

**ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF CLINICAL OCCUPATIONAL
THERAPY RECORDS KEPT AT SCHOOLS FOR LEARNERS
WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN THE WESTERN
CAPE**

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the degree of
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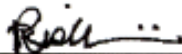
Cape Town, 2008

Candidate's declaration

I, Renee Antoinette Rischmüller declare that this research report is my own work.
I received assistance from Denise Franzsen as my supervisor.

I received assistance from Steven Olorunju with the sampling and analysis of the data from the checklists.

It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Science in Occupational Therapy in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other University



Renee Antoinette Rischmüller

sixth day of November 2008

To
my husband, Carel-J Rischmüller
for his ongoing love and support.

Abstract

This research report compares what occupational therapists working at schools for learners with special educational needs (LSEN) think is important to record with what is recorded in the learners' occupational therapy files. Six clinical occupational therapists completed a questionnaire by grading items according to their level of importance in maintaining occupational therapy records. The researcher did an audit on 76 learners' occupational therapy files at four LSEN schools. The results indicated a vast discrepancy between what the occupational therapist viewed as important and what was actually recorded in the learners' files. The occupational therapists viewed most items as being very important to record (84.2%), yet the items were seldom recorded in the learners' files (33.3%). The researcher used the results to develop an adjusted checklist that could be used by occupational therapists at LSEN schools to audit their own records and as a guideline for record keeping.

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Nomenclature

LSEN School: Schools for learners with special educational needs. These were previously known as “Special Schools” and in the future most of these schools will be converted to “Resource Centers” in accordance with White Paper 6¹.

Learner: A child that is registered at a specific school.

File: Documents or information about a specific person².

Record: The information that the clinical occupational therapist collects on a learner and records in the learner’s file.

Item: A single piece of information as specified in the checklist or questionnaire.

Checklist: The list of information that the researcher makes use of to determine whether an item is present in a learner’s file.

Questionnaire: A set of questions (items) on a form, used to collect the opinions of clinical occupational therapists working in LSEN schools.

Interview: A formal discussion² where the researcher asks the clinical occupational therapist questions regarding their record keeping.

Biomedical Approach: A medical framework that considers illness to be caused by identifiable agents³.

Socio-medical Approach: An approach to health and illness that focuses on the social and environmental factors for example poverty, diet and housing conditions⁴.

ABBREVIATIONS

LSEN – Learners with special educational needs

OT – Occupational therapist / occupational therapy

IEDP – Individual educational development plan

FET – Further education and training

EMDC – Education management and development centre

HPCSA – Health Professions Council of South Africa