



# Centering client perspectives

Melissa Park, MA OT PhD  
School of Physical & Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences, McGill University

**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium


1

---

## Three Movements

- I. Constraints on centering client perspectives in A-SI/SP
- II. Matters of fact to matters of concern
  - Making scenes that matter
  - Eidetic reduction (or imaginary variation)
- III. Epistemic justice in the age of self-advocacy

2



## Constraints on centering client perspectives

**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

3

## Therapist perspectives on ASI (Rahman, Kadar & Harun, 2022)


### Challenges with process elements

| Core process elements                            | Challenges faced   |
|--|--|
| Ensure physical safety                           | Inadequate training<br>Resource issues<br>Physical constraints         |
| Present of sensory opportunities                 | Resource issues<br>Physical constraints                                |
| Support sensory modulation                       | Resource issues<br>Physical constraints                                |
| Facilitating praxis and organization of behavior | Resource issues<br>Physical constraints<br>Time constraints            |
| Therapist-child collaboration                    | Inadequate training<br>Physical constraints<br>Time constraints        |
| Provide just-right challenges                    | Resource issues<br>Physical constraints                                |
| Maximize child's success                         | Limited information/support provided by family<br>Physical constraints |
| Create play context                              | Inadequate training  |
| Establish therapeutic alliance                   | Inadequate training  |

### Challenges with structural elements


| Core process elements                   | Challenges faced  |
|---|---|
| Safe environment                        | Physical constraints<br>Resource issues<br>Limited support from management<br>Time constraints  |
| Record review                           | Limited information/support provided by suppliers<br>Inadequate training<br>Resource issues<br>Limited information/support provided by family |
| Physical space                          | Time constraints<br>Resource issues<br>Physical constraints   |
| Equipment currently available           | Resource issues<br>Physical constraints   |
| Communication with parents and teachers | Time constraints<br>Inadequate training<br>Limited information/support provided by family   |
| Equipment availability                  | Inadequate training<br>Resource issues<br>Physical constraints<br>Implementing Evidence-Based Practice  |

4




## Therapist perspectives on ASI (Rahman, Kadar & Harun, 2022)

| Challenges with structural elements  | Challenges with process elements   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical constraints (4)</li> <li>• Resource issues (5)</li> <li>• Inadequate training (3)</li> <li>• Time constraints (3)</li> <li>• Limited information/support provided by family (2)</li> <li>• Limited support from management (1)</li> <li>• Limited support provided by suppliers (1)</li> <li>• Implementing evidence-based practice (1)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical constraints (7)</li> <li>• Resource issues (5)</li> <li>• Inadequate training (4)</li> <li>• Time constraints (2)</li> <li>• Limited support provided by family (1)</li> </ul> |




5




## ASI: Parent perspectives (Smit, de Jongh & Cook, 2023)

- Poor collaboration, accessibility and trust
- OT/ST procedures:
  - Sensory integration “jargon”
  - Homework (i.e., time consuming and exhausting home programs)
  - Achieving the “just right” challenge

- A core element of the OT/ST intervention process that may apply here is “creates a context of play by building on the child’s intrinsic motivation and enjoyment of activities”.
- As occupational therapists we are challenged to adhere to these elements of OT/ST intervention [...] This may account for perceptions regarding sessions as “tedious” or “boring” [or alternatively as] “exhausting.”




6



## Clinical reasoning (Mattingly, 1991a/b, 1994, 1998)


**Procedural Reasoning** ↔ **Narrative Reasoning**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>To explain<br/>Generalities</b></p> <p><b>JARGON</b></p> <p>Function, adaptation<br/>"tedious" "boring"<br/>"exhausting"</p> | <p><b>To understand<br/>Particularities</b></p> <p><b>STORIES</b></p> <p>Values, meaning<br/>"enjoyment"</p> |
|--|--|




**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

7



**But that's the first thing to go, I think, the fun part. That's the first thing that we're willing to let go [...] and kids can be kicking and screaming, but it's like, "Gotta get this goal in," or "Gotta practice it," because that's your goal.**

Chloe SIPT-certified occupational therapist, 2000



**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

8




# Matters of fact to-and matters of concern

Jargon to-and stories from an ethnography in a sensory integration-based clinic

**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

9




## Philosophical concepts

- **scene** (Burke, 1969)
- **eidetic reduction as imaginary variation** (Husserl in Davidson, 2003)
- **epistemic justice (testimonial and hermeneutic)** (Fricker, 2017)

**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

10




## Ethnography

**“[T]o clarify what goes on in such places,  
to reduce the puzzlement”** (p. 16)


**“Ethnographic findings are not privileged, just particular:  
another country heard from”** (p. 18)

(Geertz, 1973)



**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

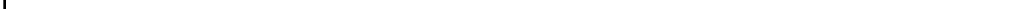
11



## Making scenes that matter

1. Listen for what matters, in their precise terms
2. Practice eidectic reduction, using their precise terms (hermeneutic resources)
3. Build on these shared hermeneutical resources to make decisions-  
*with* clients to realize hoped for selves/scenes

(Park, 2008; Thomas, Kuper, Chin-Yee & Park, 2020)



**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

12

Jade & Archer




13

JADE: What are we going to do today?  
ARCHER: I am a fish, and you are the blue fish.

14



15




**DORY:** Hold on!  
**MARLIN:** Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. I. Can't. Do. It.  
**ARCHER:** I-, I-, can't-  
**DORY:** Yes you can.  
**MARLIN:** -get up the ladder any more. I can't do it!  
**DORY:** Get up.  
**MARLIN :** I CAN'T!  
**ARCHER :** My fingers are slipping down.  
**JADE:** Put your feet down then. Put your feet down.

16






17



## Eidetic reduction (Husserl in Davidson, 2003: 90-91)

**“A technique of varying the details of an object in one's imagination in order to determine which aspects of the object are essential to its being what it is. [...] We can vary these particular details in our imagination in order to assess the status of these various aspects.”**

1. *Vary the details of a someone's narrative in one's imagination to determine which details are essential or really matter to that person;*
2. *Entertain in one's imagination the possibility of an alternative twist in the plot of an unfolding narrative;*
3. *Frame the variation in the words and the details of the person's unfolding narrative.*



18



## Eidetic reduction (Husserl in Davidson, 2003: 90-91)

**“A technique of varying the details of the **desired scene** in one's imagination in order to determine which aspects of the **scene** are essential to its being what it is. [...] We can vary these particular details in our imagination in order to assess the status of these various aspects.”**

1. *Vary the details of a someone's narrative in one's imagination to determine which details are essential or really matter to that person;*
2. *Entertain in one's imagination the possibility of an alternative twist in the plot of an unfolding narrative;*
3. *Frame the variation in the words and the details of the person's unfolding narrative.*

**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

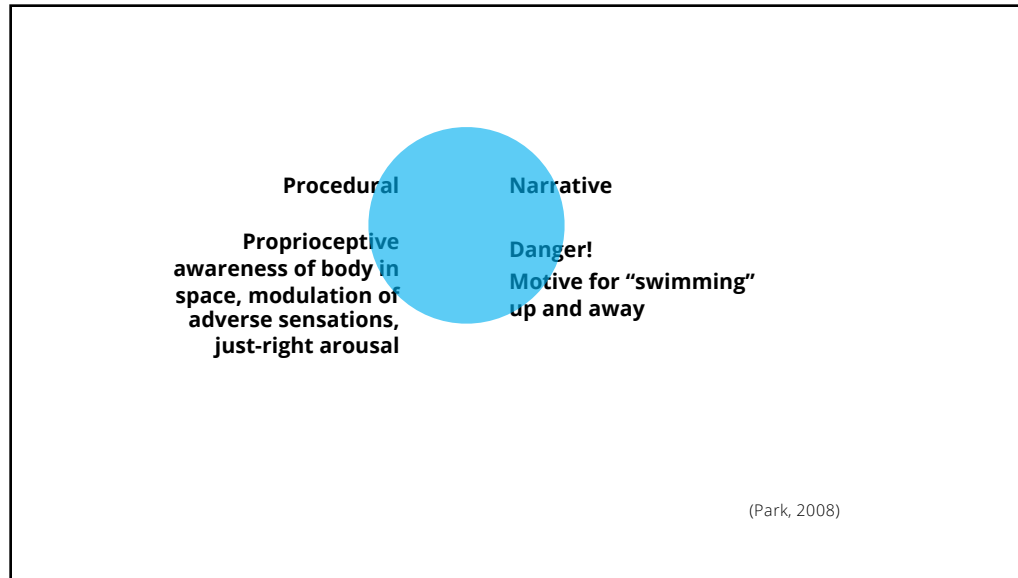
19



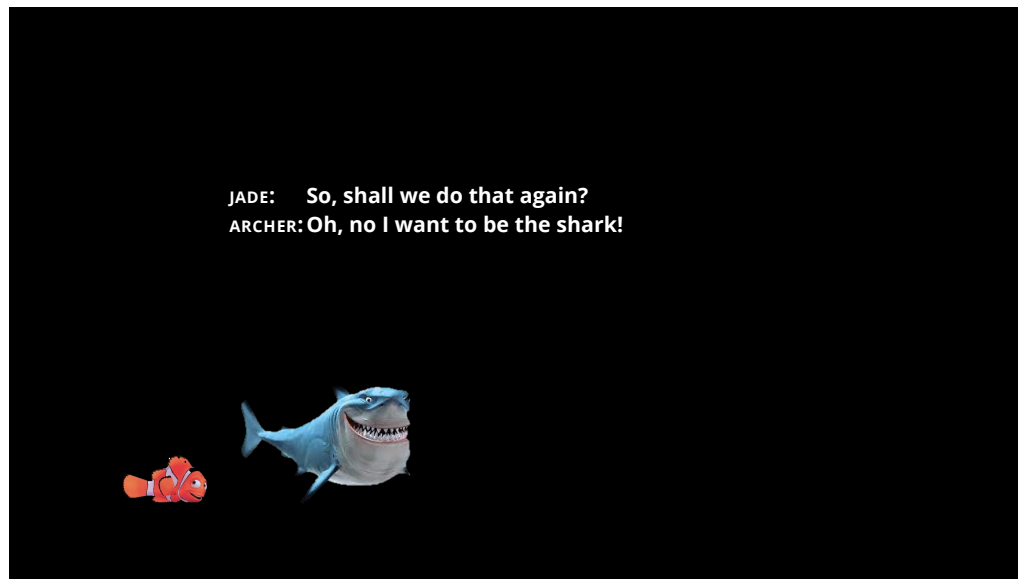
JADE:  
safe,  
and  
DORY:  
ARCHER:

So, he's going to be passing by three times, and you are able to stay on to be okay? So, he may go, > bump< you a little bit! or >bump< you this way, ohhh, then this way.  
Good job, you made it! The pass-, the shark passed you by and you didn't-, you did not get hurt!  
I did it!

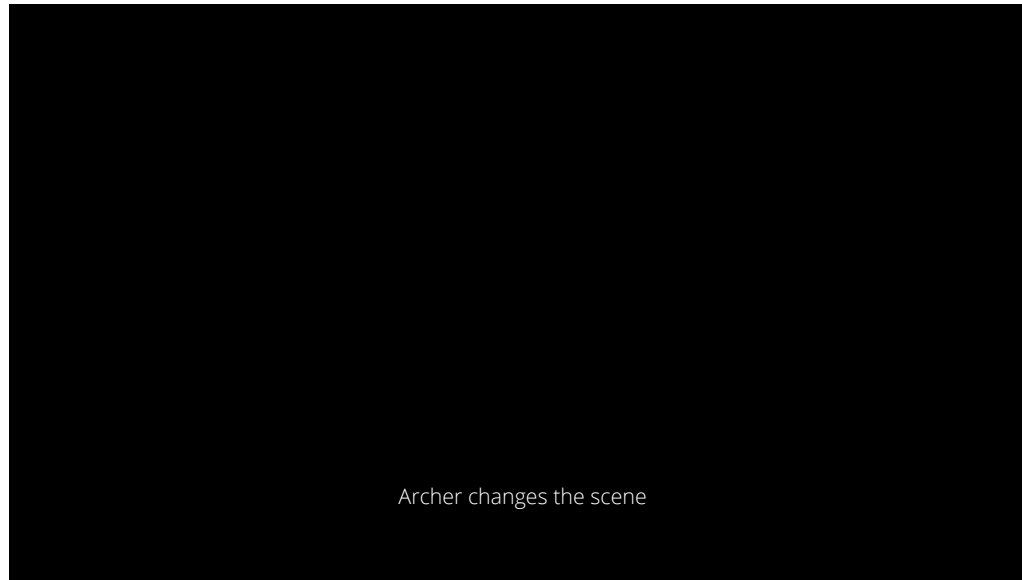
20



21



22



23



24



## Acts can change scenes, to be in keeping with the agent

(Burke, 1969)

1. She listens to what matters to Archer
2. His actions change the scene from ocean to jungle
3. From being a **small fish** tossed around by the waves to shark to being T-rex ("king") grounded on land (ex. in Park, 2008)

**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

25

**"a context of play building on the child's intrinsic  
motivation and enjoyment of activities"**

26



27

A white rectangular area with a black border containing text and logos.

**It's more just trying not to feel so much like he's just doing what I want him to do versus something that he enjoys doing and is part of. I think it's more making it an **enjoyable** experience for him. Like, it's something he would actually want to do, even if I wasn't there.**

Chloe (c. 2000) SIPT-certified occupational therapist

**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

28



**DYLAN:** That's-, ...that's good! I want to see it! (Chloe's patient)

29

**CHLOE:** Where should we go today?  
**DYLAN:** We got to take friends to see the dinosaur-  
**CHLOE:** Okay  
**DYLAN:** -museum

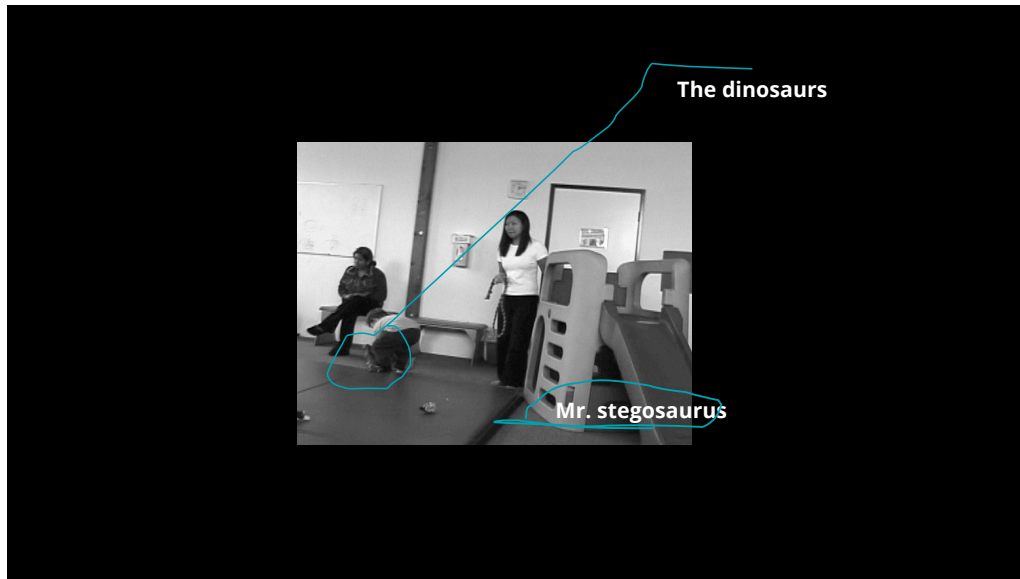


**CHLOE:** Okay, so where are your friends? Let's go...

30



31



32





conflict

33



**DYLAN : Look it-, the dinosaurs are sad (wistfully), they want the stegosaurus...**

34



CHLOE : If it's not his way, he's like "I don't want to play with you guys."  
So its great to expand on his ideas, but it's not really helping him peer-wise. So that's why I was like, "Well, let me push this a little more."

35

Please see hand out for client and occupational therapy perspectives.

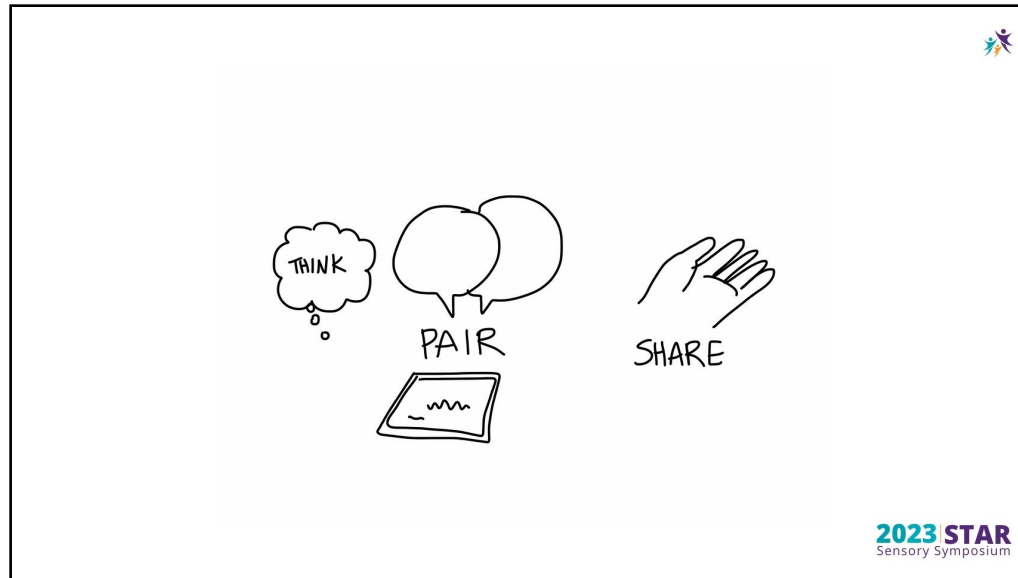


Using Dylan and his mother's precise terms, what eidetic variations might you propose which could make a scene that matters to Dylan *and* elicit an adaptive response?



2023 STAR  
Sensory Symposium

36



37

DYLAN : Chloe, I'm scared.  
CHLOE: (*concerned*) What are you afraid of?  
DYLAN : Unhhh, there's a twister.

38



CHLOE : Oh, there's a twister coming? Then you'd better get in your car.

39

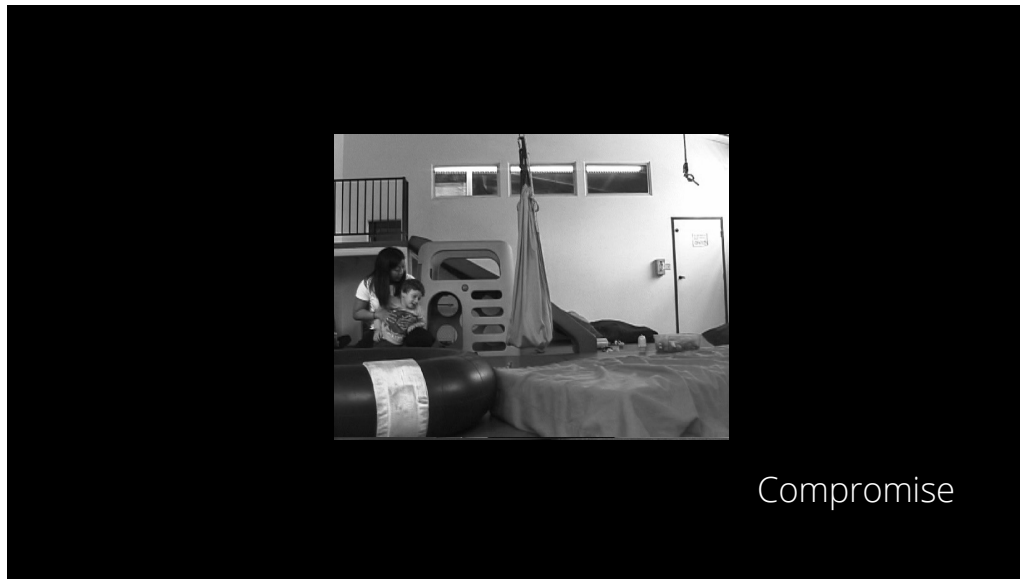


DYLAN: (*exasperated*) No, a car will get up! I want to be the twister!"

40

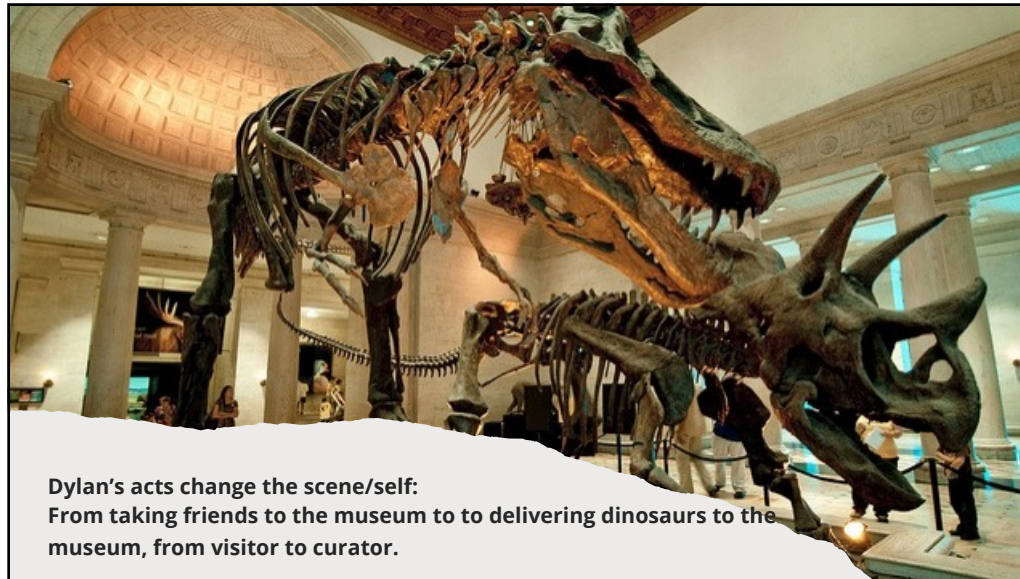


41



Compromise

42



Dylan's acts change the scene/self:  
From taking friends to the museum to to delivering dinosaurs to the  
museum, from visitor to curator.

43




DYLAN : Baby's crying!

44



45

**Procedural**



**Narrative**

The dynamic of a storm system is the dynamic of interpersonal life; one is the objective correlative of the other.

(Jackson, 1998:169)

46




47



48






# (Structural) scenes that matter

Epistemic justice and terms

**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

49



## Centering client perspectives as epistemic justice (Fricker, 2017)

**Testimonial justice : What are we going to do today?  
Where do you want to go today?**

**Hermeneutic justice : T-rex, Twisters...**

**2023 STAR**  
Sensory Symposium

50



## Definitions (Fricker, 2017: 54-55)


**Unintended discrimination**

- 1. Testimonial injustice**
  - *the hearer makes a special kind of misjudgement of the speaker's credibility – one actually clouded by prejudice.*
  - *discriminatory but ingenuous misjudgement*
- 2. Hermeneutic injustice\***
  - *the hearer who cannot understand because there is a lack of sufficiently shared concepts with the speaker*
  - *not deliberately manipulating, concealing, or blanking anything*

\* **requires significantly more than slight interpersonal hermeneutical empowerments; "virtuous" listening can only erode**





51



## So, do we use identity-first, person-first or "on the autism spectrum"

- 1. Consider the majority preference for specific language**
- 2. Use terms in the ways determined by the disability community that coined them**
- 3. Use **precise** descriptors of the characteristics rather than functioning labels (i.e., vary with context), more accurate descriptors in comparison studies (e.g., non-autistic, comparison or control group), and avoid negative or vague descriptors (e.g., challenging behavior, autistic traits) (Bottema-Beutel, Kapp, Lester, Sasson, & Hand, 2021)**

Or ...

52

## Selected Citations



- Bottema-Beutel, K., Kapp, S. K., Lester, J. N., Sasson, N. J., & Hand, B. N. (2021). Avoiding Ableist Language: Suggestions for Autism Researchers. *Autism Adulthood*, 3(1), 18-29. doi:10.1089/aut.2020.0014
- Burke, K. (1969[1945]). *A grammar of motives*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Davidson, L. (2003). Eliciting narratives. In *Living outside mental illness: Qualitative studies of recovery in schizophrenia* (pp. 61-92). New York: New York University Press.
- Fricker, M. (2017). Evolving concepts of epistemic injustice. In K. Medina & J. Pohlhaus G Jr (Editors) *Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*. Routledge Handbooks in Philosophy, pp. 53-60.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. USA: Basic Books
- Jackson, M. (1998). *Minima ethnographic: intersubjectivity and the anthropological project*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Mattingly, C. (1991). What is clinical reasoning? *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 45(11), 979-986.
- Mattingly, C. (1991). The narrative nature of clinical reasoning. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 45(11), 998-1005.
- Mattingly, C. (1998). *Healing dramas and clinical plots: The narrative structure of experience*. New York: Cambridge University.
- Mattingly, C. (2000). Emergent narratives. In C. Mattingly & L. C. Garro (Eds.), *Narrative and the cultural construction of illness and healing* (pp. 181-211). Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Mattingly, C., & Fleming, M. H. (1994). *Clinical reasoning: forms of inquiry in a therapeutic practice*. Philadelphia: F.A. Davis.
- Park, M. (2008). Making scenes: Imaginative practices for a child with autism in an occupational therapy session. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 22(3), 234-256.
- Park, M. (2010). Beyond calculus: Apple-apple-apple-ike and other embodied pleasures for a child diagnosed with autism in a sensory integration based clinic. *Disability Studies Quarterly: Special Topic: Autism and Neurodiversity*, 30(1).
- Park, M. (2012). Pleasure, throwing breaches, and embodied metaphors: tracing transformations-in-participation for a child with autism to a sensory integration-based therapy session. *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*, 32(1 Suppl), S34-S47.
- Rahman, F. S., Kadar, M., & Harun, D. (2022). Ayres Sensory Integration @ Implementation in Malaysian Occupational Therapists: Challenges and Limitations. *Jurnal Sains Kesihatan Malaysia*, 20(2), 117-128.
- Schmit, J., de Jongh, J.-C., & Cook, R. A. (2018). The facilitators and barriers encountered by South African parents regarding sensory integration occupational therapy. *South African Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 48(3). doi:10.17159/2310-3833/2017/vol48n3a7