



Wilma L. West Library Resource Notes

Fire in Australia

January 2002

Several ideas for the first RN in 2002 have flitted through my mind and into the folder where I keep all possibilities. Once again, however, perusal of the *Washington Post* during my train ride to the office gave me the topic I am choosing to pursue this week.

To start the day on an upbeat, I look at the "Style" section of the newspaper where you find stories on the Arts, Ann Landers, tips for dating, parenting, etc., the comics, and the crossword puzzle. Since 9/11, I have noticed that more serious stories are encroaching into this section.

This morning, after working the puzzle and reading the comics, I read a piece on preparing for emergencies that began with a reference to September 11 and how each of us must now ready our homes, personal and financial records, and family for future disasters.

Okay, so this is not so bad. May still be considered "light reading," but wait. Turning back to page 1, I spied a picture of a city skyline clouded by a partially blue and very smoky sky, with the caption; "Sydney's harbor and famous Opera House are obscured by thick smoke from bush fires." This article is a Letter from Australia, titled "Red Sky at Morning," by Kate Orman. The subtext is more upsetting, "As fires lick at Sydney, residents pack and hope."

The story gives more details about these fires that began before Christmas, which, of course, occurs during Australia's summer. Several themes related to societal crises unfolded as I continued to read. One, "Be Prepared," is a repeat of the shorter article on emergencies. Have planned and practiced escape routes and a meeting place for family members. Since so many of us have entered our personal and financial records and transactions on our computers copy your files on floppy discs or CDs and store them elsewhere, like a safety deposit box.

Fires accompany natural and man-made disasters; so, perhaps learning more about fires and how to prevent or deal with them is a must for all of us. Two sites with multiple documents on fire and fire safety, including some in Spanish, are:

The United States Fire Administration MedlinePlus

Track down this article from staff members of the American Red Cross, Washington, D.C., Land, A. & Irby, D. (2001). Disaster planning & fire safety. *Occupational Health & Safety*, 70(11), 28-30.

Here are two articles from **OT SEARCH**:

Caracciolo, R. (1995). Fire prevention in rehab facilities. *OT Week*, 9(41), 17.

Steib, P.A. (1995). Fire prevention week Oct. 8-14: What your OT clients should know.

OT Week, 9(41), 16-17.

ABSTRACT: People with disabilities, physical or mental, are often at special risk in the event of a fire. The National Fire Prevention Association has special tips for people with disabilities and their caregivers, beginning with how to plan ahead for emergencies.

Like all disasters, the trauma from experiencing a fire is long lasting and affects all aspects of victims' lives. Mark S. Rosenfeld discusses the effects of house fires on the daily lives of the victims and means of coping in:

Rosenfeld, M.S. (1989). Occupational disruption and adaptation: A study of house fire victims. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 43(2), 89-96.

ABSTRACT: House fires are the most common disasters in our society. Disaster theorists acknowledge that complex daily living problems impede the recovery of victims. However, these problems have not been described in detail. The author conducted a qualitative study of the disruption of daily living routines caused by house fires and of the adaptation processes victims undertook to reestablish effective patterns of purposeful activity. The data-gathering methods included observation on the scenes of 15 house or tenement fires and in-depth interviews with members of 10 families displaced by fires. Disruption was found to occur in the victims' use of time and comfort in their personal environment. A data analysis revealed a new process of occupational adaptation. The roles of tasks and activities were determined to be important in recovery.

Rosenfeld, M.S. (1993). Disaster relief: From fires to floods: Helping victims regain their lives. *OT Week*, 7(46), 22-23.

The following citation is from PsychInfo:

Keane, A., Pickett, M., Robinson, L., Lowery, B. & McCorkle, R. (1998). A model of survivors' psychological responses following a residential fire. *Death Studies*, 22(1), 43-60.

Abstract: Residential fires result in loss of life, property, and displacement from one's neighborhood. It would be expected that grief experienced in the aftermath of residential fires has a significant impact on survivors' recovery and reintegration into the community. Although there is some research on psychological responses to community-wide fires and large-scale disasters, little is known about such responses among survivors of home fires that occur episodically. Appropriate interventions cannot be developed until more is learned about variables influencing survivors' psychological response to a residential fire. A theoretical model of survivors' psychological response post-fire is proposed.

In the process of deciding what to pack if evacuation became necessary, the author and her husband were faced with deciding what really was important to them in their homes. What would you pack? I have a large envelope with family photos that I would hate to lose, because they tell my story, identify me. It is what I tell myself I'll grab if forced out of my home by fire or

other disaster. Many things, our worldly goods, our toys, or perhaps the tools of our trade or profession shape our identities. Occupational therapy practitioners address the issue of identity. Here are three recent references that seem to fit here.

Christiansen, C.H. (1999). The 1999 Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecture: Defining lives: Occupation as identity: An essay on competence, coherence, and the creation of meaning. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 53(6), 547-558.

ABSTRACT: This article presents a view of occupation as the principal means through which people develop and express their personal identities. Based on a review of theory and research, it proposes that identity is instrumental to social life because it provides a context for deriving meaning from daily experiences and interpreting lives over time. The article proposes that identity also provides a framework for goal-setting and motivation. It is asserted that competence in the performance of tasks and occupations contributes to identity-shaping and that the realization of an acceptable identity contributes to coherence and wellbeing. Within this framework, it is postulated that performance limitations and disfigurement that sometimes result from illness or injury have identity implications that should be recognized by occupational therapy practitioners. By virtue of their expertise in daily living skills, occupational therapy practitioners are well positioned to help address the identity challenges of those whom they serve. In so doing, they make an important contribution to meaning and well being.

Collins, M. (2001). Who is occupied? Consciousness, self awareness and the process of human adaptation. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 8(1), 25-32.

ABSTRACT: This article explores consciousness and its relevance to the field of occupational science. Selected literature from Eastern and Western schools of philosophy and consciousness is explored in relation to the process of human adaptation. The article highlights the inner world of occupational beings with particular emphasis on the nature of identity as experienced through the self. This paper explores consciousness further from the standpoint of advances made in science and psychology. The theories of uncertainty, chaos and complexity are discussed from a process oriented perspective that considers the importance of self awareness. This article suggests that occupational scientists should consider the dynamic potential that exists for evolving awareness in consciousness, and the implications that this has for occupational beings and the process of human adaptation.

Hocking, C. (2000). Having and Using Objects in the Western World. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 7(3), 148-157.

ABSTRACT: This interpretive study explores how Western people construct self and express identity through the objects they acquire, make and use in their day-to-day occupation. Drawing on literature from psychology, consumer research, sociology, anthropology, disability studies and popular literature, it proposes that people use objects to reflect self and identity, and to transform self and others. Using a history of ideas methodology, the author argues that Western people take for granted that the objects they have and use reflect an individual rather than collective identity, and suggests that the ways people use objects to construct self and identity are informed by the philosophies of both Stoicism, which emphasizes self discipline and rational decision making, and Romanticism which celebrates people's emotional depth, creativity and self expression.

I was shocked to read that arsonists may have started these fires. Twenty-one suspects have been arrested; fourteen of whom are juveniles, ". . . characterized as troublemakers bored during their summer vacation." Violence against person and the environment is certainly a societal crisis. Again, occupational therapy practitioners have addressed the issues of occupation or habits in juvenile delinquents.

DeForest, D., Watts, J.H. & Madigan, M.J. (1991). Resonance in the Model of Human Occupation: A pilot study. *Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*, 11(2/3), 57-71.

ABSTRACT: This pilot study of resonance in the model of human occupation examines the belief that successful performance of craft activities will positively influence belief in skill (BIS). Juvenile delinquents participated in craft activities and interviews to help answer the question "What is the difference in the youths' BIS before and after intervention?" Increases in BIS were significant for: (a) the combination of craft activities in which the youths participated, and (b) other performance subsystem activities not specifically practiced during the study. This offers preliminary support for resonance since changes in the performance subsystem seemed to have positively influenced subjects' BIS (volition subsystem). Future studies are needed to explain how the resonance dynamic operates.

Ebb, E.W., Coster, W. & Duncombe, L. (1989). Comparison of normal and psychosocially dysfunctional male adolescents. *Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*, 9(2), 53-74.

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to examine whether variables defined as critical by the model of human occupation (Kielhofner & Burke, 1980, 1985), could discriminate normal (n=18), and psychosocially dysfunctional (n=15), groups of male adolescents. Discriminant analysis was used to evaluate several variables simultaneously in order to determine group membership. Measures used were the following: Locus of Control Scale for Children (Nowicki & Strickland, 1973), Occupational Questionnaire (Riopel, 1981), Role Checklist (Oakley, 1982), Modification of Matsutsuyu's Interest Checklist (1969) and the Adapted Adolescent Functional Performance Evaluation. Results showed that the model variables did successfully differentiate between the normal and psychosocially dysfunctional groups. Further data analysis indicated that the number of current and future roles as well as the number of strong interests proved to be the most valuable variables in this discrimination. Future research is suggested to improve the validity of the instruments used in this study.

Farnworth, L. (1998). Doing, being, and boredom. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 5(3), 140-146.

ABSTRACT: My research on the time use and subjective experience of young offenders has uncovered that many experience a high degree of boredom. At first, this boredom appears to be related to their lack of engagement in productive occupations, such as education and work and the predominance of time spent in passive leisure and personal care occupations. The experience of boredom is often associated with ideas of victimization and entrapment. An implicit assumption is that people have a right to not be bored, and that society's obligations include preventing this boredom. One means to achieve this is believed to be through engagement in paid employment. However, in this paper, I will argue that boredom may loom large in our culture today and may be just as prevalent amongst those in paid employment as those who are unemployed. Using my research with young offenders and several literary explanations of the phenomenon of boredom, I will illustrate that boredom is a little understood

concept which is intimately linked with human occupation and meaning, and thus is of interest to occupational scientists.

Farnworth, L. (2000). Time use and leisure occupations of young offenders. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 54(3), 315-325.

ABSTRACT: Objective. The overall goal of this study was to understand the time use, including leisure occupations, of a sample of young offenders in Melbourne, Australia. Method. This study investigated how 37 probationary young offenders (from 13-18 years of age) spent their wakeful time during 1 week. The study used a combination of the Experience Sampling Method and interviewing. Participants were beeped 60 times over days and, each time, they were asked to complete a questionnaire about the occupations in which they were engaged. Each participant was interviewed both before and after the Experience Sampling Method data collection about their everyday lives, including their leisure occupations. Data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Results. The young offenders reported that they were engaged in leisure occupations, predominantly passive, 57% of the times beeped, and in personal care occupations 21% of the times beeped. Only 10% of the times beeped did they report being engaged in productive occupations such as education or employment. The time spent in passive leisure occupations was 30% higher than for the average Australian adolescent. Leaving school and lack of financial and human resources contributed to the high percentage of engagement in passive leisure occupations. Conclusion. Findings from this study help us to understand the relationship between use of time and social well-being, particularly the nature of time use of young offenders, and will help to inform occupational therapy practices with such groups

Farnworth, L.J. (1999). The time use and subjective experience of occupations of young male and female legal offenders. . (Australia, juvenile delinquency). Los Angeles, CA: University of Southern California. (dissertation)

ABSTRACT: Occupational therapy and occupational science literature suggests that there is a relationship between one's use of time and a person's health and well-being. Time budget studies generally indicate that humans have a temporal order to their daily lives which is organized around the occupations of self-maintenance, work and leisure. Young offenders are known to have problematic school attendance and consequently have difficulties in gaining paid employment. Occupations such as paid employment and attending school structure time and develop routines and habits for independent living. However, little is known about how young offenders spend their time. This study investigated how 37 young legal offenders on probation (16 females and 21 males) in Melbourne, Australia, spent their time, and how they experienced this use of time. The study used a combination of research methods, Experience Sampling Method (ESM) and interviewing. Participants were each beeped 60 times over seven days and asked to complete a questionnaire about occupations engaged in, social and physical contexts of the occupations, and subjective experiences while engaged in these occupations. Each participant was interviewed both before and after the ESM data collection. Of their wakeful hours, the young offenders reported spending 57% of their time engaged in leisure occupations such as watching television or listening to music, and 21% in personal care occupations, such as eating and drinking. Only 10% of their time was reported in productive occupations such as education or employment. The time spent in passive leisure occupations was 30% higher than the average Australian adolescent. They were bored 42% of the times that they were beeped, and 62% of their reported time was spent in occupations that they experienced as less challenging than their self-perceived skill levels. Boredom was experienced almost half of the

time when they were engaged in passive leisure and personal care occupations, and was less likely to occur when engaged in education, labor force or active leisure occupations. Both the lack of challenges and experience of boredom were directly related to engagement in illegal activities. NOTE: The WLW Library does not have this dissertation in its collection.

Henry, A.D. & Coster, W.J. Competency beliefs and occupational role behavior among adolescents: Explication of the personal causation construct. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 51(4), 267-276.

ABSTRACT: According to the Model of Human Occupation (MOHO), beliefs regarding competency can influence whether a person's occupational role behavior is adaptive or maladaptive. Such beliefs are considered to be part of a person's sense of "personal causation". This article reviews some of the theoretical underpinnings of the personal causation construct. Issues addressed are the distinction between competency beliefs and locus of control (another aspect of personal causation according to the MOHO); the domain-specific nature of competency beliefs; and, in particular, the evidence for a relationship between competency beliefs and actual behavior. The article focuses on competency beliefs and their relationship to three domains of occupational behavior that have relevance for adolescents: academic ability, social competence, and physical competence. Implications for clinical practice with adolescents with psychiatric disorders are addressed.

Lederer, J.M., Kielhofner, G. & Watts, J.H. (1985). Values, personal causation and skills of delinquents and Nondelinquents. *Occupational Therapy in Mental Health*, 5(2), 59-77.

ABSTRACT: A study exploring the occupational nature of juvenile delinquency from the perspective of the Model of Human Occupation is presented. Because of the complex etiology and lack of a coherent occupational therapy conceptualization of delinquency, this study and literature review serve as beginning points for further investigation. Literature is presented on variables in the volition and performance subsystems, specifically values, internal/external locus of control and perceptual motor skills. Scott's Personal Values Scales (1965), the second half of the Role Checklist (Oakley, 1981), the Locus of Control Scale for Children (Nowicki-Strickland, 1973), and the Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Beery & Buktenica, 1967) were used to measure the variables simultaneously in a group of adolescent delinquents and age-matched non-delinquents to see whether the groups differed. No statistical differences were found between groups on the variables studied. However, results suggest that delinquents value different, more solitary, deviant and self-expressive roles than non-delinquents. Further study is needed on the following aspects of occupational behavior: role, habit patterns, and interests.

Snyder, C., Clark, F., Masunaka-Noriega, M. & Young, B. (1998). Los Angeles Street Kids: New Occupations for Life Program. *Journal of Occupational Science*, 5(3), 133-139.

ABSTRACT: In the same sense that health intervention focused on the daily occupations of the well-elderly can promote successful aging, programs aimed at the daily occupations of at-risk youth may act as a potential deterrent to street gang activity. In the city of Los Angeles, thousands of young people come under the influence of gang culture and in turn lead lifestyles destructive to themselves and society. This paper begins with a few statistics which paint a grim picture of the existence of street gang members and the impact of street gang involvement. Following, there is a story of one youth's path from immigration to the United States to his involvement with a street gang which eventually led to his participation in the New

Occupations for Life Program. This pilot program, developed by the University of Southern California Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, targeted the harmful occupations for 100 Hispanic and African-American teenagers at risk for gang involvement. The program provided a safe context for disestablishing gang allegiances, building community, and exploring socially acceptable, productive occupations. In this liminal space, these at-risk youth were given the opportunity to experience other "modes of being" within the context of meaningful and enjoyable occupations. Clark and her colleagues offer their interpretation of this transformative process and share their optimism about the power of occupation to change the lives of at-risk youth.

Virikowic, T.L. (1993). Perspectives on delinquency and the Model of Human Occupation. *Journal of Occupational Therapy Students*, 7(1), 30-41.

ABSTRACT: Adolescents with delinquent behaviors display a multitude of behavioral patterns that affect several aspects of their life-styles, including work, school, self-care, and leisure. A multifactoral and complex interaction of dysfunctional biological, sociological, and psychological factors has been attributed to the development of such behaviors. The Model of Human Occupation provides a framework for occupational therapy assessment and intervention that addresses the performance skills and underlying performance components that may be maladaptive or dysfunctional for the adolescent.

This is the end of my musing about the terrible fires in Australia and my intellectual linking of this disaster with the profession of occupational therapy. I believe it validates the titles of Mary Reilly's and David Nelson's Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lectures:

"Occupational therapy can be one of the great ideas of 20th century medicine " and "Why the profession of occupational therapy will flourish in the 21st century," respectively. Dr. Reilly delivered her lecture in 1961 and Dr. Nelson in 1996. Perhaps rereading them will reaffirm your confidence in the role of occupation and occupational therapy in ameliorating or preventing societal crises.

Reilly, M. (1962). Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecture: "Occupational therapy can be one of the great ideas of 20th century medicine. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 16(1), 1-9.).

Nelson, D.L. (1997). The 1996 Eleanor Clarke Slagle Lecture: Why the profession of occupational therapy will flourish in the 21st century. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 51(1), 11-24.

I send my positive thoughts and hopes to our Australian colleagues during this frightening time.