

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Sue Morrison, MSOT, OTR/L Ashton Hudspeth, MOTS, & Colton Peltier, MOTS Department of Occupational Therapy, University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences Grand Forks, ND 58202-9037 | Contact: ashton.hudspeth@und.edu, colton.peltier@und.edu



Intro

The life history of Sue Morrison was one of 30 life history interviews conducted as a part of a larger project of *Life Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) in North Dakota and Wyoming*

- The purpose of this project is to gather information about the history and evolution of OT practice from individuals like Sue Morrison who have been influential in developing OT in these two states
- This study is intended to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists a view of the history and how OT practice has evolved from its inception to current practice in North Dakota and Wyoming
- This life history of Sue Morrison is a case study guided by the Kawa model that examined her life as an OT practitioner, and educator

Description of Participant

Sue Morrison began her career in occupational therapy after graduating with her bachelor's degree from the University of North Dakota at the satellite campus in Casper, Wyoming in 1998. She began working in the public-school system in Cody, Wyoming due to a lack of positions available in her hometown of Casper, Wyoming

- Sue received a master's of science in occupational therapy from San Jose State in 2004
- Sue owned a private practice from 2006-2010 that focused on pediatrics
- She taught from 2000-2002 as an adjunct professor for the Casper College Occupational Therapy Assistant Program
- From 2005-2010 she taught Biology at Northwest Community College in Powell, Wyoming as an adjunct professor
- Sue then acted as the program coordinator and instructor for the OTA program at Casper college from 2010-2012
- She then acted as the professional site coordinator and assistant professor for the University of North Dakota at the Casper, Wyoming site from 2012-2017, which is where she started the Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources (SOAR) program. The SOAR program was designed to help Casper college students with disabilities advocate for themselves
- Sue is currently practicing OT as a school based pediatric therapist in Rawlins, Wyoming

Literature Review

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was originally passed in 1975 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004). The purpose of IDEA was to provide free appropriate education for children with disabilities. The school district must locate and evaluate all children with disabilities, and educate them in the least restrictive environment (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2004).

- As Sue Morrison primary practice in school-based pediatrics, her service provision is greatly influenced by IDEA.

In 1997 the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) was implemented resulting in major changes to Medicare reimbursement for home health. The BBA placed a cap on payments per beneficiary, replacing cost-based reimbursement with a prospective payment system (PPS) (Komisar, 1997)

- Sue Morrison felt that BBA greatly affected her ability to find a job as an occupational therapist in certain locations after her graduation

AOTA moved for occupational therapy to be a postbaccalaureate level of education in 1999. Accreditation Counsel for Occupation Therapy Education (ACOTE) voted to allow until 2007 for occupational therapy programs to offer the updated degree (AOTA, 2014)

Methodology

- This was a qualitative study using a life history approach. The participant was assigned from a list developed by project directors through purposive sampling. There were no specific gatekeeper issues
- Informed consent was obtained
- One semi-structured interview was completed and recorded
- The Interview lasted approximately one-hour
- The Interview was conducted using video chat software; Zoom
- An interview schedule created by the project directors was used to guide the interview; the questions on the interview schedule were designed to be used with all the individuals interviewed as part of the larger project. The researchers were allowed to modify or add interview questions as needed for each interviewee
- The data were transcriber verbatim and used as a basis for coding The transcription was coded and from this categories, themes, and assertions were formed

Data Analysis

- Sue Morrison's life history was revealed using the Kawa Model to guide the interview and data analysis in chronological fashion
 - This model uses the concept of a river to represent the individual and their journey through life (Turpin & Iwama, 2011).
- The categories that emerged from the codes of the transcription are: education, job/work, and advocacy.

Findings

Categories were analyzed from the codes to identify themes that represent Sue Morrison as a person and occupational therapist. From these themes, an overall assertion was then developed.

Education themes:

- Sue greatly values the educational experiences she has had, both in and out of school
 - "So more education just isn't about more money. It's about more knowledge."
- Education has improved her occupational therapy practice
 - "I believe in the power of education...of knowing how things work, knowing how the systems work, knowing where to go, knowing what you don't know..."

Job/Work Themes:

- Sue feels that an occupational therapist needs to be a "jack of all trades" when working in a rural setting
- Sue's goal is to be a great therapist by "keeping up with the times, and through evidence-based practice"

Advocacy Themes:

Photo provided by Sue Morrison (2018)

- Sue believes there is a need to advocate for yourself to create a healthy work-life balance
- Sue is passionate about engaging with others to help them maximize their potential

Conclusion

Sue is a strong proponent of education, she is committed to being a generalist and having the knowledge and evidence to advocate for herself and the others to engage in meaningful occupations and create a healthy balance in their lives

- This is evidenced by her tireless work as an advocate for those who are unable to do so for themselves, such as children and individuals with disabilities
- Sue frequently performs self-composed music at charity functions such as the American Cancer Society, suicide prevention and autism awareness
- Through teaching occupational therapy in a higher education setting, it has helped Sue Morrison find a new love for theory and evidence-based practice

References

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