

The role of occupational identity in facilitating a scholarship of practice at undergraduate level

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The profession of occupational therapy faces the challenge of introducing research as an occupation to undergraduate students. Occupational therapists value occupation, the influence of the environment and the role of culture within a specific environment. Therefore, these aspects should be considered not only when working with clients but also when educating students. An action learning and action research approach led to a framework for promoting an appreciation for research-related activities (FARRA). This paper introduces and scrutinises the FARRA for its ability to promote scholarship of practice at undergraduate level. The components of this process suggest engagement in research-related activities that would influence students' occupational identities and enable transformation towards a lifelong engagement in research. However, the endeavour to facilitate a research culture at undergraduate level for occupational therapy students remains an idealistic enterprise. The prospect of research and publication, even when part of a postgraduate qualification, is daunting. The aim of the FARRA is however not to produce researchers and publishers at the end of the undergraduate training course. Rather opportunities for engagement in research-related activities provided at undergraduate education level for occupational therapy students should be utilised for preparing clinicians to be articulate when expressing their opinion professionally (e.g. during ward rounds - verbal presentation). These clinicians would also be able to proficiently prepare funding proposals or communicate care plans and home programs in written format (components of visual presentation, scientific writing and the research process).