

# Life History of Elizabeth Crepeau, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

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## Introduction

- The purpose of the study is to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists a view of the history and how occupational therapy practice has evolved from its inception to current practice through the life history stories of occupational therapists who have held leadership roles at the national level and beyond. It is anticipated that the life history process will be a powerful way to gather this information.
- This life history is part of the larger study consisting of 30 occupational therapists.
- The larger project is *Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) at the National Level and Beyond*.
- A qualitative research design using a life history approach was used.
- The participant, Dr. Elizabeth Crepeau, was interviewed over FaceTime since she lives in New Hampshire.

## Description of Participant

- She is a mother of two and a wife to a Airforce Veteran.
- Dr. Crepeau has been retired from the OT profession since 2008.
- She started graduate school in sociology and got her PhD in this department.
- She graduated from University of New Hampshire (UNH) in 1966 and received her Bachelor's degree in OT.
- Dr. Crepeau practiced in many settings when starting out in the OT profession.
- Most of her career was spent being a professor in the OT department at UNH.
- Beyond practicing with clients, Dr. Crepeau was involved at the state and national levels.
- She was involved in editing three editions of the textbook *Willard & Spackman's Occupational Therapy*.



## Literature Review

- In the early 1900s the concept of *flow* was created to describe peoples intrinsic motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). Dr. Crepeau emphasizes engaging in meaningful occupations in order to achieve an outcome of *flow*.
- The concepts of moral treatment and occupational therapy which developed before the 20<sup>th</sup> century based the value of human individuality and the fundamental perception of the clients needs to engage in creative activity (Ermerst, 1972). Dr. Crepeau emphasized using crafts to promote meaningful occupations.
- The phrase evidenced-based originated in 1980 for a way of describing the problem-based learning approach and providing efficacy treatment (Bennett, S. & Bennett, J., 2000). Dr. Crepeau values using evidenced-based to increase clinical reasoning and providing the best treatment possible to our clients.
- In 1998 Wilcock reflects on the concept of balancing doing, being, and becoming to promote a person's well-being and quality of life (Wilcock, 1998). Dr. Crepeau used advocacy to provide opportunities that enhanced an individual's sense of *doing, being, and belonging* throughout the community.

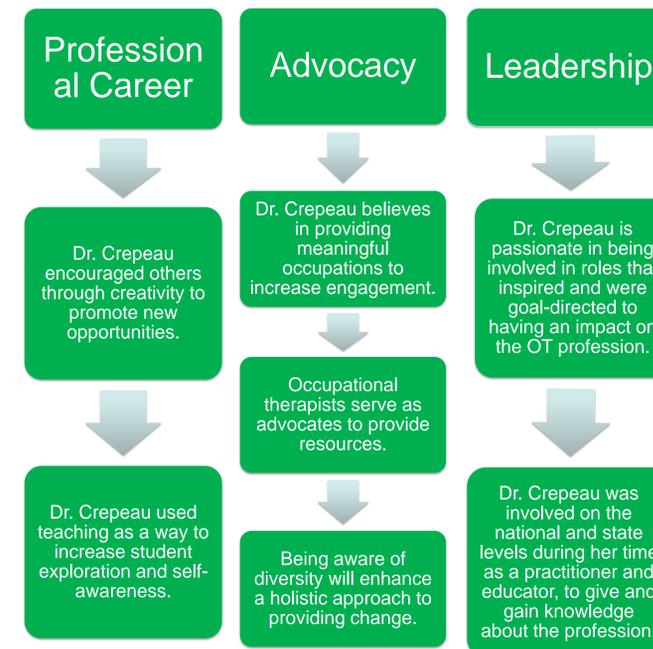
## Methodology

- This is a qualitative study that uses a life history approach.
- The participant was selected from a participant list compiled through purposive sampling by the project directors.
- Informed consent was obtained prior to the interview.
- The project was approved by the UND Institutional Review Board and because of the study design the formal IRB process was waived.
- The semi-structured interview was guided by an interview schedule prepared by the project directors; the questions on the interview schedule were designed to be used with all the individuals interviewed as part of the larger project. The student researchers were allowed to modify or add interview questions as needed for each specific interview.
- The Kawa model was used to guide this research study in the interview questions and analyzing data.
- The participant, Dr. Elizabeth Crepeau, was interviewed over FaceTime since she lives in New Hampshire.
- The interview was audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim by the researchers.
- The study's trustworthiness components include:
  - **Researcher Triangulation:** Two researchers were involved in the analysis of the data to decrease bias.
  - **Credibility:** Since the data was obtained directly from Dr. Crepeau it is assumed the data is true and credible.

## Data Analysis

- Initial memos were made on the transcription by the researchers..
- The transcription was coded with 32 codes which were analyzed and then grouped into three categories with corresponding themes.
- An assertion was developed to summarize the overall meaning of the data collected.

## Findings



**Assertion**  
Dr. Crepeau made significant contributions to the field of occupational therapy through her involvement in the state and national levels and her unique ways of teaching. She emphasized the importance of finding occupations that advocate and provide an opportunity to individuals to increase meaningful engagement in occupations that lead to desired quality of life.

## Conclusion

- Throughout the course of her career, Dr. Crepeau has significantly contributed to the field of occupational therapy by advocating for best practice across all settings and populations.

Being a part of a larger organization and being able to advocate for the profession has an impact on the future generation of OT.
- Dr. Crepeau has made significant contributions to legislation and advocacy in the field of occupational therapy through her involvement at the state and national levels through the American Occupational Therapy Association.

"It's emphasizing to the legislature the importance of funding for colleges so students can afford to go to school, you know, so it doesn't have to relate just to OT."
- Dr. Crepeau provided a unique perspective to her students as a professor at The University of New Hampshire through the use of self-exploration and self-awareness.

"I loved creating courses and trying to find assignments that students would learn something from, but would also be interesting and fun for them to do."
- Over the course of her career, Dr. Crepeau emphasized the use of providing opportunities that elicit meaningful engagement in occupations that lead to desired quality of life.

"The idea of people engaging in things that they love to do and how that contributes to their health and well-being and to the community is I mean, that's just the central tenant of OT."

## Acknowledgments

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## References

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