Applying the Person-Environment-Occupation Model to a DCD population

Sally Payne
Occupational Therapist
What is occupational therapy?
What’s special about OT?
What a model of practice does

- Provides a framework to:
  - Define the scope & boundaries of a profession
  - Describe its fundamental principles & values
  - Guide assessment, intervention & evaluation practices
The Plan

- To describe the PEO model
- Apply this to children & young people with DCD
- Present a case study
The PEO model

- First described by Law et al 1996
- Doesn’t prescribe specific assessments or methods of intervention
- Guides clinical reasoning about what we choose & why
Occupational Performance

- How a person manages the everyday activities that occupy them at home, at school/work or at play/during leisure time.

- Activities = things we do to fulfil our life roles
Person-Environment-Occupation Model of Practice (Law et al 1996)
Person

- Skills & abilities
  - Muscle strength, visual-perception, cognitive abilities
- Intrinsic motivation, values & goals
- Each person is unique
- “Person” could also apply to a group of people e.g. students with a disability in a school
Environment

- Physical
- Sensory
- Social
- Cultural
- Institutional
Occupation

- Groups of activities that help a person be for example:
  - A student
  - A player
  - A brother
  - A friend

- Includes:
  - Writing an essay, riding a skateboard, playing football, making a snack
The PEO fit

Figure 1
The Person-Environment-Occupation (PEO) Model (Law et al., 1996)

Reproduced from the Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 63, p.15
The PEO applied to people with DCD

- **Person**
  - Difficulties with motor coordination
  - Poor organisation
  - Deficits in working memory
  - Unusual sensory processing patterns
  - Emotional factors
The PEO applied to people with DCD

- **Environment**
  - Psychosocial – home & school
  - Physical
  - Sensory
  - Cultural
  - Institutional
The PEO applied to people with DCD

- Occupation
  - Self-care
  - School
  - Leisure
PEO & assessments

- Person
  - Movement ABC, VMI, Bruininks

- Environment
  - Access audits, parts of SFA

- Occupation
  - DASH, Pediatric Interest Profiles
Assessing occupational performance
Multiple avenues for intervention

- **Person** – component skills e.g. strength, balance, coordination, social skills
- **Environment** – raising awareness, physical adaptations, visual timetables
- **Occupation** – handwriting programmes, visual prompts for dressing, teach to ride a bike
Case Study: Scot

- 13 years
- Verbal dyspraxia
- Areas of concern:
  - Using cutlery
  - Tying shoe laces
  - Handwriting speed & presentation
  - General “clumsiness”
Assessments used

- Occupational performance
  - Self-care questionnaire
  - Occupational interview
  - ADL AMPS
    - Bowl of cereal & cold drink
    - Changing sheets on the bed
  - Interview with school staff
- School AMPS
  - Maths lesson drawing graphs
Needs identified

- Person
  - Poor balance
  - Difficulty positioning body
  - Difficulty using two hands together
  - Poor manipulative skills
Needs identified

- **Home Environment**
  - Could be quite focussed
  - Routines & accommodations support performance
  - Good use of visual timetables & colour coding
  - Very supportive parents
    - Person first, disability second
Needs identified

○ School environment
  ● Practical strategies work well but not applied by all staff
  ● Some staff encouraged Scott to speak out in class, but not all
  ● Support assistants enabled Scott to benefit from lesson but may provide too much help
  ● Difficulty staying focused
  ● Didn’t record work in planner
Occupation

- Difficulty producing *written work* in class
- **Dressing** – unable to tie shoe laces or tie
- **Snack preparation** – difficulty handling equipment & organising task
Intervention

- **Writing** – computer assessment & alternative writing tools
- **Skill training** to tie laces
- Provide Dycem & kitchen equipment
- **Visual task organiser** to make a snack
Conclusion

- Occupational performance is the result of the *dynamic relationship* between the person, their environment and their activities.
- Relationships vary across the lifespan.
- The PEO model provides *multiple options* for assessment, intervention and outcome evaluation.