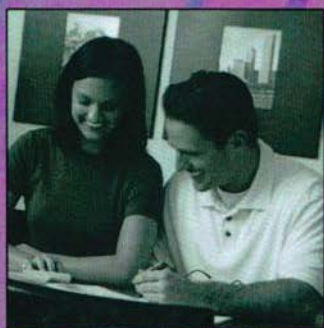# The
Scholarship
of Practice

Academic-Practice Collaborations
for Promoting Occupational Therapy

Patricia Crist, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA
Gary Kielhofner, DrPH, OTR, FAOTA
Editors

The Scholarship of Practice: Academic-Practice Collaborations for Promoting Occupational Therapy

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Interprofessional Collaboration in Occupational Therapy, edited by Stanley Paul, PhD, and Cindee Q. Peterson, PhD, OTR (Vol. 15, No. 3/4, 2001). *"A good source of information. . . . Introduces the reader to the concept of interprofessional collaboration, its benefits, barriers, and strategies for developing such collaboration. . . . Presents a series of research studies that show the value of interprofessional collaboration to achieve outcomes at different levels and within different service delivery models." (Dyhalma Irizarry, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, Director, Occupational Therapy Program, University of Puerto Rico)*

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The Scholarship of Practice: Academic-Practice Collaborations for Promoting Occupational Therapy

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ABOUT THE EDITORS

Patricia Crist, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA, is Founding Chairperson and Professor for the Department of Occupational Therapy at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Dr. Crist has numerous publications including *Innovations in OT Education* (co-editor), the self-study, *Meeting the Fieldwork Challenge* (co-author), *Evaluation: Obtaining and Interpreting Data (2nd Edition)* (co-editor), and the popular *Fieldwork Issue* column in *OT Advance.* She recently co-edited *Education for Occupational Therapy in Health Care: Strategies for the New Millennium* through The Haworth Press. Dr. Crist has completed numerous scholarly works regarding fieldwork education, mental health interventions, parents with disabilities and research. Currently, she is Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy. She is a Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association.

Gary Kielhofner, DrPH, OTR, FAOTA, is currently Professor and Wade/Meyer Chair in the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His research focuses on a wide range of populations, but one focus is programming for persons with AIDS, mental health and substance abuse problems. Dr. Kielhofner maintains a close involvement in clinical practice, research, and consultation. He is the co-author/editor of 15 books and has published over 100 articles. Dr. Kielhofner is a Fellow of the American Occupational Therapy Association, a member of the Academy of Research of the American Occupational Therapy Foundation, and a recipient of the A. Jean Ayres award. He is also the recipient of 3 honorary Doctoral Degrees.

Editors' Overview

Innovations in health care or education are successful because an individual addresses an unmet need by envisioning new possibilities. This type of innovation requires leadership and risk-taking, coupled with a passion to do better and a hunger for a new journey.

Currently, occupational therapists are uniquely positioned to engage emerging opportunities in practice and education. However, as time passes, initial intentions are transformed into even better plans or programs as new lessons are learned and contexts are better understood. A story demonstrating the value of occupational therapy likely unfolds. In sharing the story later, still more insights and reflections emerge. Finally, the listeners or readers can be motivated from the experience of others to consider the opportunity before them.

As co-editors, our journeys into the scholarship of practice were motivated by our own reasons and we developed our approaches within the context of our own education and practice environments. Quite by accident, we came together at the 2002 World Federation of Occupational Therapy conference in Sweden. Gary presented the keynote that challenged occupational therapist scholars to partner with practitioners to develop and study practice as his faculty members do under their banner of a Scholarship of Practice at the University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC). On that same day, Pat co-presented a poster with her faculty, Anne Marie Witchger Hansen, regarding their Practice-Scholar Program at Duquesne University (DU) developing 'best practices' practitioner models which seamlessly integrated activities of scholarship in emerging innovative occupation-based practice areas along with facilitating student professional development.

A brief conversation at the airport between us waiting for our return trip to the USA indicated that while our approaches were different, we shared a common interest to lead new approaches to the study of occupational therapy practice through partnerships and demonstrate possible practitioner roles and activities to embed the study of practice as part of everyday work.

The Fall 2003 program director's workshop highlighting the UIC approach to the scholarship of practice, resulted in immense interest from many program directors to pursue the concept of the scholarship of practice. Each inquiry was curious about how to adapt the scholarship of practice to support their own missions, academic contexts and faculty abilities to pursue scholarship through practice partnerships. Several were intrigued by the opportunities emerging from a different approach that Duquesne University was taking because of the nature of their academic and community content and resources. A formal meeting between the UIC and DU faculties at this Program Director's meeting in Chicago in Fall 2003 resulted in Anne Dickerson, Editor of *OTHC*, approving our proposal to move forward with a special publication on the scholarship of practice. Clearly from our various activities, educators and practitioners were ready to embrace the scholarship of practice and were curious to learn from the experiences of others who are pioneering this approach. Thus, our primary objective is to highlight current approaches that close the gap between scholarship and practice.

In occupational therapy, when investigators and practitioners work together to combine innovation with action, documentation and reflection, they embark on a journey that is the scholarship of practice. The scholarship of practice in occupational therapy will take on many different forms that reflect the unique needs of the academic and practice settings; no 'one size fits all' because the scholarship of practice in occupational therapy is built on unique partnerships between the academic and practice settings. Each brings their own mission and purpose for seeking the partnership and the partnership develops and sustains itself only when mutual interest and needs are addressed.

As we compared notes on the evolution of our two different scholarship of practice approaches, we become aware that faculty in an occupational therapy education program in a research intensive program will have different motivations for engaging in the scholarship of practice than one will in a teaching intensive setting. Likewise, practice partners vary in their contexts and missions for practice. Thus, multiple Scholarship of Practice models can emerge, each providing a model for others to understand and even replicate. We proceeded with an open call for papers for this volume, realizing that few scholarship of practice models probably existed at this

point in time. The authors felt that it was important to provide readers with the greatest variety of approaches possible. This variety would stimulate even more models to emerge in the future.

OVERVIEW

The primary goals of this special publication were to:

- discuss the reasons for the gaps between scholarship and practice
- highlight how scholarship can support the validity of occupational therapy practice through investigations studying everyday practice grounded in the reality of therapeutic encounters
- demonstrate how the engagement of occupations allows our clients, patients, etc., to reclaim their lives in the face of illness or disability
- illustrate models of practice-based research that can be implemented to provide evidence regarding the efficacy of occupational therapy services and approaches

The editors wish to thank the authors who submitted manuscripts to achieve this goal. Inside this volume, you will find rich pragmatic descriptions of academic-practice partnership models and outcome in four different contexts. This section is followed by faculty from four different universities or colleges outlining academic approaches to facilitate the scholarship of practice. The third section focuses on four examples of research methods that have been applied successfully in practice settings to develop evidence to support the practice of occupational therapy. In the last section, a group of authors provide a model to develop evidence-based practice competencies among practitioners to apply daily during intervention planning and overall program development.

We hope that the papers presented in this publication stimulate a growing interest by more occupational therapy and faculty practitioners to focus on the scholarship of practice. Evidence to describe the specific contribution of occupational therapy as a profession is critical to retaining our value as an essential service in our practice settings. Further, we need models to follow in practice that embed scholarship as part of everyday practice. Creating meaningful databases from individual responses to occupational therapy interventions can ultimately lead to studies demonstrating the validity of occupational therapy intervention. Accumulation of these practice studies will validate to others the importance of occupational therapy services. In closing, one of the greatest

challenges that occupational therapy faces today is creating a new approach to patient documentation that lends itself to demonstrate the specific impact of occupation-based interventions. Global program evaluation may demonstrate benefits of a program through measures such as length of stay, recidivism, and overall functional change. However, this approach frequently leaves occupational therapy practitioners to demonstrate the specific outcomes from occupational therapy. We encourage faculty-practitioner teams to come together and delineate systematic, reasonable approaches to patient or client assessment and re-assessment. This simple habit would create a wealth of scholarship regarding the efficacy and effectiveness of occupational therapy practice ensuring our future and most importantly, our patients' enhanced quality of life resulting from the application of evidence to everyday practice.

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO . . .

The review of journal articles was provided by a cadre of invited individuals from both practice and education from across the United States as well as Scotland and England. I want to thank them for their beneficial services, as their analysis and feed- back underpinned the selection process. Thanks to each of you for volunteering.

IN CLOSING

As the editors of this special edition regarding the scholarship of practice, we urge faculty and practitioners to create their own scholarship of practice through being a practice-scholar. We firmly believe that the Scholarship of Practice will be the norm, not the exception.

Patricia Crist, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA
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Volume Editors

A Scholarship of Practice:
Creating Discourse Between
Theory, Research and Practice

Gary Kielhofner, DrPH, OTR/L, FAOTA

SUMMARY. Occupational therapy has experienced a tremendous growth both of theory and research. However, there is little evidence that this renaissance of knowledge has been paralleled by changes in practice. Instead, academics tend to express concern that practice lags behind scholarship while clinicians bemoan the irrelevance of theory and research to their everyday work. This paper discusses the scholarship of practice. This approach is based on the assumption that those who ultimately will use the knowledge must be partners in its generation. Thus, it emphasizes cooperative efforts in which practitioners and scholars work together as partners to advance both knowledge and practice. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <http://www.HaworthPress.com> © 2005 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]*

KEYWORDS. Theory, scholarship of practice, knowledge generation, participatory action research, knowledge-creating systems, empowerment evaluation

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THE SCHOLARSHIP PRACTICE GAP

In the last quarter century, occupational therapy has experienced something of an explosion of scholarship. Tremendous growth both of theory and research in the field has resulted in a wealth of new concepts and evidence in the field. Much of the theoretical work and research has sought to better envision the role of occupation in health and well-being and its role as a therapeutic tool.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence that this renaissance of knowledge has been paralleled by a renaissance of practice. Instead academics tend to express concern that practice lags behind scholarship while clinicians bemoan the irrelevance of theory and research to their everyday work.

Why might practitioners not find theory and research relevant to their everyday work? It is likely that many factors account for this, including the demands and constraints of practice settings that leave limited time for reflection and innovation. However, an overlooked factor is how the occupational therapy generates knowledge and the resulting form that the field's knowledge takes.

Most of the new knowledge that gets produced and disseminated (i.e., published, presented at conferences) are the result of academics or graduate students working under academics. The kinds of concerns that these persons address when they are developing concepts or conducting investigations revolve around logical and rigor. What they too often ignore or consider secondary is relevance. That is, the question of what constitutes good knowledge for practice takes a back seat to academic concerns for conceptual and methodological rigor.

Recognizing this as a universal problem in the professions, writers such as Barnett (1994), Eraut (1994), and MacKinnon (1991) argue that, rather than de-coupling knowledge generation and knowledge use, these activities should be tied together into a single enterprise. Achieving this aim is not simple however, since a number of barriers exist. One barrier to coupling scholarship and practice is the fact that those who are generating knowledge and those who use knowledge work in different types of institutions (universities and colleges versus hospitals, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes and school systems with different agendas and expectations). A second barrier is the "everyday worlds" in which these two constituents operate. Academics work in a world where knowledge is judged, as noted above, by scientific rigor and where the ultimate legitimization of knowledge is publication. Practitioners exist in a world where knowledge is judged by what it allows

them to do and the practical results it generates. Such institutional and pragmatic barriers, mean that coupling scholarship and practice into a meaningful relationship requires innovative new models.

A Scholarship of Practice

One successful model of profitably coupling scholarship and practice is the concept of a scholarship of practice (Hammel, Finlayson, Kielhofner, Helfrich, & Peterson, 2002; Kielhofner, 2001, 2004) which first emerged at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). A key element of the scholarship of practice is that in a profession such as occupational therapy legitimate scholarship is devoted to improve practice. While scholarship that aims to improve practice, routinely generates new knowledge, it does not seek to generate knowledge for its own sake. Rather, knowledge is valued because it enhances practice and practice outcomes. This is an important distinction since scholarship in academic circles traditionally emphasized the importance of knowledge for its own sake. Claims that such knowledge might inform or benefit practice are not seen as sufficient for legitimizing inquiry that does not directly address questions of concern or interest to practice.

The scholarship of practice was originally defined as "a dialectic in which theoretical and empirical knowledge is brought to bear on the practical problems of therapeutic work and in which the latter raise questions to be addressed through scholarship." The aim of the scholarship of practice was stated to better understand the needs of people that occupational therapy serves, and the ways in which we can most effectively address these needs (Kielhofner, 2001). As such it includes research that:

- Identifies problems and needs that can be addressed by OT
- Develops assessment measures of targeted client outcomes
- Illuminates therapeutic processes
- Tests therapeutic strategies or programs
- Investigates OT contributions to interdisciplinary programs (Kielhofner, 2001)

Hammel, Finlayson, Kielhofner, Helfrich, and Peterson (2001) identified the following key elements of a scholarship of practice:

- Commitment to conducting research that directly responds to and contributes to practice

- Partnerships with individuals and organizations outside of the academic department to create new educational, practice and research opportunities,
- Creating synergies to advance practice and scholarship simultaneously

This approach is based on the assumption that those who ultimately will use the knowledge must be partners in its generation. The scholarship of practice, thus, begins with the premise that researchers and theorists in the field must work together with practitioners to not only generate the field's theory and research but also to advance practice. Consequently, the scholarship of practice emphasizes that:

- occupational therapy knowledge should grow out of collaboration between those in academic and practice roles.
- the collaboration must be a true partnership in which power is shared between academics and practitioners so that the perspectives that characterize the "everyday worlds" of each are fully represented.

In such a collaborative model, scholarship provides tools to enhance understanding of practice problems (e.g., methodological principles and rules for verifying knowledge). Practice points to what we should know and, by applying theory to real life, enriches the understanding and development of theory. In such a collaborative model, the theoretical, empirical and practical are interwoven. Knowledge becomes not simply knowledge about something, but knowledge of how to do something. It is a new form of knowledge-in-action. This, in short, is the guiding vision of a scholarship of practice. The next critical component is creating specific ways of operationalizing this vision.

Interdisciplinary Models of Cooperative Knowledge Generation

The scholarship of practice has also been informed by interdisciplinary models of developing knowledge relevant to solving real-world problems. Variously called participatory action research, empowerment evaluation, and knowledge-generating systems, these approaches all articulate principles and strategies for the involvement those who engage in or receive professional services in research that is designed to generate information for practice.

Participatory action research. Participatory action research has its origins in third-world social activism (Townsend, Birch, Langley, & Langille, 2000; Friere, 1993). It combines investigation and action to define and address local problems (Brown & Tandon, 1983).

When used in the context of developing and evaluating services, PAR aims to assure that the services and how they are evaluated reflect the perspectives of providers and consumers. PAR seeks to accomplish this aim by involving such stakeholders as true partners who have an active role in shaping services and identifying the criteria or standards against which effective service should be judged (Balcazar, Keys, Kaplan, & Suarez-Balcazar, 1998, Taylor, Hammel, & Braveman, 2004).

PAR is not a research method per se, but rather an approach that maximizes the involvement of stakeholders. It is typically associated with action-oriented projects that emphasize the achievement of local, consumer-driven goals over the traditional aims of positivist science (Bradbury & Reason, 2001; Boyce & Lysack, 2000). Therefore, much of the literature highlights differences between PAR approaches and more traditional research that only emphasizes prevailing standards of scientific rigor. This research approach has been noted to produce findings of greater relevance and social validity. Notably, because stakeholders are involved in shaping it, they are more likely to use and to benefit from the knowledge generated in the research (Brown, 1991; Tewey, 1997; Krogh, 1998).

Taylor, Hammel, and Braveman (2004) discuss and provide examples of how PAR can be used within studies that aim to develop and test occupational therapy service. They note that while approaches to studying services are limited to professionally-generated, intellectual ways of knowing, PAR embraces different kinds of knowing that can provide important evidence about practice. They also emphasize the importance of involving therapists and consumers in the research process.

Empowerment Evaluation

Empowerment evaluation (EE) builds upon and shares principles with PAR. However, it focuses on enabling local groups or communities to create and/or evaluate programs. EE encapsulates the philosophy that knowledge to inform practice should be generated in an interactive context where investigation, practice, and innovation are linked together (Fawcett, Paine-Andrews, Francisco, Scultz, Richter, Lewis, Williams, Harris, Berkley, Fisher, & Lopez, 1995; Fetterman, 1996; Suarez-Balcazar & Harper, 2003).

Empowerment evaluation ordinarily links knowing and doing through a cyclical process of investigation, education, and action. As information is gathered, it is analyzed and applied to enhance services and the results of changed service are then evaluated and the cycle continues. Empowerment Evaluation models (Suarez-Balcazar & Harper, 2003; Fawcett, Boothroyd, Schultz, Francisco, Carson & Bremby, 2003) stress that:

- EE is an emergent process that cannot be determined and structured beforehand like traditional research designs that emphasize control by the researcher.
- The academic is present in the evaluation not as an expert to pass judgment but as a facilitator to enable community partners to take control of the development and evaluation of their own programs.
- Academics and the community members with whom they form a partnership may take turns filling roles such as coach, educator, or technical assistant.
- EE is a capacity building process in which local stakeholders engage in learning by doing.

Benefits of EE are that staff and others in the agencies whose programs are evaluated are more likely to respond to and use the information generated through evaluation and that the local personnel involved in the evaluation learn new skills for creating, evaluating, and securing resources for their services (Suarez-Balcazar, Orellana-Damacela, Portillo, Sharma, & Lanum, 2004).

Knowledge Creating Systems

PAR and Empowerment Evaluation stress inquiry in which the primary aim of research is to generate locally-desired and utilizable knowledge and building capacity of local stakeholders. Senge and Scharmer (2001), building on PAR and EE concepts, propose an approach that incorporate both the focus on addressing local problem and building capacity while at the same time creating generalizable knowledge of the kind emphasized in traditional research. In their approach all three of these aims are incorporated into "a knowledge-creating system." This system is a community of researchers and practitioners who work together to create theory, along with practical tools and know-how.

Consequently a knowledge creating system involves three interacting domains of activity:

- capacity-building,
- practice innovation, and
- research.

Capacity-building aims to enhance local stakeholders' awareness and capabilities both as individuals and collectively. This element of the knowledge-creating system results in practical knowledge among the participants. Practice innovation involves creating a new vision of what can be accomplished in practice and going on to create the practical tools and approaches that achieve the vision. Practice innovation aims often create tools that not only work in the situation at hand, but that can also be used in other comparable situations. According to Senge and Scharmer (p. 240), research is a "disciplined approach to discovery and understanding, with a commitment to share what is learned." Thus, research aims to create generalizable, theoretical knowledge.

The knowledge creating system aims to integrate all three types of knowledge creation and use within a single community of people working together. Thus concepts, evidence, and practice innovations are created at the same time that practitioners' knowledge of and use of these resources is increased. All participants share a commitment to all three goals. For example, practitioners are involved in the process of creating generalizable knowledge, while academics are involved in solving practice problems. In this knowledge-creating system the traditional equal weight is given to generating knowledge and applying it, since these activities are inseparable. Kielhofner (2005) and Forsyth, Summerfield-Mann, and Kielhofner (2005) have described how such knowledge creating systems can be created in occupational therapy through academic practitioner collaboration.

While the ideas of PAR, EE, and KCS are each unique, taken together they indicate that knowledge development best occurs when:

- Those who ultimately will use the knowledge should be involved in helping to generate and refine it
- Knowledge generation should be grounded in the kinds of contexts in which it is designed for application
- Knowledge generation should emerge from cooperation and teamwork between those whose primary roles are to generate knowledge and those whose roles involve application of knowledge
- The desire to generate generalizable knowledge (theoretical and empirical) is balanced with the desire to create local problem-solutions and technical know-how

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