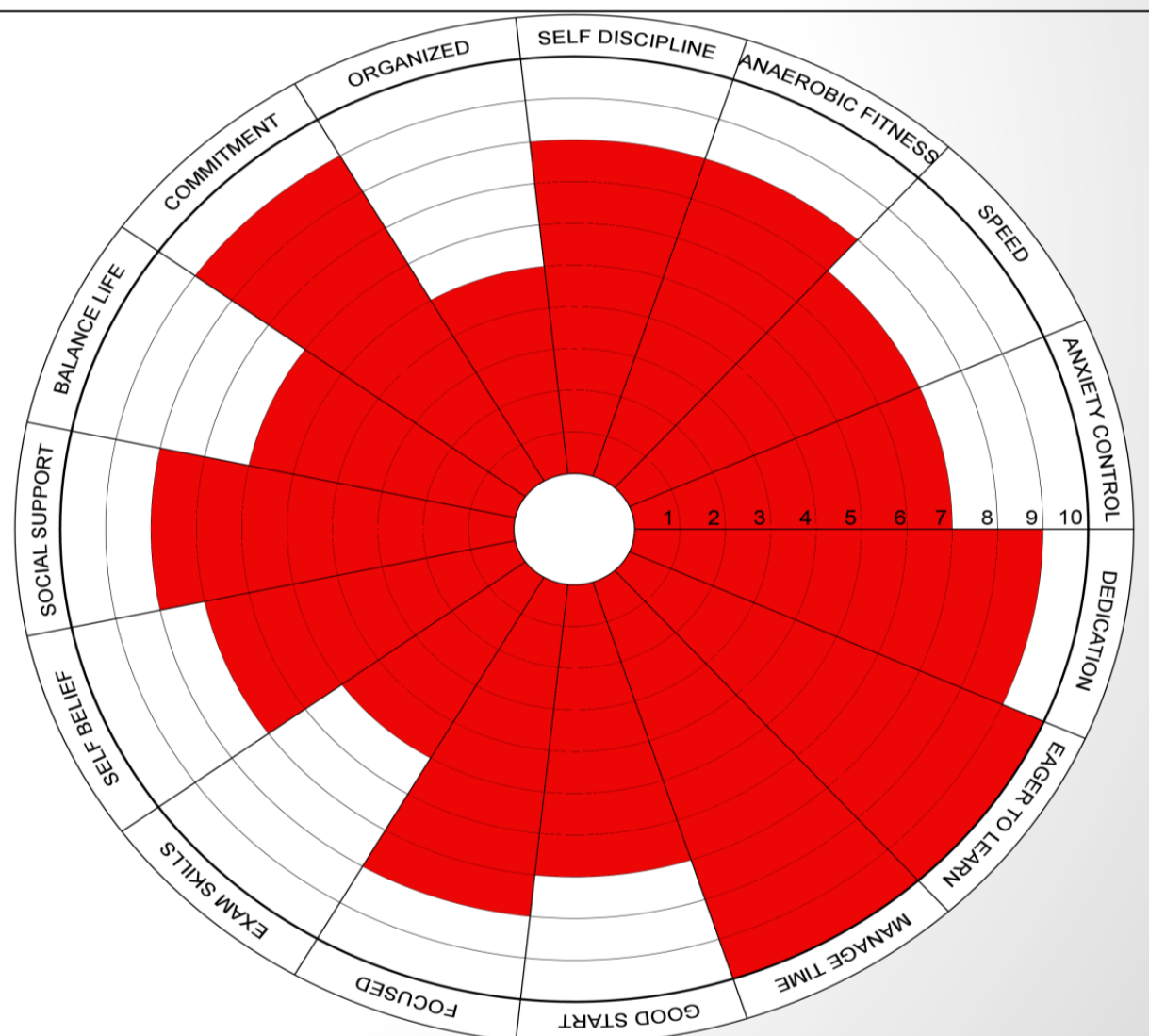


Figure Two: An example of a completed performance profile from its original domain, sporting psychology which outlines the conceptualization of any component of performance.

Consequently, the performance profile may enable us to actively seek to make sense of our world, to review our perceptions, which are maintained hierarchically organised internal representations to make predictions that we test for their efficiency (Gucciardi and Gordon, 2009), which will aid the therapist in seeking understanding of their negotiations through the concept and embodiment of cultural humility.



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CONCLUSION

This poster outlined the theory of occupational agency, the negotiations of the occupational therapist and the impact upon the health and wellbeing of the practitioner. It highlighted the essential requirement to embody cultural humility within the teams', services, and clients that we serve. It provided an opportunity using the performance profile for the process of using reflection and reflexivity to enable personal and professional development.

NEXT STEPS

This concept was developed as a result of a PhD. "*The Theory of Occupational Agency; An international investigation of Occupational Therapists' negotiations*" (Perryman, 2021). The intention and trajectory is to

- 1) seek explanation of the concept of occupational agency within everyday occupations, and
- 2) introduce the opportunity of the performance profile when becoming and being an occupational therapist to stimulate lifelong learning and development to embody humility in our actions and interactions.

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