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Professional socialisation: students' expectations of being a physiotherapist or occupational therapist


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Background

- **Changing health care demands**
 - client centred, focussed care
 - community based
 - health promotion
- **Changing demography**
 - greying population
- **Health Economics**
 - clinical governance
 - clinical effectiveness





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Professional education

Global aims are to:

- be 'genuinely multi professional' to promote teamwork, partnership and collaboration
- interweave professional, multi professional and inter-professional elements

Locally, at UEA, AHP aims are for:

- competence in practice
- life long learners
- critical evaluators
- able to operate in inter-disciplinary teams





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Philosophy of OT and PT

OT - a profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational therapists achieve this outcome by enabling people to do things that will enhance their ability to participate or by modifying their environment to better support participation

PT - a health care profession which emphasizes the use of physical and interpersonal approaches to the promotion, maintenance and restoration of an individual's physical, psychological and social well-being, encompassing variations in health







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Issues


- **widening access**
- **encouragement for shared learning**
- **diverse student intake**
 - how do student views of their profession differ ?
 - how can tutors match their needs ?




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A shared syllabus

- **Characteristics of student cohorts**
 - ages between 18 and over 30
 - 15-20% males
 - small but increasing number of students from ethnic minorities
 - formally assessed educational abilities extending from diploma to degree
- **Shared sessions**
 - 50% shared - professional studies, health sciences, methods of enquiry.







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The study

Purpose:
to investigate new entrants' expectations of being an OT or PT with the intention of informing curriculum design

Methodology:
a phenomenographic approach to explore the varied conceptions of being an OT or PT using taped interviews




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Subjects

new students on the undergraduate education course

8 occupational therapy and 8 physiotherapy students were strategically selected to obtain maximum variation:

- sex
- age
- earlier work experiences
- educational background







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Method

- taped interviews at the beginning of the education programme
- 40-45 minutes long
- semi-structured

All started with the same request:
"please tell me about one important thing you hope to learn to help you become an occupational therapist/physiotherapist"





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Interview guide

A commonly developed interview guide was used to explore:

- why the topic was chosen
- what was expected
- the anticipated way the knowledge would be used
- views of care
- interaction perceived with which types and ages of clients
- views of sickness and health
- relationships with other agencies and health care professions
- perceived professional boundaries







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Procedures of analysis

- all interviews were transcribed verbatim
- analysis within and across professions
 - familiarization
 - identification of themes
- comparison of similarities and differences in themes grouped
- identification of qualitatively different categories which emerged
- categories describe and designated titles
- categories contrasted and related to each other



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Themes


"making the patient totally at ease"


"need to know what their (patients') aims are"

"what type of intervention is going to work best"

"learning professional skills, knowing I am right"

"I want that real knowledge"







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Findings

Categories

- client-centred
- client focussed
- professional





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Client centred

- "independence in their own environment"
- maintain individuality
- look at the individual
- " where are they coming from"
- "functioning at a level they are happy with"
- "depends on the individual and their view of dependence"

Communication, relating, body language







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Client focussed

- helping different types of people
- making people understand and accept
- "make sure it's clear so they understand exactly what you want"
- "taking their opinions on board .. to design your treatment plan"
- improving people's quality of life
- which organisations can help

networking, explaining, learning by observation





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Professional

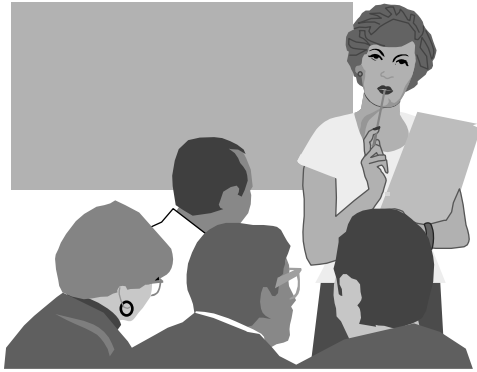
- really know what to do - "that clear professional outlook"
- dealing with people
- getting respect "being in a position of authority"
- using the right words
- "got to be forceful or you'll just get walked on"


being a good teacher, seeing people behave, learning to be confident




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professional development







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Discussion

- **public professional profile**
- **challenge to educators**
 - personal tutors
 - placement choices
 - clinical educators as models
- **professional purpose**
- **changing health needs**





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