How to Make the Most of your Therapy: Putting Research into Practice!

Annotated Bibliography – to inform the workshop on Appraising the Quality of Qualitative Research

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The author describes this article as research she undertook with a young, active, educated and healthy acquaintance recovering from a stroke secondary to a ruptured aneurysm at the age of 47.

Methodology
She indicates that the narrative discourse presented in this article "emerged through our collaboration as life history ethnographers (Frank, 1979, 1984, 1986), interpreting her experience of disability over time from an occupational science standpoint, and as ethnomethodologists (Garfinkel, 1967) identifying the therapeutic process that emerged as I unexpectedly functioned as her occupational therapist, while engage in the research process." (p. 1068).

Findings
This article illustrates the ways a narrative can create a means for practitioners to understand the process of recovery as rooted in the individual's own life story (a story with a beginning, middle and end) while also challenging professionals' views of their role and providing a means for positioning themselves in the process of recovery. It illustrates the principles of reflexivity – researcher engagement 'with' the research but also reflections 'on', the researcher's own views or conceptions of practice, recovery etc. It clearly writes the person into the story with great depth, detail and variation over time. This is an example of the ways the 'particular' can be drawn upon to inform practitioners' views of practice.

Notes:


Abstract
Purpose/Method: This study used in-depth interviews to explore the perspectives of nine older women who had not followed through with environmental modification recommendations to reduce the risk of falls in their own home. Results: It was found that the core concept of 'exerting control' provided an understanding of their experience following an occupational therapy home visit. Exerting control was a behavioral, cognitive and affective process whereby the women made decisions about whether or not to follow thought with environmental modification recommendations based on their knowledge of environmental risks, perceptions of degree of risk, perceived ability to mediate these risks through behavior and the degree of freedom she had in decision making. Exerting control meant that the women made daily choices about their home environment which increased or decreased the risk of falls with identified home hazards. Conclusion: The findings suggest that, for some women, health professionals need to work with the phenomenonon of exerting control, in order to work with clients to reduce environmental hazards.

Notes:

Background to the research
The author locates the study in the literature within Occupational Therapy practice related to the identified value of 'sensory integration approaches' in "increasing children's motor, sensory processing, and academic skills" (p. 285). The observer however the evidence related to efficacy is not definitive. She argues that parents play a key role in identifying the need for therapy and in achieving and sustaining outcomes of therapy. Moreover, the author positions the study in her observations in practice and in relation to her experience as a parent of young children. The study builds from earlier research identifying themes related to desired changes in the "parenting occupation" and the "occupation of children" (p. 286) and seeks to make manifest parents' perceptions of this particular form of therapy for their children.

Methodology
The investigator used 'naturalistic program evaluation methods' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to undertake the research. The design was a 'collective case study approach' (Stake, 1994). Sampling was purposive in that it involved parents whose children had received OT using the sensory integration approach for a minimum period of time (at least 32 - 1 hr sessions). Children with a positive diagnosis of Autism, pervasive developmental disorder or fragile X syndrome were excluded because they may not respond in a similar way to the therapy. Parents were interviewed in their own home, interviews were audio-taped and transcribed and submitted to analysis using 'grounded theory methods' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Findings
Parents' perspectives of therapy outcomes are described as a process that is shaped by parents' expectations, their perceptions of 'successful' parenting and influenced by their views of their children's challenges and responses to therapy. (See Figure 1, p. 288). Categories and processes are illustrated using quotes and data excerpts and considered in relation to the broader literature on parenting, literature on child focused outcomes of therapy.

Notes:


Background to the research
The authors position this study in the broader theoretical and practice perspectives on grief therapy. They undertook the study because their practice experience was that peoples' experiences did not 'fit' the traditional perspectives on grief as 'separation' or loss.

Methodology
The methodology is described as a 'hermeneutic interpretive study'. The authors position their perspectives on practice as aligning with this philosophical position. The strategies for 'sampling' and data gathering are compatible with the tenets of this perspective.

Analysis

The preliminary analysis sought to extract "beliefs that seemed linked to grief, and which may have been potentially diminishing or contributing to the suffering associated with grief" (p. 101). The researchers then engaged in an interpretation of these beliefs to emphasize "practical applications of the findings".

'Findings'

The findings are presented first as an exploration of a series of beliefs. The participants' explanations or experiences are considered in light of the prevailing literature on grief, to highlight points of tension or compatibility.

The analysts then proceed to propose an alternative interpretation of the grief experience. This interpretation creates a way for persons living with loss to engage with their grief and introduces new metaphors – that capture different experiences and dimensions of grief. Such metaphors the authors argue create a means for people (and therapists) to engage with grief that is at times experienced as "walking backwards and living forward". The authors propose a second phase of research to explore the impact of interventions to diminish the suffering associated with grief.

Notes:


Positions the narrative approach to research in occupational therapy. Illustrates ways this method can be enacted and the forms of insights it offers. A methods paper.

Additional Examples of Qualitative Research – with applications to OT/PT:


Abstract

The physical, symbolic and experiential aspects of receiving long-term care are examined in this paper using Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and field. We draw on data from an ethnographic study of home care in 16 homes in urban, rural and remote locations in Ontario, Canada. Across all cases, data about domestic and caregiving routines were gathered through observation, interviews with clients and/or the primary family caregiver, interviews with service providers and videotaped tours of the home. Based on the analysis of these data, we argue that a transposition of logics and practices occurred when the domestic and health care fields were superimposed within the spaces of the home. Although all

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of the care recipients and their family caregivers indicated a strong preference for home care over institutional care, their experiences and practices within their homes were disrupted and reconfigured by the insertion of logics emanating from the healthcare field. These changes were manifested in three main themes: the politics of aesthetics; the maintenance of order and cleanliness; and transcending the limitations of the home. In each of these dimensions, it became apparent that care recipients engaged in improvisatory social practices that reflected their ambiguous and changing habitus or social location. The material spaces of their homes signified, or prompted, altered or changing social placement.

**Keywords:**
home care, ethnography, chronic illness, Bourdieu

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In addition to the ideas presented in the ppt component of the workshop the following are Articles that address – the appraisal of Quality in Qualitative Research


(While important points are made, all points are not necessarily applicable to all types of qualitative research. Does not always distinguish between different methods within the qualitative paradigm).


(Focus is on the analysis of the quality of the analysis. Introduces the criteria of complexity and discovery as indicators of quality. Provides a description of levels of analysis that reflect increasing complexity and discovery and illustrates these with examples. Useful for focusing attention on the nuances of detailed analysis.)


(Articulates the aims of qualitative inquiry and illustrates, for different methods within the paradigm, how these aims are accomplished in the analysis. Distinguishes criteria to be applied to different types of studies.)

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