



Thesis Presentation Seminar and Graduation Ceremony

Thursday March 13th 2025

On site at Zürich University of Applied Sciences,

Winterthur / CH

And online via streaming

Welcome to the thesis presentations
regarding occupational therapy and occupational science issues.
You're welcome to listen, learn and ask questions!

Thesis Presentation Seminar and Graduation Ceremony March 13th 2025

The presentations include 15 min presentation by the graduate and 10 min for discussion

13.30-13.35	Welcome and introduction with Debbie Kramer-Roy, Director Education Room MG O1.098, link to be confirmed	
	Thesis presentations A Room MG O1.098, link to be confirmed	Thesis Presentations B Room MG O2.016, link to be confirmed
13.40-14.05	Student: Anisha Vettukallel Moderator: Nora Bilke	Student: Lizzie Andare Moderator: Céline Delmée
Time to change rooms 10'		
14.15-14.40	Student: Virgile Paupelin Moderator: Birgit Stadler	Student: Kim Derksen Moderator: Anisha Vettukallel
Time to change rooms 10'		
14.50-15.15	Student: Céline Delmée Moderator: Virgile Paupelin	Student: Birgit Stadler Moderator: Lizzie Andare
Break 15'		
15.30-15.55		Student: Nora Bilke Moderator: Kim Derksen
15.55-16.15	Break and Social mingling for the presenters, families, friends and staff Outside room MG O1.098	
16.15-17.30	Graduation Ceremony Room O1.098, link to be confirmed	
17.30	Social mingling for the presenters, families, friends and staff Outside room MG O1.098	

Abstracts

(in alphabetical order of last names)

Please note: the following pages contain the abstract of all the theses of the students who are graduating, but not all the theses will be presented in the seminar

Andare Lizzie **(June 2024)**

How do Somali refugees with disabilities living in the Dadaab refugee camp experience occupational disruption from an intersectional perspective; a Short-term Ethnography study

Refugees with disabilities experience challenges transitioning to life in the refugee camp affected by their intersecting identities of having refugee status, living with disabilities and often their gender.

The experiences of six refugees with disabilities were gathered mainly through interviews and participant observation for five weeks in the Dadaab refugee camp, to understand their participation in meaningful activities.

This study uses an intersectional lens to highlight how multiple identities of refugees living with disabilities intersect with each other to create a compounded nature of occupational disruptions created by the conditions of a refugee camp and migration trajectories experienced.

By developing a nuanced understanding of occupational disruptions experienced by refugees with disabilities, occupational therapists and occupational scientists can enable meaningful participation, and improve the quality of the lives of refugees with disabilities.

Keywords: Occupational disruption, intersectionality, refugee status, disability status

Bilke Nora (October 2024)

Cross-cultural validity of the German version of the Writing Readiness Inventory Tool in Context (WRITIC). Applicability of the normative values of the Dutch version of WRITIC for preschoolers in Germany

Background: To date, there is no feasible norm-referenced assessment in Germany that evaluates handwriting readiness in preschoolers in the kindergarten context. The German version of the Writing Readiness Inventory Tool In Context (German-WRITIC) now allows for the identification to identify of pre-handwriting difficulties. Early evaluation of handwriting readiness prevents negative effects on the children's further (academic) development and self-esteem.

Aim: The cross-sectional study investigated the applicability of the Dutch normative values of the WRITIC-Task-Performance (WRITIC-TP) sum score (sum-score-WTP) to the German-WRITIC for preschoolers living in Germany. In addition, it examined if there are statistically significant age and sex differences on WRITIC-TP scores the mean of the sum-score-WTP (mean sum-score-WTP) in the German sample.

Methods: 76 preschoolers (5.5 to 6.5 years old; 39 boys, 37 girls) from German mainstream kindergartens were assessed with the German-WRITIC in mainstream kindergartens in one federal state in Germany, excluding children with any known diagnosis to date. Parent and educator questionnaire gathered additional information about participants, including their socio-economic status. Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied.

Results: There is a statistically significant country difference on the mean sum-score-WTP in handwriting readiness between both countries, in favour of Dutch preschoolers. Girls of the German sample scored achieved a considerably higher on mean sum-scores-WTP WRITIC-Task-Performance ($p=0.001$) than boys indicating a higher ability of handwriting readiness and no age group differences were found.

Conclusion: The results indicate that the normative scores values can be applied to the German- WRITIC with caution for evaluating handwriting readiness in German preschoolers until a larger-scale and representative follow-up study has taken place. Generalizability of the results is limited due to methodological limitations.

Keywords: Handwriting readiness, child, kindergarten, evaluation, assessment, occupational therapy

Chèvre Pauline

(October 2024)

Occupational Performance in Digital- versus Paper-based Exercises after Surgery for Distal Radius Fractures in Switzerland. Feasibility and Preliminary Results of an Ongoing Randomized Controlled Trial¹

Purpose: Healthcare systems worldwide are increasingly focused on telehealth development, including smartphone applications. This approach could greatly influence rehabilitation outcomes after wrist fracture surgery. An ongoing randomized controlled trial is investigating this topic, and our study aims to explore its preliminary results to enhance scientific rigor and reliability.

Method: This multiple case study included participants (N=10) aged 18-65 post-distal radius fracture surgery at a single centre in Switzerland. A home exercise program was provided either (1) by a smartphone application, featuring videos, oral, and written instructions (intervention group), or (2) on paper with pictures and brief written explanations (control group). Feasibility and outcome measures were assessed under the scope of occupational performance at baseline, weeks 6 and 12. Data were stored on REDCap and analysed with SPSS 29.

Results: Although the preliminary analysis suggested that the study procedures appeared feasible and effective, additional measures might be required to meet the recruitment target on time. Similar outcomes among participants in terms of occupational performance, including return to work, performance skills and client factors were observed. However, participants showed more regularity in treatment adherence and greater satisfaction with treatment modality in the intervention group.

Conclusion: Data collection for the ongoing RCT must be completed to obtain significant and generalizable results. Smartphone applications, part of the ongoing global expansion of telehealth, might be considered as a useful, modern and alternative tool for future patient care and occupational therapy.

Keywords: Occupational therapy, hand rehabilitation, wrist fracture, occupational performance, telehealth, digital home exercise program

¹ This thesis will not be presented. If you are interested in the topic, contact ot-euromaster@hva.nl

Delmée Céline

(October 2024)

Purposeful Activities for Stress Regulation: Insights Into Cortisol, Oxytocin, and Their Relevance to Occupational Therapy and Science – A Scoping Review

Objective: This scoping review explores literature on purposeful activities regulating stress in healthy adults, focusing on effects on cortisol, oxytocin, and perceived stress, and identifying shared characteristics.

Introduction: Purposeful activities are structured, goal-directed actions (Pierce, 2001), aimed at regulating stress. Chronic stress affects health and occupational balance, highlighting the need for evidence-based interventions (Hogan et al., 2023; WHO, 2023). While occupational therapy emphasizes meaningful occupations (Fisher, 2013; Wilcock, 2015), purposeful activities may act as effective intermediaries (Pierce, 2001). Hormonal markers like cortisol and oxytocin provide objective measures of physiological effects (Pruessner & Ali, 2015).

Methods: Studies included were healthy adults engaging in purposeful activities, with at least one physiological (cortisol or oxytocin) and one psychosocial (perceived stress) measure, published in English or German between 2012 and 2024. A comprehensive search was conducted in MEDLINE Complete, CINAHL Complete, and APA PsychInfo. Source selection, data extraction, and analysis followed Joanna Briggs Institute guidelines (Peters et al., 2020).

Results: Fourteen studies were reviewed, covering activities like singing, walking, social interactions, mindfulness, nature activities, relaxation. These activities demonstrated potential for stress regulation through positive effects on physiological markers and/or perceived stress. Shared characteristics include solo vs. non-solo, sensory stimulation, physical activity, nature connection, mindfulness and mood influence.

Conclusions: Purposeful activities support stress regulation, enhancing physiological and psychosocial well-being. Understanding hormonal roles can guide occupational therapists and researchers in developing tailored interventions advancing holistic health. Further research is needed across diverse cultural contexts.

Keywords: Purposeful activities, stress regulation, cortisol, oxytocin, occupational therapy, holistic health

Derksen Kim (January 2025)

Understanding Occupational Disruption after hand injury: A scoping review

Background: Hand injuries significantly impact daily activities and independence, often resulting in occupational disruption. Despite this, treatment often focuses on functional limitations, raising tension between the medical and occupational perspectives regarding rehabilitation and how individuals are understood as occupational beings. There is limited knowledge about occupational disruption related to hand injuries and what contributes to this disruption.

Research aim: Therefore, this literature review aimed to map how the literature describes what contributes to occupational disruption in adults following a hand injury.

Method: A scoping review was conducted to map current literature. Three researchers screened the literature and selected studies based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data analysis involved thematic analysis and descriptive statistics.

Results: Fourteen articles were included in the final selection. Hand injuries led to significant occupational disruption lasting over a year, affecting mood and leading to a strong desire for participation. Furthermore, sense of coherence scores were linked to satisfaction in daily occupations and mental quality of life. The literature describes the realization of enduring limitations as a re-evaluation of occupational patterns, often accompanied by frustration and determination to overcome challenges.

Conclusion: Current literature describes hand injuries as significantly disrupting occupations, shifting perspectives and priorities. Recovery is slow, often causing frustration and feelings of inadequacy. Addressing personal resilience, support systems, and systemic barriers through holistic rehabilitation is crucial for reducing occupational disruption and improving outcomes, highlighting areas for further research.

Keywords: Occupational Disruption; Hand injury; Rehabilitation; Occupation

Dubowy Hannah

(October 2024)

Building bridges: a qualitative exploration of the teaching topics of Migration and Displacement related topics in German Occupational therapy Education. A State of the Art Focus Group Discussion²

Background: The lack of standardized frameworks for teaching migration and displacement in the German OT (Occupational Therapy) Curriculum contrasts with the growing urgency of this issue.

Aim: This study aimed to explore the approaches and experiences of educators teaching migration and displacement within the German OT curriculum and provide an overview of the current approaches and insights applied in OT education.

Methods: A focus group of OT Educators and the analysis of 29 resources informed the study. Qualitative descriptive methodology and reflexive thematic analysis was applied.

Findings: Three themes emerged: (1) Adaptive teaching, where flexibility is key but leads to variability; (2) Co-creation of learning, emphasizing reflection, trust, and critical thinking; (3) OT in a changing world, with OT Education shifting from cultural competence to critical reflexivity, focusing on diversity, power dynamics, and political engagement.

Conclusion: Several aspects, closely tied to the principles of critical pedagogy, are considered essential for equipping OT-students to work in the field of migration and displacement.

Keywords: Focus group, Migration, Education, Germany

² This thesis will not be presented. If you are interested in the topic, contact ot-euromaster@hva.nl

Paupelin Virgile

(October 2024)

'I am a human being of the world, and I have the right to live'. Occupational opportunities for refugees in Switzerland

Previous research has shown that refugees are often victims of occupational injustices. As asylum applications continue to rise, it is necessary to examine the relevance of the system's answer to this population to critically explore how occupational opportunities are shaped for and by refugees in Switzerland.

To achieve this aim, I conducted a short critical ethnographical study to better understand the power dynamics and oppressions at the heart of the difficulties faced by refugees. A narrative analysis followed interviews and participant observations based on five individuals with refugee status in Switzerland. The constructed narratives focused on their experiences and the occupational opportunities they developed in Switzerland.

The findings revealed a dominance of the system in shaping their occupational opportunities. This resulted in a reproduction of the neoliberal logic through individualization. Participants having to deploy their personal resources and a lot of energy to obtain opportunities that were meaningful to them. Succeeding in getting occupational opportunities enabled some participants to feel a sense of belonging to Switzerland. The study also highlighted differential treatment based on individual profiles, referencing Mayblin's (2020) necropolitics.

In conclusion, it is crucial to advance research and practice in occupational therapy into individuals from forced migration backgrounds, aiming towards a just world where every individual has the same rights and opportunities to engage in meaningful occupations.

Keywords: Refugee – Occupational Opportunities – Occupational Justice – Critical Ethnography – Narrative

Perrein Marthe

(October 2024)

The lived experience of job satisfaction among occupational therapists practicing in rural areas in France³

Background: The multifaceted concept of rural areas can pose challenges for occupational therapists such as professional isolation, heavy workloads, etc., and may impact their job satisfaction. This research aims to explore the phenomenon of job satisfaction among occupational therapists working in rural areas in France.

Method: Eight occupational therapists working in rural areas in France were individually interviewed using semi-structured interviews about their experience on job satisfaction. Data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis of Smith et al. (2009).

Results: Four themes emerged from the analysis: practicing in rural area as meaningful, being on the road lived as an ambivalent experience, the diversity as a source of enrichment and the organization's structure experienced as nuanced.

Conclusion: Implications of this study suggest that the phenomenon of job satisfaction is important to consider in occupational therapists' work setting and measures should be taken by organizations.

Keywords: occupational therapy, job satisfaction, rural areas, lived experience

³ This thesis will not be presented. If you are interested in the topic, contact ot-euromaster@hva.nl

Stadler Birgit (January 2025)

Listening to migrant “Mantelzorgers” in the Netherlands. Experiences in occupational identity formation of informal carers with migration background while caring for survivors of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) in the Netherlands: a secondary thematic analysis

Background: The objective of this research is to understand how informal carers with a migration background perceive their occupational identity (OI) while providing care for survivors of ABI in the Netherlands. It delves into key factors influencing occupational identity formation and examines how cultural experiences shape caregiving roles. It intends to comprehensively understand the intersection between migration, caregiving, and occupational identity.

Methods: A qualitative research design has been chosen. The study is informed by a phenomenological background and a constructivist framework, assuming multiple realities governed by social processes (Silverman, 2021). Thematic analysis is used with reference to a secondary analysis of 6 single interviews and two dialogue sessions.

Findings: Key themes are the interplay between informal care and culture, sacrifice and emotional toll of caregiving, struggles with the public healthcare system and long-term adaptation strategies. The study highlights the role of cultural expectations in caregiving decisions and the need for tailored resources. The complex interplay between personal resilience, cultural influences, and the availability of external support in shaping OI is revealed.

Conclusion: The need for more diverse and inclusive support frameworks that address the specific needs of caregivers from various backgrounds is emphasised. Essential is a broader understanding of informal caregiving in the context of migration and the interplay with OI. These insights can inform policymaking, healthcare practices, and support services to improve the quality of life for informal caregivers, care recipients and their environment.

Keywords: occupational identity, informal care, migrant informal carers

Vettukallel Anisha

(January 2025)

*Community mobility of older women with migration background in Switzerland
Impact of ageing on community mobility, social participation & sense of belonging*

Background: Older migrants remain underrepresented in research within Switzerland and Europe, despite their growing significance. Research highlighted that the existing knowledge base and findings on unmet community mobility needs are rendering unrepresentative of all older adults. Such unmet needs restrict access to meaningful activities and life spaces, reducing social participation, which is essential for health. This study explores how community mobility needs are connected to social participation of older women with migration background in Switzerland from an occupational perspective.

Methods: Semi structured interviews and participatory occupation sessions were conducted with four participants. Reflexive thematic analysis was employed to examine the impact of aging on community mobility, social participation, and sense of belonging to both home and host countries, synthesizing the data into main themes.

Results: Two main themes were identified: (1) the role of community mobility in navigating belonging and (2) aging in the host country. The second theme included two subthemes: (2a) managing age-related changes and (2b) navigating later-life events. These subthemes highlighted how individuals adapted their community mobility needs and relied on support from their social environment to sustain social participation and maintain a sense of belonging to both home and host countries.

Conclusion: Further occupational science research and practice from a public health perspective is needed to address potential injustices, such as unmet community mobility needs, and ensure equitable access to meaningful occupations, which support social participation and enhance health among older adults from diverse backgrounds.

Keywords: older women, migration, community mobility, social participation, occupational deprivation



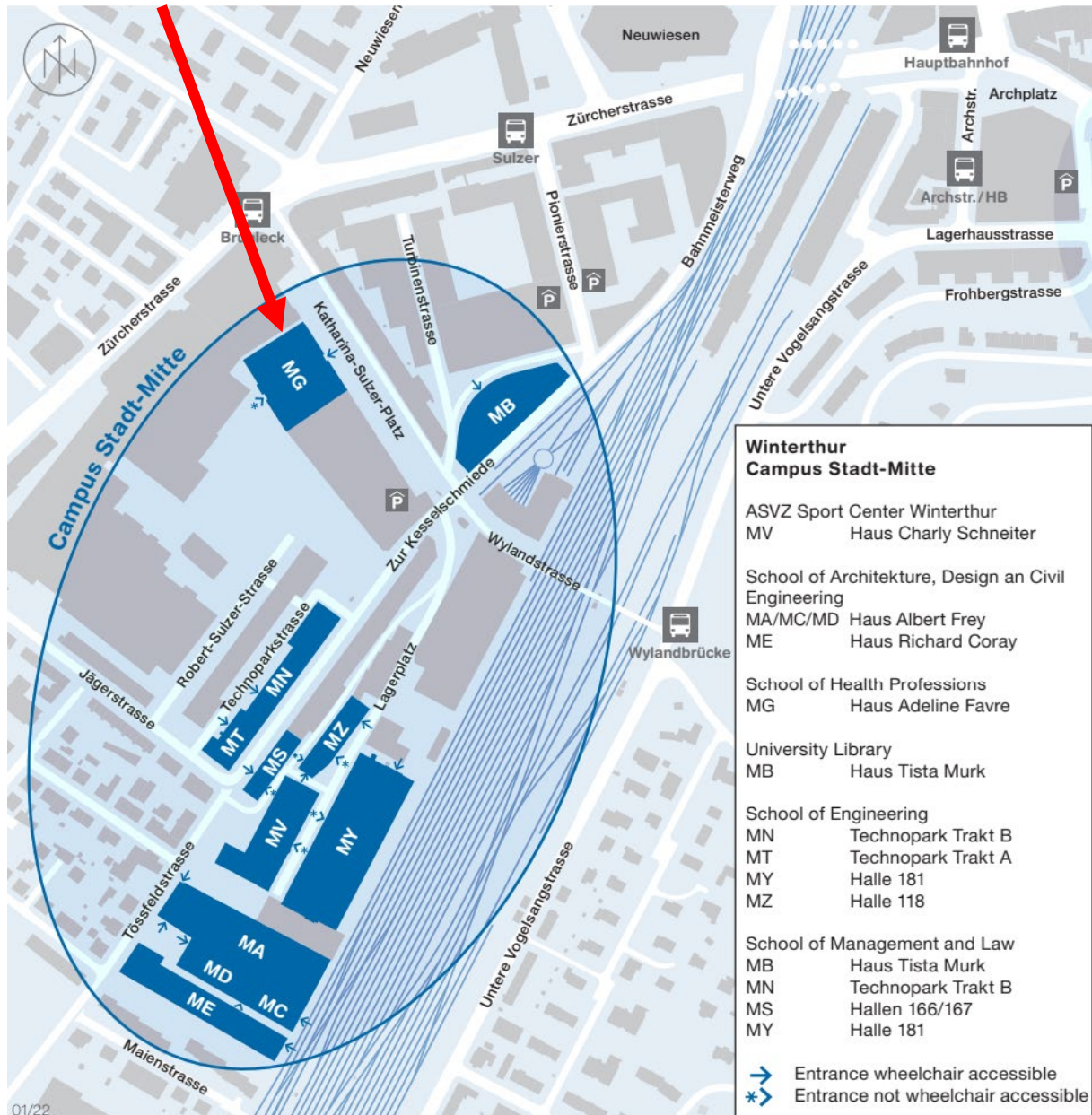
Finding your way around the School of Health Sciences at ZHAW ([link to online map](#))

The building MG is called “Haus Adeline Favre”.

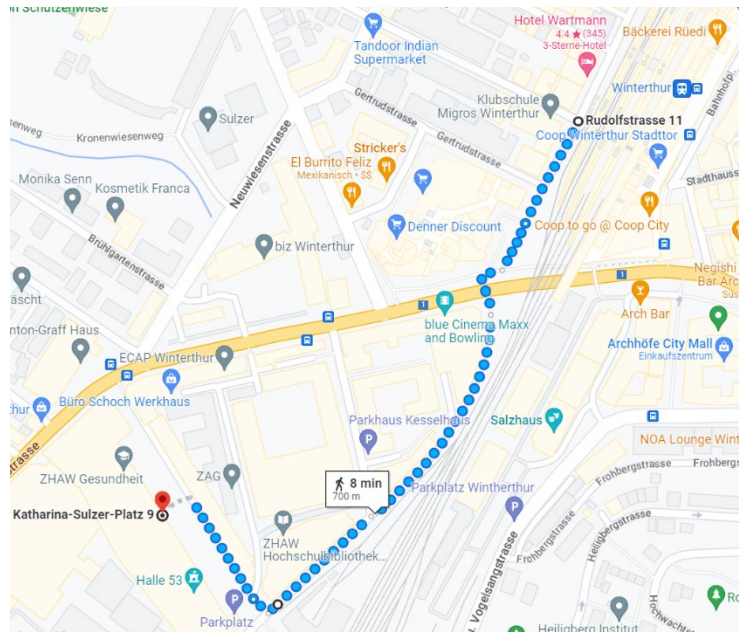
Postal address: Haus Adeline Favre, Katharina-Sulzer-Platz 9, 8401 Winterthur

The Thesis Presentation Seminar and graduation ceremony will take place on the first floor.

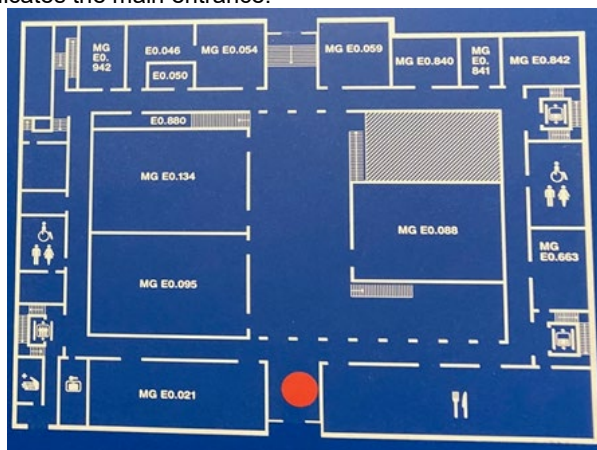
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How to get to the campus: a 10 min. walk from the Winterthur train station.



Ground floor: the red dot indicates the main entrance:



1st floor: the thesis presentations and graduation ceremony start in MG O1.098

