

0246

Occupational Therapy Education; Students' views on the use of the KAWA Model for their personal development.

Linda Renton

Queen Margaret University, Scotland, United Kingdom

The KAWA (or river) model emerged in the 1990s and it attempts to explain occupational therapists' overall purpose, strategies for interpreting a client's circumstances and a way of clarifying the rationale and application of occupational therapy (Iwama 2006 p139). It uses the metaphor of a river as a symbolic representation of life. It is referred to as a new culturally relevant conceptual model of occupational therapy. Many examples of its use with clients in occupational therapy are emerging. This paper explores the use of the model by occupational therapy students, for their own self development.

At Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh UK, as part of the four year education programme, undergraduate (or first cycle) students are introduced to the KAWA model in first year. In second year they explore the model through case work and in third year they conceptualise a client, and offer critique of the model.

Through a small pilot exploration, third year students were asked to consider the use of the KAWA model for their own self development in relation to their learning. All students attending one specific class were invited to complete a short questionnaire and comment on: the type of river they could draw, what settings they could use it in, what purpose could they use it for and who they would discuss it with. They were also asked to draw their river. The findings showed that; students were creative in their application of this model to their own learning, most felt it was a useful way to explore their self development, it could be used in a variety of settings and in a diverse range of ways and the students could identify reasons why they liked or disliked it. Three examples of students' rivers are presented: "My Third Practice Placement", "My learning Journey" and "Doing an Assignment".

Finally the contribution of the KAWA Model to occupational therapy students' personal development is critiqued and conclusions are drawn.