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## The Social Profiles of Occupational Therapy Students' Educational Groups

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## The Social Profiles of Occupational Therapy Students' Educational Groups

### Abstract

**Background:** Today's occupational therapy models emphasize that a person's choice of, satisfaction with, and performance in occupations are markedly influenced by the context. For students undergoing a group-based study module, the group is an important context factor. Until recently, there has been a lack of instruments available for the assessment of functioning and participation at the group level. This mixed methods pilot study aimed to examine occupational therapy students' perceptions of their group's level of functioning and course of development during one study module.

**Methods:** The students' perceptions of their group's functioning were assessed in two ways: by examining their scores on the Social Profile (SP), a new instrument, and by examining their qualitative descriptions of the groups and how the groups developed over time. The sample consisted of four occupational therapy students.

**Results:** Two students perceived their group functioning as stable over time. One student's scores indicated an increase in group functioning over time, whereas one student's showed a decrease. The interview statements showed varying degrees of connectedness with the SP items.

**Conclusions:** Descriptions of stability and change corresponded very well with the students' SP trajectories, indicating content validity of the assessment as a whole.

### Comments

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### Keywords

Social Profile, group functioning, social participation, occupational therapy, students

### Credentials Display

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Assessment is at the core of both research and practice in the occupational therapy profession (Kielhofner, 2008; Laver-Fawcett, 2007). Making judgments about the nature and quality of a phenomenon (assessment) often involves some kind of measurement of its central characteristics (Kielhofner, 2006; Polit & Beck, 2004). The phenomena under scrutiny may be personal characteristics, such as motivation, anxiety, or occupational performance. However, phenomena may also be related to more complex and higher-order units, like social groups (Forsyth, 2006). Today's occupational therapy models emphasize that a person's choice of, satisfaction with, and performance in occupations are markedly influenced by the context—the physical, social, institutional, and cultural environment (Kielhofner, 2008; Townsend & Polatajko, 2007).

In light of the above reasoning, the authors generally assume that the characteristics of a social group—a context factor assessed at the group level—will have a marked impact on its individual members. Studies from the group psychotherapy literature are in support of this assumption, as a recent study showed that group members who perceived the group climate as highly engaged also experienced a long-lasting favorable outcome (symptom reduction) from therapy (Bonsaksen, Borge, & Hoffart, 2013). Applied to the educational context of the present study, the authors similarly assume that occupational therapy students are influenced by educational groups, in which a part of their studies take place. The sharing and discussion among motivated students in groups has been considered an important aspect of a positive learning

environment, much because groups emulate the communities of practice that are found in real-life professional work (Fearon, McLaughlin, & Eng, 2012). However, a study of nursing students found that students who felt discomfort with their group were more prone to display a surface approach to learning, compared to the deeper approach among students who were more at ease with their group (Beccaria, Kek, Huijser, Rose, & Kimmins, 2014). Therefore, an assessment of group level functioning is warranted, as it would enable predictions about the students' thriving and satisfaction in the group, as well as their subsequent academic performance.

Not only does a group have an effect on its members, but group members also highly influence the group and how it functions as a whole (Forsyth, 2006; Yalom & Leszcz, 2005). Groups composed of adolescents, for example, may function differently from groups composed of mature adults. In a similar way, it can be assumed that a person's attitude toward the group, and how he or she acts in relation to it, plays a part in shaping the group experience for all of its members (Forsyth, 2006). Attitudes may concern how much the person enjoys being in the group, or it may concern how much personal benefit he or she believes will come from the group experience. Actions, however, may speak louder than words. Actual presence in the group is important for building the group culture, whereas having time-demanding obligations elsewhere—for example, a part-time job—may make attendance in study groups challenging.

To date, however, the occupational therapy literature is sparse when it comes to assessments of group level participation and functioning in

activity groups. Law, Baum, and Dunn (2005) reported no such assessments in their comprehensive overview of assessments. Hemphill-Pearson (2008) did include a relatively crude assessment on group membership, adapted from Mosey's writings about groups in occupational therapy practice (1986), but with no accompanying information concerning its validity. The index provided by Asher (2007) included a chapter on assessments of social skills and interaction skills, but only one of the assessments included the possibility of group level assessment. With this assessment, called the Social Profile (SP), Donohue built further on Mosey's views on social interaction in groups, which culminated in a revised assessment of social participation in activity groups (Donohue, 2013). One important feature of the SP is that it can be used to measure the level of social participation both in individuals and in groups, depending on the purpose of the therapist or researcher using it. The measure has undergone extensive psychometric testing, the results of which have been promising. However, it has never before been used in an educational context with a student sample.

In summary, assessment is considered crucial both to practice and to research in the occupational therapy profession, and the impact of the environment on the individual is emphasized in most conceptual models of occupation. However, available assessments appear to have focused largely on the individual rather than on contextual factors. The impact of group functioning on its individual members may be large, but assessments of group level participation and functioning have been lacking. A new assessment in this area, the SP (Donohue, 2013),

appears to be promising. Its use in an educational context with a young adult student sample, however, has not previously been explored. Moreover, a mixed methods design study, allowing for comparisons of the SP scores with the participants' interview statements, represents an innovative way of examining its validity.

### **Aim of the Study**

This study aimed to explore a new social participation assessment by examining occupational therapy students' perceptions of their group's level of social participation and course of development during one module of their occupational therapy training. The students' perceptions of their group's social participation were assessed from two different angles: by examining their SP scores (Donohue, 2013) and by examining their qualitative descriptions of the groups and how the groups developed over time.

### **Methods**

This study reports from a pilot study using a mixed methods design. The authors collected data with the SP (Donohue, 2013) at four time points in order to examine changes in the students' perceptions of group level functioning. At the conclusion of the project, the authors interviewed the participants about their experiences in the educational groups.

### **Educational Groups**

At the start of the module, all of the students were assigned to a group consisting of four to six student members. The purpose of the student groups was to provide an arena for peer support related to the study topics and materials, but also to provide an experience with forming and developing relationships in a group. The teacher (first author), who did not know the

students before they started the module, randomly composed the groups. There was no specific guidance or requirements in terms of how the student groups should be structured, but group members were expected to meet in person regularly and at designated times. The study module had a duration of 10 weeks.

### **Recruitment and Data Collection**

The first author recruited the study sample from one cohort of undergraduate occupational therapy students in Oslo in August 2014. Being a student in this particular cohort of students was the only inclusion criteria, and there were no exclusion criteria. The teacher provided information about the study in the classroom, and asked the students to volunteer for participation (self-selection procedure). No particular incentives or rewards were provided for the participants, other than learning about the assessment. Baseline data, using the SP (Donohue, 2013) and the demographic questionnaire, was collected about two weeks into the educational module. The three subsequent assessments with the SP (Donohue, 2013) were conducted with an approximate two week interval between them. The individual interviews were conducted approximately one week after the last SP assessment.

### **Training**

All of the participants took part in a one-hour seminar prior to completing the first questionnaire. The teacher (first author) conducting the seminar received brief training by the author of the original manual. He read the

manual and attended an online SP course prior to the seminar. The seminar included basic information about the SP (Donohue, 2013), what it purports to assess, and its scoring procedure. For the present study, the participants were given the following scoring instructions: “Think about how the interaction in your group has been during the last week. Based on your observations, circle the number that best describes how often this behavior occurs.”

### **Measures**

**Social profile.** The SP is used (a) to assess group level functioning, or (b) to assess individual member functioning in the context of an activity group (Donohue, 2013). This study assessed group level functioning. The instrument consists of 39 items formulated as statements about the group’s behaviors. For each statement the participant records his or her level of agreement on a 6-point Likert type scale. The items are proposed to reflect social participation at five different levels of social participation, levels with increasing complexity and demand for social skills. This conceptualization of group functioning builds on previous theoretical writings in the field of occupational therapy (Mosey, 1986; Parten, 1932), and the five levels of social interaction are coined as the parallel level, the associative level, the basic cooperative level, the supportive cooperative level, and the mature level (Donohue, 2013). A comparison between Donohue’s (2013) and Mosey’s (1986) group level concepts are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*A Comparison of Donohue's and Mosey's Concepts Related to Group Functioning Levels*

Group functioning level	Donohue (2013)	Mosey (1986)
Highest level	Mature	Mature
	Supportive Cooperative	Cooperative
	Basic Cooperative	Egocentric Cooperative
	Associative	Project
Lowest level	Parallel	Parallel

The scoring procedure for the SP consists of a series of steps (Donohue, 2013). First, average scores for each level of group functioning are calculated for each of the three topics: activity participation, social interaction, and group membership and roles. Second, average scores for each level of group functioning across the three topics are calculated. And third, the overall SP score is calculated as the mean of the average scores for each level of group functioning (Donohue, 2013).

The instrument has been extensively scrutinized for feasibility, reliability, validity, and sensitivity to change. It has been shown to be of feasible length (Donohue, 2001), to have good item consistency (Donohue, 2003), to have acceptable to moderate interrater reliability (Donohue, 2007), to have content and construct validity (Donohue, 2003, 2005), and to be sufficiently sensitive to detect changes following a brief intervention period (Donohue, Hanif, & Wu Berns, 2011).

The first author of the present article translated the SP into Norwegian prior to its use in this study. This is the first study to explore the SP in a Norwegian language context.

**Sociodemographic data.** At the first assessment, the participants provided information about their age and sex. Those who reported that they had a job also provided the number of hours

he or she worked, on average, during a normal week.

**Group attitudes.** At the first assessment, the participants also provided answers to these two questions: “How much do you enjoy, in general, working in groups during your studies?” and “In your experience, to what degree does working in groups contribute to your learning outcomes during your studies?” Answers to both questions were provided as numerical codes, interpreted as follows: 1 = very little, 2 = little, 3 = somewhat, 4 = much, 5 = very much.

**Group behavior.** At each time of assessment, the participants were asked to state approximately how many hours the group had worked together during the last week.

**Interviews**

Toward the end of the project, and after the four measurements with the SP, qualitative interviews were conducted with the participants who accepted the invitation to take part in them. The interviews aimed at eliciting a deeper understanding of the quantitative results concerning group level functioning (Creswell, 2014). They were thematically semi-structured by the topics in the SP (see Table 2) and were conducted by the first author.

**Data Analysis**

The quantitative data was analyzed descriptively. No statistical procedures were

performed due to the small number of participants. Missing data was managed with the strategy of carrying the last observation forward to the next assessment (Field, 2005). Only one of the questionnaires (Diana's responses at the third assessment) was not returned to the researchers, and her SP score for that time was stipulated according to protocol.

**Table 2***Interview Guide*

Topic	Guiding questions
Activity participation	Please describe the types of activities your group has performed during this educational module. Have the types of activities your group has performed changed in any way since the group was formed? If so, in what way?
Social interaction	Please describe how the group members have interacted with each other during this educational module. Has the social interaction in your group changed in any way since the group was formed? If so, in what way?
Group membership and roles	Please describe the group members' sense of belonging in the group during this educational module. Has this sense of belonging in the group changed in any way since the group was formed? If so, in what way?

The subsequent interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to a side-by-side interpretative analysis as a way of verifying, extending, and contrasting the quantitative results (Creswell, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The authors wanted to explore the interview material in relation to the quantitative data obtained from

the SP. Thus, codes and themes applied to the data material were deductively derived from the SP as used in the interview guide. As a result, the material was organized around three codes (activity participation, social interaction, and group membership and roles) and two overarching themes (stability and change). The first and second author independently coded the material according to this protocol before meeting to discuss the coding. Consensus about how the material should be coded was reached during three consecutive meetings. Finally, the material in each code was condensed and interpreted in light of the study aims.

**Ethics**

All of the participants were appropriately informed about the study and how their responses would be held in confidence by the researchers. All of them signed a letter confirming their consent to participate. Participation in the study was voluntary. The Norwegian Data Inspectorate approved this study in July 2014. The names used in this article are fictional.

**Results****Participant Characteristics**

Table 3 displays the characteristics of the participants and their SP scores at the first time of assessment. Four female students between 22 and 31 years of age participated in the project. All of the participants were employed in addition to being full-time students, and they each worked on average between seven and 15 hours a week. Overall, they enjoyed group work and perceived a level of learning outcome from working in groups. At the first assessment, the participants reported a considerable variation in how much time their groups had actually worked together during the

last week—between two and 10 hours. Their total scores on the SP also varied substantially.

According to Donohue’s classification (2013), the scores represent the diverse views of the groups: between functioning mostly on the associative level (Cathy’s group = 2.13), to somewhere between the basic cooperative and the supportive cooperative levels (Diana’s group = 3.77).

**Social Profile Trajectories**

Figure 1 shows the four participants’ SP scores at the four time points. Anne and Diana both showed stable group profiles across the one-

month follow-up period, with both groups functioning between the basic cooperative and the supportive cooperative levels. Beth’s and Cathy’s groups developed differently across time: Beth considered her group to have developed from the basic cooperative/supportive cooperative level to a group functioning closer to the associative level. Cathy, however, considered her group to follow the opposite trajectory, developing from the associative level to the basic cooperative/supportive cooperative level.

**Table 3**

*Characteristics of the Study Participants at Baseline (n = 4)*

Characteristics	Anne	Beth	Cathy	Diana
<i>Background</i>				
Age (years)	27	31	22	24
Mean weekly hours of employment	15	8	7	8
<i>Group attitudes and behaviors</i>				
Enjoyment in group work (1-5)	5	4	3	5
Perceived learning outcome from group work (1-5)	4	4	4	5
Hours spent working with the student group last week	10	6	2	4
<i>Social Profile score</i>				
Social Profile total score (1-5)	3.43	3.36	2.13	3.77

Note. Higher scores on enjoyment, perceived learning outcome, and time spent working in group indicate higher levels. Scores on the Social Profile are interpreted as follows: 1 = parallel level, 1-2 = parallel to associative levels, 2-3 = associative to basic cooperative levels, 3-4 = basic cooperative to supportive cooperative levels, 4-5 = supportive cooperative to mature levels, 5 = mature level (Donohue, 2013).

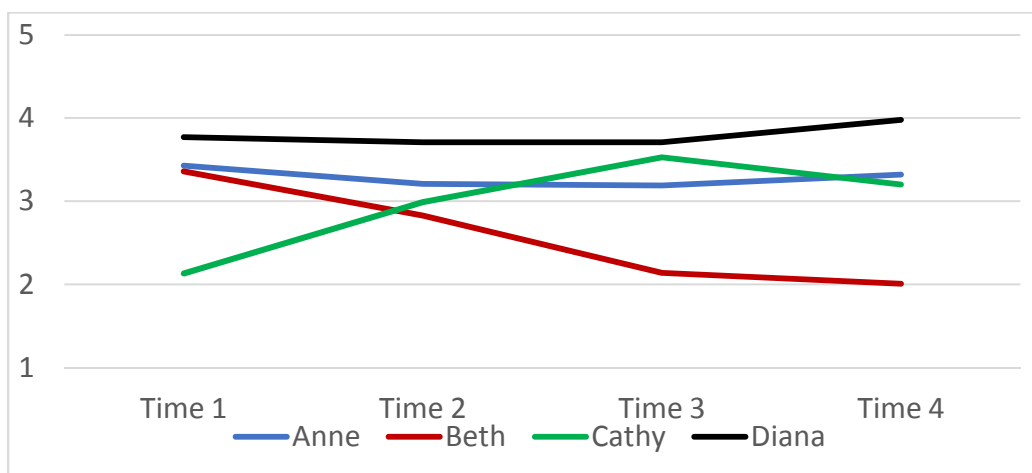


Figure 1. Trajectories of the Participants’ Social Profile Scores. Donohue (2013) provided the following classification of group functioning based on Social Profile mean scores: 1 = parallel level, 1-2 = parallel to associative levels, 2-3 = associative to basic cooperative levels, 3-4 = basic cooperative to supportive cooperative levels, 4-5 = supportive cooperative to mature levels, 5 = mature level.



## Interview Results

In relation to the activity participation topic, the participants mentioned specific examples of activities that the groups had performed. The most frequently mentioned activities were group discussion, writing assignments, interviewing practitioners, and giving presentations for the class. At a more abstract level, material concerning the activity participation topic was often related to the extent to which the group members took responsibility for the group and the group's assignments. Based on the three interviews, activity participation appeared largely to be a result of the type and extent of the assignments the groups had been given by the teachers. Similarly, change in the group's activity participation seemed to reflect changes in the type of assignment on which they worked. For example, Cathy said: "When we have had more extensive work to do with assignments, then we worked together a lot longer in the group."

The participants spoke about activity participation in their respective groups in fairly similar ways. There were more variations when discussing the topics of social interaction among the group membership and their roles. The participants often described social interaction in terms of openness in the discussions, decision-making processes, and making efforts toward getting to know one another in the group. For example, Anne said: "We know each other better now, and the silent ones have come more forward in the group. We are all part of the decisions that are made." Beth, on the other hand, was less satisfied with how the interaction in her group had developed. She described a decrease in the

group's motivation and morale. For example, she explained:

In the beginning, we were so enthusiastic and thought: "My God, this [group work] will be awesome!" But maybe we did not fit so well together after all. Now, some in the group do so much, and others don't do anything at all."

Cathy described how she initially wanted to become friends with the other group members. As time passed, she was content with the interaction in the group, but felt that she had to accept that she would not really make friends—the group was, to Cathy, just a school-based group:

We did show interest in each other, and we showed engagement. We asked questions and took initiatives. Then you start wondering whether you can become friends or not. After a while, you start to accept that you cannot be friends outside the group. [When working together in the group], we focus mostly on the work, and not so much on personal issues."

The participants often described the third topic, group membership and roles, in terms of becoming a group, group cohesion, and leadership role. Cathy pointed out how important the first phase of group work is, when the members are still new to one another and sensitive toward changes in the group:

When you begin with a new group, you don't know the other [members] so well. What affected us, I think, was [the possibility] that we could have another new member in the group. [When it became clear that the group would not

change], we became a true “groupy group”.

The three participants experienced group cohesion and its development over time differently and described the experiences with different terms. Anne, for instance, used words and phrases like integration, sticking together, and have fun together. Although she, like Cathy, did not usually spend time with other members of the group outside of the school work, she described that: “We were a group from day one. We have been very stable as a group, we feel we belong to the group and it gives us joy.”

Cathy and Beth both commented on leadership. Whereas Cathy seemed to have discovered the value of good leadership in an otherwise democratic group culture, Beth had concerns with the way her own group functioned in this respect. She discussed the possibility that the group perhaps had too many members who wanted leadership roles: “There are many with strong personalities in this group, many so called leader types. Maybe we don’t fit so well together.” Beth also commented on the burden of playing a specific structuring role in the group; the

role of whip. She described how she got tired of trying to make the others work in the group, and explained her own demoralized relationship with the other group members: “I don’t want to be the person who says ‘Now, let’s do some work’ every time. Then, I work better on my own.”

In Table 4, example quotes from the interviews have been placed into the structure based on the three SP topic areas and the two overarching themes.

### Discussion

This study longitudinally examined the SP (Donohue, 2013) scores of four occupational therapy students undergoing an educational module which involved a substantial amount of group work. Two of the students had stable perceptions of their group’s functioning over time: One reported increased group functioning, whereas the last student reported decreased group functioning. Three of the students volunteered to be interviewed in retrospect about their recent experiences in the groups, and we will discuss the extent to which the students’ statements correspond with theory and their group ratings with the SP.

**Table 4**

*Example Quotes from the Interviews Structured According to Codes and Themes*

Themes	Codes		
	Activity Participation	Social Interaction	Group Membership and Roles
Stability	“We worked mostly with school assignments.” <i>Cathy</i>	“We focused mostly on the group’s task, not so much on the relationships between the group members.” <i>Cathy</i>	“We have been a group from day one.” <i>Anne</i>
Change	“It all started very well. We looked at each others’ work [...], but later on we sort of languished.” <i>Beth</i>	“[Toward the end], everyone in the group was involved, and was part of decisions to be made. [And we had] much stronger team spirit at the end.” <i>Anne</i>	“Those who were more reserved in the beginning [...] now speak their minds and come forward. They have loosened up a bit.” <i>Anne</i>

## Social Participation in Student Groups

Social participation at the basic cooperative level is generally described as when the “group members jointly select, implement, and execute longer play, activity, or work tasks for reasons of mutual self-interest in the goal, project, or fellow members” (Donohue, 2013, p. 79).

According to theory, this would be the assumed level of participation in student groups that have been given a task to work with in collaboration (Cole & Donohue, 2011), as was the case with the participants in this study. According to Donohue’s classification system (Donohue, 2013; see Figure 1), we would expect the SP scores to lie somewhere between “two” and “four.” A score closer to “two” would imply a group functioning closer to the associative level, whereas a score closer to “four” would imply that the group is closer to the supportive cooperative level of functioning. For all four of the participants, and for all four of the assessment times, the scores were within this score interval. The grand mean (average SP score for all of the participants across the four measurements) was 3.11, also indicating an overall view of group functioning at the basic cooperative level.

When commenting on questions related to activity participation, the students were quite specific about what they had been doing together as a group; there was less abstract characterization of the performed activities. However, the authors interpret the frequent responses about responsibility for the group and the group’s assignment to be most closely related to the SP items categorized as basic cooperative participation, i.e., the activities in the group reflect group goals and acceptable actions and

emphasizes the completion of activities (Donohue, 2013). In addition, the interview statements also reflected the initial question about how activities influence group interactions; as is evident from Cathy’s quote, the nature of the assignment largely impacted on the group’s work.

The participants often referred to social interaction in terms of open discussion, making decisions, and getting to know one another in the group. The first two concepts are closely linked with the basic cooperative level of social participation. Specifically, these descriptions fit with the SP items describing that the members start to express ideas, meet the needs of others, and act as though they have the right to be group members—group members do have the right to speak their minds and take part in the decision-making process (Donohue, 2013). The aspect of getting to know one another could be interpreted as being more closely related to the supportive cooperative level of interaction. However, this may not always be the case, as highlighted in Cathy’s statements about her group’s interaction. In her opinion, the group was a school-based group only, and not one in which friendships developed.

Group membership and roles were often spoken about in terms of becoming a group, group cohesion, and leadership roles. The “forming” phase of a group (Tuckman, 1965) may be one characterized by much enthusiasm, as described by Beth, but also laden with anxiety and worries about the group’s composition—who is really going to be part of this group? Cathy, in particular, gave voice to the latter concern. Both issues related to the formation and beginning of a group process are well known from the literature

on group dynamics in a variety of contexts, including therapeutic, organizational, and educational ones (Bonsaksen, Lerdal, Borge, Sexton, & Hoffart, 2011; Forsyth, 2006). Anne emphasized the sense of being a group and found this a stable aspect of her group: “We were a group from day one.” Cathy found that this sense of groupness developed over time. After the initial concerns about group composition had been resolved, they became “a groupy group.”

The participants discussed leadership in different ways. Cathy emphasized the need for leadership to enable the group to complete its assignment; without proper leadership, the group might be less efficient in resolving their task. This may be interpreted as a call for mature group behaviors, according to Donohue’s classification (2013), as it can be equated with maintaining a balance between activity performance and interaction with group members. Beth, however, discussed more problematic aspects of group leadership roles. In her group, she perceived that many members had “strong personalities,” and that this impacted negatively on the dynamics in the group. Interpreting the situation (according to Beth) in terms of group development (Forsyth, 2006; Tuckman, 1965; Yalom, 2005), it could be that the group experienced power struggles in the conflict phase that were not well resolved, and instead of moving successfully on to the group’s assignment, the members became demoralized and withdrew their engagement with the group. The leadership role left for Beth was not a desirable one (“I don’t want to be the person who says ‘Now, let’s do some work.’”).

It appears that the participants did speak about social interaction and group membership

and roles, but that they did so in a language not fully compatible with the items used in the SP. It is possible that these two topics are more abstract than the activity and participation topic, as suggested in the SP manual (Donohue, 2013). A certain level of interpretation had to be used in order to connect the interview material with these last two topics in the instrument. However, when the participants were asked to describe how the group had developed over time, they responded in concert with how they had scored the SP.

Anne described a well-functioning group from day one; a group to which she felt she belonged. Her consistent and relatively high-level scores on the SP reflected this (see Figure 1). When Beth started the process with her group, they were all eager, enthusiastic, and wanted to do their best in the group. Eventually, this feeling subsided, and Beth felt that some group members did all of the work whereas others did nothing. In the subsequent interview, Beth wondered if they did not fit together as a group after all. Her scores on the SP mirrored the disengagement with the group’s work that she had described, with steadily declining scores over time. Thus, one contribution that this study makes is indicating that a student group can decline in cohesion and social participation levels over time. This may be an unexpected result that the SP (Donohue, 2013) can point out. Cathy reported an increase in “groupness” over time, in particular after the group had put their initial worries behind them. In spite of her gradual acceptance that the group had some limitations (they would not become friends), she appeared to have a growing feeling that the group was working well. Correspondingly, her SP scores increased over time.

## Study Limitations

This study has limited generalizability. The authors used a small convenience sample of four students undergoing an educational module as part of their occupational therapy training. All of the participants received a minimum of training on how to use the SP (Donohue, 2013), but we do not know whether or not this was sufficient. Their scores were not verified by someone with more expertise in using the instrument. All of the interviews were conducted after the last assessment with the SP (Donohue, 2013). Thus, the participants' retrospective views on their respective groups may have changed during the follow-up period.

The extent to which the results may apply to other persons or types of groups should be explored in subsequent studies. The main instrument of the study—the SP (Donohue, 2013)—is yet to be formally translated into Norwegian using standard procedures for translation and cross-cultural adaptation, including processes of back-translation and pilot study testing (Wild et al., 2005). However, we wanted to explore the utility of the instrument with a limited student sample before embarking on such an extensive process (Laver-Fawcett, 2014).

## Implications for Further Research

So far, the SP (Donohue, 2013) has undergone much psychometric testing, but this

study appears to be the first to combine scores on the SP with qualitative descriptions from participants in groups. Further studies are warranted in a range of areas. Specifically, the authors suggest three areas of future inquiry. One, the interplay between group level and individual level functioning should be explored: What is the relationship between the two, and what implications may there be for occupational therapy practice? Two, how the SP can be used in clinical processes among practicing occupational therapists. And three, an investigation of correlates of higher and lower scores on the SP.

## Conclusion

In a sample of four occupational therapy students, two students perceived their group's level of functioning to be relatively unchanged over time. One student's scores indicated an increase in group functioning over time, whereas one other student showed the opposite trajectory. The participants' interview statements about their group's activity participation, social interaction, and group membership and roles showed varying degrees of connectedness with the SP items (Donohue, 2013). Descriptions of stability and change, however, corresponded well with the students' SP trajectories, indicating content validity of the assessment as a whole.

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