

## Guest-Editorial

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The papers in this special issue all illustrate application of the model of human occupation to the problem of assessment and rehabilitation of the injured/disabled worker. Taken together these articles stand as examples of several important points.

First of all, the papers illustrate the value of grounding practical application and research in theory. I have argued elsewhere (Kielhofner, 1997) that conceptual practice models, such as the model of human occupation, are ideal frameworks for the development of knowledge in practical disciplines. A model provides theoretical arguments which guide clinical reasoning and program development and thus systematize approaches to providing care and service. A model also serves as a framework for generating a technology for application. This includes such things as assessment tools, case examples, and documented programs of services. Finally, applied and basic research test the veracity and practical utility of the model's theoretical arguments. When a conceptual practice model is being developed, tested, and applied in an ongoing fashion, it serves to organize an accumulation of knowledge. Moreover, it creates a framework wherein research, theory and practical issues can influence each other and are more easily related.

While each of the articles in this issue can stand alone as a valuable contribution to the knowledge base for work-related services, they illustrate something equally important as a collective: that the usefulness of published work is enhanced when organized under a common framework. Therefore, I encourage readers to examine this set of papers as a whole to recognize the threads of ideas and concepts which tie them together and to see how readily the case examples, clinical reasoning strategies, assessment tools, and research are interrelated. There is an ease of discourse between these different types of papers.

Another point worth mentioning is the community of effort which generated the scholarship represented in this issue. While conceptual practice models usually have their origins in the work of a single scholar or a small group of scholars, no model can remain vibrant and useful without the inclusion of ideas, the empirical scrutiny and the creative application that comes from many persons working together to develop a common set of ideas. This makes common sense, but it is too

often overlooked. We tend to associate theories and concepts with a single or few individuals rather than the larger community of persons who actually develop and apply them. Moreover, scholars are often led to 'reinvent the wheel' in the name of originality, rather than recognizing the important impact they can have in building upon existing theoretical and empirical traditions. A model of practice is not anyone's exclusive property, it belongs to a community of scholars who collectively own it and hold responsibility for its development. When this is the case, we have a valuable conceptual practice model.

Related to this theme, it is notable that the papers in this collection also represent international contributions. Conceptual models should not be limited by national or cultural boundaries. Professional knowledge can and should be developed and applied internationally and cross-culturally. Theories are enriched when culturally embedded ideas or approaches are challenged and critiqued by colleagues from other cultures. Moreover, cross-cultural research enables us to sort out what is common to the human condition and what is unique in specific cultures. While it is important to recognize cultural differences and the impact they can have on human experience and performance, I am also struck repeatedly that research and case examples underscore what is common across cultures. When we recognize this commonality and make use of others' work and wisdom, we have a wider array of tools and ideas we can bring to bear in solving human problems.

Most of the papers in this issue are largely the result of a "journal club" organized in the occupational therapy department at the University of Illinois. I think all of us can readily vouch for several things. A group of persons working together on a common set of ideas can generate an interesting and exciting scholarly exchange. The structure of regular meetings, deadlines, discussion and critique is one of the surest ways to publication. Working together in groups toward writing papers is a useful mechanism for creating a climate of scholarship in any group. We heartily encourage others to consider forming groups to support writing and publication!

Gary Kielhofner  
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