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Broadening the Conceptualization of ‘Participation’ of Persons with Physical Disabilities:

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A Configurative Review and Recommendations

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Abstract

Within the context of physical disability, *participation* has typically been conceptualized in terms of one's performance of different roles and activities. This perspective, however, ignores the meanings and satisfactions that a person derives from participating. Without an accepted conceptualization of participation that accounts for people's subjective perceptions and experiences, it is challenging for decision-makers and service-providers to design meaningful participation-enhancing services, programs, and policies. Accordingly, our objectives were to: (a) conduct a review of definitions and conceptualizations of participation that extend beyond performance and capture people's subjective experiences of participating, and (b) identify key experiential aspects of participation that can be used as a basis for conceptualizing and operationalizing the concept more broadly. The project involved a systematic, configurative review of relevant literature. Ten relevant articles were identified. Information on characteristics associated with experiential aspects of participation was extracted and subjected to a thematic analysis. Six themes emerged: *Autonomy, Belongingness, Challenge, Engagement, Mastery, and Meaning*. Drawing on these findings, it is recommended that the individual's subjective perceptions of autonomy, belongingness, challenge, engagement, mastery and meaning associated with participating be incorporated into conceptualizations and operationalizations of the participation construct. This recommendation provides a starting point for clinicians, researchers and policy makers to conceptualize and measure the participation concept more consistently and more broadly.

65 *Keywords:* Social Participation; Social Engagement; Community Participation;
66 Community Involvement; Integration

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List of Abbreviations

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70 CINAHL Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature

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72 ICF International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

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74 SDT Self-Determination Theory

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Introduction

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Participation refers to the nature and extent of involvement in activities and roles both at home and in the community^{1,2}. Among persons with physical disabilities, greater participation has been associated with better physical and psychological health and greater overall life satisfaction^{3,4}. Participation is considered so vital to human functioning and well-being, that the United Nations⁵ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities protects the basic right to “full and effective participation” in society.

Given its importance, participation is considered a fundamental goal of rehabilitation⁶, and is increasingly recognized by researchers as being part of a comprehensive approach to health outcome assessment⁷. For example, among those who have acquired a physical disability, return to participation in education, employment or family roles are often primary long-term goals of a rehabilitation program⁸. In the scientific literature, considerable research (e.g.,^{9,10}) has focused on the extent to which children and adults with disabilities participate in social roles (e.g., student, parent, spouse) and valued aspects of life (e.g., travel, sports, volunteerism). Research has also focused on developing and testing interventions to increase the number of people with disabilities who participate in various aspects of life and how much they participate (for example, see reviews by Clayton et al.¹¹ on employment interventions and Rimmer et al.¹² on exercise interventions).

Yet, as Dijkers⁶ has noted, participation is more than the quantifiable extent to which a person fulfills roles, has relationships and “otherwise performs a portfolio of actions that can be witnessed by an observer” (p. S7). Nevertheless, the perspective typically adopted by scientists, clinicians, and society in general, is to conceptualize

101 participation in terms of whether people are spending time involved in the typical range
102 of activities that would be expected, when compared to societal or cultural norms. For
103 instance, within the World Health Organization's International Classification of
104 Functioning, Disability and Health model (ICF; ¹³), participation is defined as
105 "involvement in a life situation" (p. 10) and operationalized in terms of the degree of
106 difficulty one has performing different roles and activities. However, conceptualizing
107 participation merely in terms of performance ignores the meanings and satisfactions that
108 an individual derives from participating^{6,14,15}. Indeed, people with disabilities have
109 indicated that participation is not merely 'being there', and that full participation cannot
110 be defined simply as involvement in a particular set of activities or by predetermined
111 societal norms or standards^{14,16}. Together, these perspectives create a compelling
112 argument for a conceptualization of participation that extends beyond *what* a person does,
113 and takes into account the person's subjective experiences of participating.

114 Currently, there is no commonly accepted conceptualization of participation that
115 accounts for people's subjective perceptions and experiences. As a result, it is
116 challenging for decision-makers and service-providers to design meaningful
117 participation-enhancing services, programs, and policies (cf. ^{17,18}). If the subjective
118 aspects of participation are not considered, strategies aimed at improving participation are
119 likely to achieve only an increase in the number of people participating rather than the
120 quality of people's participation experiences (^{18,19}). In addition, without a consistent
121 operationalization of the experiential aspects of participation, it is difficult for clinicians
122 and researchers to select appropriate outcome measures and to compare results across
123 studies, thus hindering the advancement of knowledge. Given these issues, the objectives

124 of the present paper were to: (a) conduct a review of definitions and conceptualizations of
125 participation that have been used within the physical disability literature to encompass
126 experiential aspects of participation, and (b) identify key experiential aspects of
127 participation that can be used to formulate recommendations for operationalizing the
128 concept more broadly, beyond performance.

129 **Method**

130 **Overview of Methods**

131 A systematic, configurative review was undertaken. Configurative reviews are
132 conducted with the goal of seeking, interpreting and arranging information, providing
133 enlightenment through new ways of understanding, and developing concepts²⁰.

134 Philosophically, such reviews are typically underpinned by assumptions of ontological
135 relativism and epistemological constructionism.

136 Although configurative reviews tend to be more exploratory than aggregative
137 reviews (e.g., meta-analyses, cost-benefit analyses), they are still conducted in a
138 systematic manner with clear and accountable methods. The general methodology is
139 specified *a priori*, however specific methods may be selected or adapted iteratively as the
140 research proceeds²⁰. This iterative process was necessary to address inherent challenges.

141 For instance, it was impossible to specify an *a priori* literature search strategy for our
142 project, as the search was for concepts and ideas rather than data. The search was further
143 complicated by the use of a variety of terms in the published literature to reflect similar
144 concepts, and discussion of the concept within different types of articles (e.g., reviews,
145 editorials, research reports).

146 The impact of these challenges was mitigated by following recommendations^{20,21}
147 employed by groups who have conducted similar types of reviews to operationalize
148 concepts such as social exclusion²², social inclusion¹⁸, and institutionalization²³. These
149 recommendations included: adopting safe-guards to reduce biases (e.g., establishing
150 multidisciplinary teams); undertaking a broad search of relevant literature across multiple
151 sources and databases rather than conducting an exhaustive review; using an iterative
152 search strategy; and accepting overlap in the searching, analysis, synthesis and writing
153 stages of the project, because re-visiting each of these steps can help to focus the review.

154 A multidisciplinary core team (i.e., the authors) led the project. This team had
155 expertise in psychology, occupational therapy, disability and rehabilitation studies, and
156 population health. The project was undertaken as a preliminary step in a much larger,
157 federally-funded set of team-based projects designed to improve both objective and
158 subjective aspects of participation among people living with physical disabilities (the
159 Canadian Disability Participation Project; www.cdpp.ca).

160 **Literature Search Strategy and Extraction of Relevant Information**

161 A systematic, iterative, two-stage literature search was conducted, with the goal of
162 identifying a sufficient number of documents to facilitate the exploration of common
163 themes^{20,21}. In the first stage, we drew upon expertise within the core team to identify key
164 articles that addressed a concept consistent with the ideas of *full and effective*
165 *participation, qualitative aspects of participation, or subjective experiences of*
166 *participation*. The reference lists of these articles were reviewed to identify additional
167 relevant papers. The abstracts and (if necessary) full papers for these citations were read
168 to determine if the article provided a definition, key attributes, or any other information

169 that could be used to describe the concept. For articles that met these criteria, the
170 following information was extracted: type of article (e.g., editorial, review), terminology
171 used to label the concept, definition of the concept, and attributes or characteristics
172 associated with the concept.

173 This first literature search stage produced a clearer understanding of how the
174 concept was labeled, used, and discussed in the literature. Although there was
175 inconsistent terminology and labeling of the construct, it was routinely discussed within
176 the context of the need to think about participation beyond doing, or performing. It was
177 also noted that several of the articles reported on qualitative studies or were conceptual
178 papers that synthesized information and provided commentary.

179 With a better understanding of what to look for, MEDLINE, Embase, Cumulative
180 Index to Nursing and Allied Health (CINAHL), and PsycINFO databases were searched
181 for additional, relevant papers published between January 1990 and June 2015. The
182 following keywords were used: social participation OR community participation AND
183 physical disability. Search terms were kept broad given the lack of consistent
184 terminology used to describe the concept of interest. Publication language was not
185 restricted.

186 The searches returned 183 citations from MEDLINE, 114 citations from Embase,
187 272 citations from CINAHL, and 291 citations from PsycINFO. Using the knowledge
188 garnered from the phase one literature search, titles and abstracts were scanned to identify
189 articles that provided a definition, key attributes, or other information to describe a
190 conceptualization of participation that captured its subjective, qualitative, or experiential
191 aspects. Articles were excluded if they did not provide this information. There were no

192 other article inclusion/exclusion criteria. Particular attention was paid to abstracts that
193 described qualitative studies, commentaries, and knowledge syntheses, given the number
194 of articles of this type that were identified in the first phase of the search.

195 After removing duplicates, and scanning citation titles and abstracts, ten papers
196 were identified as potentially relevant. The full text of these articles was retrieved and
197 read. Eight papers were excluded for the following reasons: paper was a commentary on
198 another paper ($n = 1$); paper focused on a different concept (“the good life,” general
199 disability issues, social care, barriers to participation [$n = 4$]); paper reported on an
200 evaluation of a specific program ($n = 1$) or a study of the relationship between
201 participation and other constructs ($n = 1$); paper discussed conceptual differences in
202 participation versus social participation ($n = 1$). Two articles were considered relevant
203 and included in the review. Additional papers were sought by searching the references of
204 these two papers and any subsequent articles in which they were cited. These strategies
205 did not yield any additional relevant papers.

206 **Synthesis of Information**

207 Information extracted on concept attributes or characteristics was subjected to an
208 inductive thematic analysis²⁴. In brief, the individual attributes and characteristics were
209 coded and then sorted into themes by two members of the authorship team [XXX, XXX].
210 All four authors then met to discuss and reach consensus regarding the coding, labeling,
211 and descriptions of the themes. The themes and a preliminary draft of this manuscript
212 were then circulated to academic and non-academic members of our larger team with a
213 request to provide feedback on whether the themes, along with their labels and
214 descriptions, were meaningful within each member’s content area of expertise (e.g.,

215 program delivery, public policy, organizational behaviour). Team members were also
216 asked whether they believed the list of themes was comprehensive in its coverage of the
217 experiential aspects of participation. The authorship team deliberated this feedback and
218 subsequently used it to formulate recommendations for conceptualizing and
219 operationalizing participation.

220 **Results**

221 **Description of the Included Papers**

222 The first and second stages of the literature search yielded eight^{6,14,25,26,27,28,16,4}
223 and two^{29,30} papers, respectively, for a total of ten papers included in our review (see
224 Table 1). The papers included four editorials/reviews^{6,25,28,4}, two focus group studies^{14,29},
225 one mixed-methods measurement development paper²⁶, a concept analysis²⁷, a qualitative
226 meta-synthesis¹⁶, and a quantitative, observational study³⁰. All papers were published in
227 English.

228 **Terminology and Definitions Used**

229 Nine different terms were used in the literature to reflect the concept of interest:
230 1) the “qualitative/subjective/evaluative aspects of participation”⁶; 2) “participation”²⁵;
231 3) “full participation”¹⁴; 4) “participation enfranchisement”²⁶; 5) “engagement”²⁸; 6)
232 “the subjective dimension of participation”²⁹; 7) “levels of participation”¹⁶; 8)
233 “meaningful participation”⁴; and 9) “the subjective experience of involvement”³⁰. Only
234 four of the terms were defined (“participation enfranchisement”, “engagement”, “levels
235 of participation” and “the subjective experience of involvement”). The definitions are
236 presented in the second column of Table 1.

237 **Thematic Analysis**

238 The third column of Table 1 shows the characteristics/attributes that were used to
239 describe or define each term. Using an inductive approach, two authors categorized the
240 individual characteristics into ten themes: *Autonomy; Belongingness/Relatedness;*
241 *Challenge; Efficacy/Mastery; Engagement; Impact; Inclusion; Meaning; Opportunity*
242 *and Access; and Responsibility*. Following deliberation and discussion with the core team
243 members, two themes--*Responsibility* and *Impact*--were subsequently subsumed under
244 *Meaning*, and *Inclusion* was incorporated within the theme of *Belongingness/*
245 *Relatedness*. The team also decided that *Opportunity and Access* were pre-requisites,
246 rather than characteristics of participation; this category was subsequently removed,
247 resulting in a set of six themes. The final set of themes, their labels, and a brief
248 description of each, is presented in Table 2.

249 **Statement of Recommendation**

250 The themes were circulated to the larger team for feedback from members outside
251 of the authorship group. Following a further round of discussions, the core team
252 formulated the following recommendation:

253 *When conceptualizing and operationalizing participation, it is insufficient to*
254 *consider only the objective, quantitative aspects of participation (e.g., level of*
255 *performance, performance difficulty, number of people participating). The*
256 *qualitative/subjective/experiential aspects of participation must also be taken into*
257 *account. These aspects include the individual's sense of autonomy, belongingness,*
258 *challenge, engagement, mastery, and meaning associated with participating.*

259 This recommendation acknowledges that participation is more than what a person
260 does or how an outsider evaluates that person's performance. Participation also reflects

261 personal experiences, preferences, and perceptions. Implicit in this recommendation is
262 the assumption that what constitutes *participation* for one person may be different for
263 another. Moreover, different aspects of participation (e.g., experiencing a sense of
264 autonomy, challenge, meaning, etc.) will be important to different people, at different
265 times and in different situations, given that individuals often have unique and multiple
266 motives for participating.

267

Discussion

268 The purpose of this project was to synthesize efforts to conceptualize
269 *participation* beyond level of performance. Using a configurative review process,
270 information was extracted from ten relevant articles and categorized into six themes
271 representing experiential aspects of participation: *Autonomy, Belongingness, Challenge,*
272 *Engagement, Mastery, and Meaning.* The themes were then used as the basis for
273 formulating a recommendation that can be used by researchers, clinicians and policy
274 makers as a basis for conceptualizing and operationalizing participation more broadly.

275 Within the reviewed papers, concept labels ranged from general descriptors (e.g.,
276 “the subjective dimension of participation,”²⁹) to specific terms (e.g., “participation
277 enfranchisement,”²⁶). Yet despite terminological variability, in every article, the authors
278 emphasized the importance of taking into account people’s participation-related
279 experiences and perceptions. While we recognize that there is no clear consensus in the
280 literature for the use of any particular term, our group has elected to retain the World
281 Health Organization’s¹³ term *participation* while expanding its conceptualization to
282 include not just objective, quantitative indicators of performance, but also the six themes
283 of qualitative, experiential aspects of participation, identified in our review.

284 The six themes represent experiential aspects of participation that should be taken
285 into account when conceptualizing and operationalizing the participation construct.
286 Importantly, the themes were apparent across different types of articles (e.g., editorials,
287 research reports) and across studies that used different research methods (e.g., focus
288 groups, observational studies). For instance, in their concept analysis of children’s
289 participation, Hoogsteen and Woodgate²⁷ highlighted the importance of control,
290 engagement, meaning, and inclusion. Similarly, in a focus group study, Hammel and
291 colleagues¹⁴ asked people with disabilities “what does it mean to fully participate in
292 life?” Responses clustered into themes that included choice and control, meaningful
293 engagement, and social connections. The consistency in identified features of
294 participation across articles provides evidence to support the robustness of our
295 conclusions with regard to the construct’s key experiential aspects.

296 Importantly, the six themes also align with theoretical conceptualizations of
297 factors that contribute to well-being (e.g., self-determination theory^{31,32}; theory of
298 purposeful work behavior³³; flow and peak experiences³⁴). For example, according to
299 Self-Determination Theory (SDT), humans must experience ongoing satisfaction of three
300 basic needs--autonomy, competence and relatedness--in order to experience optimal
301 development and functioning^{31,32}. Paralleling this theoretical tenet, participation is known
302 to be vital to human functioning and well-being¹³ and three of the themes identified in
303 our review--*Autonomy, Mastery and Belongingness*--encompass the three basic
304 psychological needs specified in SDT. Likewise, within the occupational therapy
305 literature, Moll and colleagues³⁵ recently proposed a framework delineating the links
306 between occupation, health, and well-being, which incorporates eight types of everyday

307 activities related to health and well-being, (e.g., connecting with others, taking care of
308 yourself), and five fundamental characteristics of activities that shape optimal health and
309 well-being. Three of these characteristics--control/choice, engagement, meaning--are
310 reflected in the themes identified in our review (i.e., *Autonomy, Engagement, and*
311 *Meaning*). Thus, our findings regarding key experiential aspects of participation are
312 consistent with both well-established theoretical perspectives on factors that contribute to
313 well-being in general^{31,32}, and emerging perspectives on factors that contribute to well-
314 being in occupational contexts in particular³⁵.

315 The development of an expanded conceptualization of participation has important
316 implications for scientists, clinicians and policy makers. By delineating its subjective/
317 experiential aspects, a clearer distinction can now be made between participation and
318 related concepts such as inclusion and community integration. Inclusion, for instance, has
319 traditionally been defined in terms of objective levels of participation or as the mere
320 presence of people with disabilities in societal settings and contexts¹⁸. Likewise, although
321 some researchers have operationalized community integration as encompassing feelings
322 of belongingness and sense of community³⁶, in most studies, objective indicators of
323 participation have typically been at the core of community integration measures³⁷.
324 Considering participation in terms of the six thematic elements distinguishes it from these
325 other concepts.

326 The delineation of key experiential aspects of participation will also facilitate its
327 operationalization and the selection of appropriate measures for its assessment. In
328 previously published systematic reviews of participation measures for people with
329 disabilities, authors distinguished between instruments that assess actual participation,

330 and instruments that assess the subjective experience of participation^{38,39}. A sampling of
331 the latter is presented in Table 3 to illustrate how items or subscales/dimensions from
332 these instruments align with some of the themes identified in our review. This illustration
333 is, however, based solely on an assessment of the face validity of the instruments and
334 their items. Additional research is needed to determine whether the instruments and items
335 do indeed measure the experiential aspects captured by the themes (i.e., research to assess
336 construct validity).

337 When measuring the experiential aspects of participation in a particular context
338 (e.g., workplace, recreation, family roles), we encourage researchers and clinicians to
339 consider using measures that are not necessarily rehabilitation or disability-specific.
340 Other disciplines have well-established measures of people's subjective experiences of
341 participation in specific domains and contexts. For instance, in workplace settings, the
342 Basic Need Satisfaction at Work Scale⁴⁰⁻⁴² might be used to assess feelings of autonomy,
343 belongingness and mastery; work-related engagement and meaning could be captured by
344 sets of items formulated for testing hypotheses regarding the relationship between these
345 constructs in the workplace⁴³; challenge could be measured by the task complexity, skill
346 variety, and problem solving components of the Job Characteristics Framework⁴⁴. These
347 measures of experiential aspects of participation could be combined with measures that
348 capture more traditional, objective aspects of participation such as the Participation
349 Objective, Participation Subjective which includes an item to measure the time spent on
350 paid work⁴⁵, or the ICF¹³ which assesses the difficulty one has engaging in paid and
351 unpaid employment. In addition, because standardized questionnaires are unlikely to fully
352 capture the broad range of potential participation experiences, we recommend the use of

353 qualitative methods to capture how people experience participation in different contexts
354 and how their experiences unfold over time. Combinations of assessments such as these
355 should provide a more comprehensive and meaningful perspective on participation than
356 any one methodology on its own.

357 **Project Limitations**

358 There are four main limitations of this review. First, given the ontological and
359 epistemological assumptions inherent to configurative reviews²⁰, other reviewers could
360 come to different conclusions regarding the content and labeling of the themes. However,
361 given the involvement of a multidisciplinary team, and the resulting themes aligned with
362 empirical perspectives on participation¹⁴ and broader theoretical perspectives on well-
363 being^{31,35,32}, we believe that our conclusions are robust.

364 A second limitation is that our conclusions are based on the extant literature, and
365 no relevant articles were found outside of the rehabilitation sciences. There may be other
366 themes and disciplinary perspectives that are relevant to a broadened conceptualization of
367 participation but are absent from the literature. Indeed, psychology experts within our
368 team raised concern that positive emotions or affective states (e.g., enjoyment) were not
369 explicitly mentioned among the key experiential elements of participation. While
370 affective and emotional states could be captured under *Engagement* (e.g., experiencing
371 positive affect while participating may be a characteristic of engagement) or *Meaning*
372 (e.g., people may find meaning in activities that produce satisfaction or pleasure), the
373 absence of discussion in the literature regarding affect and emotion highlights the need
374 for continued work to identify and test the conceptual underpinnings of participation. In

375 addition, an important future direction will be to distinguish experiential aspects of
376 participation from psychosocial antecedents and consequences of participation.

377 Third, an exhaustive review of participation measures was beyond the scope of
378 this project (see [^{38 39}] for systematic reviews of participation measures). Although a
379 comprehensive analysis of subjective measures of participation may have provided
380 further support for the six themes, we are reluctant to draw conclusions about the validity
381 of the themes based on how participation has been previously measured. The
382 conceptualization of participation should dictate its measurement rather than
383 measurement dictating how participation is conceptualized. Furthermore, when
384 conducting the analysis presented in Table 3, we recognized a strong potential for bias in
385 linking measures with themes. That is, the original intent or meaning of the scales and
386 items could be quite different from our interpretations. Notwithstanding these issues,
387 there would be merit in compiling a catalogue of subjective measures of participation for
388 people with disabilities, as some of the instruments may have utility for operationalizing
389 the participation construct.

390 And finally, a fourth limitation is that we restricted our review to literature that
391 addressed participation among people with physical disabilities. For people with other
392 types of disabilities (e.g., sensory, intellectual), it is possible that different, or additional
393 types of experiences are relevant to the conceptualization of participation.

394 **Conclusions**

395 Despite some limitations, our synthesis has created a starting point to begin
396 operationalizing and measuring the participation concept more broadly and consistently.
397 We have formulated a recommendation to capture six experiential aspects of participation

398 that extend beyond mere performance: *Autonomy, Belongingness, Challenge,*
399 *Engagement, Mastery, and Meaning.* We encourage researchers, clinicians and policy
400 makers to adopt this recommendation when addressing questions regarding participation
401 among people with physical disabilities.

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Table 1.
Terminology, Definitions and Core Features of Concepts Reflecting the Experiential Aspects of Participation

Reference, Description	Terminology, Definition	Attributes/Characteristics
Dijkers, 2010 ⁶ Editorial/Introduction to special issue on participation	Qualitative/subjective/ evaluative aspects of participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy • Challenge, mastery • Closeness, affection, social support given and received, emotional attachment • Desire more/less/same/different; fit with ideal self • Difficulty, restriction, limitation, problemness • (Dis)agreement, unity • Importance, value, meaning • Influence • Opportunity and access • Productivity • Respect and dignity • Responsibility • Satisfaction • Self-efficacy, sense of competence • Sense of belonging/membership/acceptance
K. W. Hammel et al., 2008 ¹⁴ Focus group study	Full Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice and control • Meaningful engagement • Personal and social responsibilities • Having an impact • Social connections • Societal access and opportunity

<p>J. Hammel, 2015²⁵ Review article</p>	<p>Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy • A sense of competence and accomplishment • A sense of belonging, acceptance, safety, respect • Ability and opportunity ‘to do’; to engage in personally meaningful/valuable activities • Ability and opportunity to contribute to well-being of others • Ability and opportunity to support and do things for others • Engagement in meaningful and reciprocal relationships • Having social connections • Social engagement and inclusion
<p>Heinemann et al., 2011²⁶ Mixed-methods measurement development studies</p>	<p>Participation Enfranchisement: “ a set of perceptions and values that give meaning to participation and that apply across domains”; “belongingness to one’s community or society” (p. 565)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice and control • Contributing to one’s community • Feeling valued by others
<p>Hjelle & Vik, 2011²⁹ Focus group study</p>	<p>The subjective dimension of participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being engaged (in one’s own and others’ lives) • Being a member of society (being equal, valued, included, having freedom to choose) • Interacting as a citizen

<p>Hoogsteen & Woodgate, 2010²⁷</p> <p>Concept analysis</p>	<p>Participation in children with disabilities</p>	<p>The child must...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take part in something or with someone • feel included or have a sense of inclusion; while participating, children must feel like they are engaged by either doing or being • have a choice or control over what they are taking part in; hold a degree of autonomy and take part in what matters to them • work toward obtaining a personal or socially-meaningful goal or enhancing quality of life
<p>Imms & Granlund, 2014²⁸</p> <p>Editorial</p>	<p>Engagement: “involvement in the task while there” (p. 291)</p>	<p>“The fully engaged individual will experience a level of acceptance of, and by, others and is the ultimate in participation outcomes.” (p. 291)</p>
<p>Kramer et al., 2012¹⁶</p> <p>Qualitative meta-synthesis</p>	<p>Levels of participation: “the extent to which they [youth with disabilities] felt meaningfully engaged and authentically included” (p. 771)</p>	<p>Four levels of participation on a continuum from more to less inclusive participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing what everyone else is doing • Fringe participation • Waiting or watching • Doing something different
<p>Law, 2002⁴</p> <p>Keynote address/review</p>	<p>Meaningful participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear goals • Quick and accurate feedback • Must be a feeling of choice or control over activity • A supportive environment • A focus on the task • A sense of challenge from the task • A sense of mastery • May experience sense of ‘flow’

Maxwell et al., 2012 ³⁰	The subjective experience of involvement: “...the subjective experience of involvement can be represented by the psychological constructs of involvement, control, motivation, and attention as experienced in the here-and-now moment” (p. 276)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control• Motivation• Concentration• Involvement
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Table 2.

Results of the Thematic Analysis of Attributes/Characteristics Used to Describe

Experiential Aspects of Participation

Themes	Brief Description
Autonomy	Having independence, choice, control
Belongingness	Experiencing a sense of belonging to a group; acceptance/respect from others; included at interpersonal or societal levels
Challenge	Feeling appropriately challenged
Engagement	Engaged in the activity; motivated; focused, involved; experiencing 'flow'
Mastery	Experiencing achievement/competence/ sense of accomplishment; self-efficacy
Meaning	Contributing toward obtaining a personal or socially-meaningful goal; feeling a sense of responsibility to others

Table 3.

Examples of Instruments to Assess Subjective Aspects of Participation and their Potential Thematic Alignment

Instrument	Relevant Subscale/Dimension or *Question	Aligned Theme
Impact on Participation and Autonomy Questionnaire ⁴⁶	Autonomy Indoors Autonomy Outdoors Social Relations	Autonomy Autonomy Belongingness
Reintegration to Normal Living Index ⁴⁷	*“I feel that I can deal with life events as they happen” *“In general, I am comfortable with my personal relationships”	Mastery Belongingness
Social Role Participation Questionnaire ⁴⁸	Role Importance Satisfaction with Role Performance	Meaning Mastery
Participation Objective, Participation Subjective ⁴⁵	*“What is the importance of [the activity] to your well-being?”	Meaning
Participation Enfranchisement Measure (19-item version) ²⁶	Choice and Control Contributing to One’s Community Feeling Valued	Autonomy Meaning Belongingness
Participation Enfranchisement Measure (48-item version) ⁴⁹	Importance of Participation Control over Participation	Meaning Autonomy