

0174

Critical discourse analysis: Enhancing understanding of the shaping of possibilities and expectations for occupation

Debbie Laliberte Rudman

University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada

Introduction: Research about occupation has tended to neglect the ways in which occupations are situated within and influenced by broad, macro-level social, political and cultural factors. A key contributing factor to this relative neglect has been a tendency to rely on methodologies and theoretical perspectives that focus on individuals' perspectives and experiences of occupation, without considering how expectations and possibilities for occupations are shaped within contexts.

Objectives: This presentation demonstrates the potential of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a methodological approach to examining occupational possibilities and expectations, defined as the ways and types of doing that come to be seen as ideal, possible and expected within specific environments for specific groups of people. Description: Following an overview of the theoretical underpinnings and methodology of CDA, examples of textual analysis will be drawn upon to demonstrate how CDA can be used to enhance understanding of how possibilities and expectations for occupation are shaped in ways that create occupational injustices. Discussion: Working within a governmentality perspective, discourses, that is, ways that a phenomenon is textually, visually and verbally constructed within various kinds of institutions and texts, are seen as shaping possibilities for everyday practices and identity at collective and individual levels. CDA can also be used to examine how occupation is discursively constructed within various types of documents, such as policies, popular media, academic journals and fiction. Such an examination can enhance understanding of how occupations are shaped by and bounded within social, political and cultural factors. Conclusion: CDA provides an innovative methodological approach for furthering understanding of how inequities and injustices are situated with, and perpetuated by, social, political and cultural factors. Contribution to occupational therapy: CDA studies aimed at deconstructing the social, political and cultural structures and conditions that shape and perpetuate occupational injustices can strengthen the knowledge base for occupational therapy practices that aim to promote social participation, justice and inclusion.