

Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Joan Rogers, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA

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Introduction

Purpose

This life history is one of 30 life history interviews which are part of a larger project, *Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) at the National Level and Beyond*. The purpose of this 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.

Description of Participant

Joan Rogers is an accomplished occupational therapist who has contributed to the profession through clinical practice, advocacy, committee involvement, and research. Dr. Rogers earned her OT degree from the University of Southern California in 1968 after receiving a degree in biology from Canisius College in 1966. She got her doctorate in education for psychology/gerontology from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, IL in 1975. Her accomplishments include publishing articles about her research, creating the Performance Assessment of Self-Care Skills, and giving an Eleanor Clarke Slagle lecture regarding clinical reasoning in 1983. Dr. Rogers has extensive involvement in many realms including: AOTA, World Federation of Occupational Therapists, Phi Delta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi, American Psychological Association, Gerontological Society of America, American Education Research Association, National Counsel on the Aging, American Society on Aging, Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association, Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals, American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine, and American Geriatric Society. She has practiced in various settings that include the Edward J Memorial Hospital after receiving her Master's Degree and full-time teaching after receiving her Doctorate Degree, all while maintaining her clinical license. She has taught at the following universities throughout her career: State University of New York at Buffalo, University of Southern California, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Geriatric Education Center of Pennsylvania, Temple University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Throughout her career in teaching, she spent the most time educating the students at the University of Pittsburgh.



Literature Review

- AOTA published the position paper "Licensing and Standards of Competency in Occupational Therapy" and adopted a "Statement of Occupational Therapy Referral" in 1969 (AOTA, 2019).
- In 1972, AOTA created the Government and Legal Affairs Division (GLAD) to address issues related to occupational therapy practice in Congressional legislation (AOTA 2019).
- AOTA approved a position in favor of state licensure in 1974 (AOTA, 2019).

Methodology

- This was a qualitative study done using a life history approach.
- The participant was selected from a participant list compiled through purposive sampling by the project directors.
- Informed consent was obtained and the IRB process was waived by the University of North Dakota; therefore, there were no gatekeeper issues.
- Semi-structured interview questions were guided by a schedule developed by the course instructors.
- Data was gathered from two, one-hour interviews through Zoom, which is a computer video program.
- The interviews were recorded, and later transcribed verbatim.
- Information was also gathered through demographic information prior to the interview as well as Curriculum Vitae provided by participant.

Data Analysis

- Two, one-hour interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and information was analyzed into 19 codes.
- From the 19 codes, the categories of academics, professional life, involvement, and retirement emerged.
- To develop the categories and themes, the researchers used the Kawa Model to decipher information and investigate turning points in the participants life.
- Data was collected by the researchers in multiple ways.
- Trustworthiness of the study included researchers identifying biases regarding the study and feelings of the overall process to increase validity as well as reliability.
- Triangulation included member checking information with the participant to ensure accuracy with the transcription data.

Findings and Discussion

Academics

- Dr. Rogers chose the career path of occupational therapy for many reasons including the challenge of being a health care provider in a less known healthcare field. She ironically shared one reason was finding a book called "Why Joan Chooses OT."
- Dr. Rogers gained degrees through her perseverance and mentorship, but she acknowledged some of the challenges that she had experienced. Dr. Rogers identified the importance of having mentors that supported her passion.
- Dr. Rogers was passionate in seeking out professional education opportunities that enhanced her knowledge and skills, she was willing to relocate and travel to gain these experiences.

Findings and Discussion Cont.

Professional Life

- Dr. Rogers has practiced occupational therapy in various settings and transitioned between different positions across the U.S. to allow her to experience all aspects of OT.
- Dr. Rogers challenging experiences inspired her to seek education and learning opportunities that helped form her personal identity.
- Even though faced with barriers to becoming an occupational therapist and researcher, it was her dedication to the profession that led to her success.

Involvement

- Dr. Roger's passion for occupational therapy has facilitated her motivation to become more involved in leadership opportunities, committees, and boards.
- The many national and local leadership roles that Dr. Rogers held enabled her to advocate for the profession of occupational therapy.
- Dr. Roger's unwavering dedication to the occupational therapy profession was the main priority in her life.

Retirement

- Dr. Roger's devotion to occupational therapy is still portrayed in retirement through her continued involvement within the community and various organizations.
- Dr. Rogers values her role in retirement because of the freedom to do whatever she wants, when she wants!
- Dr. Rogers commitment to the profession has continuous impact on students and colleagues that are still learning and practicing occupational therapy today.

Conclusion

- **Assertion:** Throughout Dr. Rogers career as an occupational therapist, she overcame obstacles through determination and perseverance and made a multitude of contributions to the profession through practice, committee involvement, and research.

Acknowledgement

A special thanks to Joan Rogers for her willingness to participate in this project. We appreciate the experience of learning about her contributions to the practice of occupational therapy.

References

- American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). (2019). Important events. *American Occupational Therapy Association Inc*. Retrieved from <http://www.otcentennial.org/events/1990>