

RO&Ming with Lil Episode 29

Life skills for being-in-the-unseen-world – Errol



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Introduction to Episode 29

- Welcome to Errol Ingram!
- Qualified as an O&M Instructor in 1981, Burwood College, Vic
- Started PhD in 2011, at Griffith University; finished 2019 :
The Lived Experience of Acquiring Life Skills with Congenital Total Blindness: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
- Link to Errol's PhD thesis:
<https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/handle/10072/386378>

Warming up to a PhD

- Hated school
- Going to uni harnessed critical thinking and writing skills
- Appreciates the dark side of everything, including charities...
“...and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”
(Thomas Hobbes in his Leviathan)
- Masters in education – interested in older people’s lived experience of O&M
- Working with young people (18-20) who had gaps in life skills, especially social skills
- What life skills do people need to launch from school to adulthood?

Expanded Core Curriculum (Hatlen)

- Identifies range of skills needed in adulthood by people with low vision or blindness
- Kids receive HOURS of input from specialists during their school years

BUT

- Still have gaps in life skills – remediation needed

Narrowing the topic

- Congenital total blindness – what does it mean to develop life skills, never having seen the world (even a little bit)?
- Max van Manen. (2006). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Ontario, Canada: Althouse Press.
- Also interested in parents' lived experience or raising a child who is totally blind

Being and Time

- Martin Heidegger (1927) – German philosopher, existentialism
- Average everyday practices in life: being-in-the-world
- Aha! - this is about life skills!
- Context is important when exploring lived experience

Food for thought from Errol's thesis

- Young people don't necessarily need someone to take over their tasks – they just need a pair of eyes for a moment (Aira, BeMyEyes apps serve a useful purpose here)
- O&M assessment of travel skills is useful, when guided by a support worker
- Sighted people, including parents, don't see the thousands of life skills it takes to be blind in the world

Good enough life skills

- Who decides what is good enough?
- Binary evaluation of life skills is not very helpful (can do / can't do)
- Generic performance scale from VROOM and OMO could be useful for young people and their parents to evaluate life skills:
 - 3 = better-than-good life skills... Masterchef
 - 2 = good enough life skills... can cook across the 5 food groups; plan meals
 - 1 = basic life skills... can cook 2 minute noodles – won't starve (too often)
 - 0 = can't cook... starvation imminent; risk of salmonella poisoning!

Some advice for those considering a PhD

- Choose a topic you're passionate about – it has to last a few years
- Get a good supervisor – you will spend a lot of time together
- Narrow down your topic
- Learn to write a literature review

- Enjoy it! A PhD provides an opportunity to go deep, deeper, and then deeper still – you become the world expert on your thing.

Blind Focus



- Errol is a COMS and ROMSA:
O&M specialist, certified with ACVREP and registered with OMAA
- Independent O&M service provider, based in Bowral, NSW
- A hired gun! <https://blindfocus.com.au/>
- Currently working in Tasmania during COVID-19

Conferences earning COMS points

- SPEVI Conference – Celebrating Change!
 - 18-19 January 2021
 - <https://www.speviconference.org.au/>



- International O&M Online Symposium
 - 4-6 February 2021
 - <https://orientationandmobilitysymposium.com/>



Contact & Credits

- To offer feedback, suggest a topic, or record an episode together:
Email: lil@deverell.net Mobile: +61 418 370 312
- Links and PowerPoint slides for *RO&Ming with Lil*
www.lildeverell.net/resources/roaming-with-lil/
- Music: *Happy Stroll*, a royalty-free download from Purple Planet Music
- Graphics by Lil Deverell, with technotherapy from Erin Deverell

