



Welcome to the seventh issue of *Spotlight on Occupation*

In this issue we throw a light on participation in occupations and the human rights agenda. Article 27 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits” (<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>).



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Whereas the Declaration as a whole speaks to promoting social harmony and the inherent dignity of all peoples, this Article suggests everyone has the right to be included in socially and culturally enhancing occupations. All forms of discrimination hinder inclusion. In this way Mary Law in Canada argues that excluding young people with physical disabilities from everyday and school occupations is a human rights issue. Likewise, limited opportunities for older people, either community-dwelling or in aged care, to participate in a range of everyday, valued and health promoting occupations may be argued as a breach of human rights. Being an advocate for fair and reasonable participation in human occupations is being a defender of human rights. December 10 2011 marks ten years of Human Rights Day. It is timely for us, individually and collectively, to consider how we might work to advance human dignity through promoting peoples’ participation in inclusive occupations.

Feel free to hand SPOTLIGHT on to anyone who might be interested in it. Previous issues are available at - <http://www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/study-areas/health-sciences/occupational-science-and-therapy/spotlight-on-occupation/newsletter>

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Human Rights Competencies

Three competency statements were developed for the IAG: Human Rights poster for the Canadian conference:

- Demonstrate critical consciousness by telling others about a personal and professional commitment to safeguarding one’s own and others’ occupational rights. (Daloz, 2000; Kumagai & Lyspon, 2009)
- Identify influences on occupational injustice and justice in one’s own environment. (Janke, N.D.)
- Analyze and plan effective action, and evaluate effects on occupational injustices affecting populations, communities, organizations, groups, families and individuals. (Adapted from Tibbitts et al., 2010)

References:

- Daloz, L.A.P. (2000). Transformative learning for the common good. In J. Mezirow (Ed.). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Janke, R. *Growing communities for peace*. <http://www.hrusa.org/september/activities/storytelling.htm>
- Kumagai, A.K., & Lypson, M.L. (2009). *Beyond cultural competence: Critical consciousness, social justice, and multicultural education*. *Academic Medicine*, 84(6), 782-787. DOI: 10.1097/ACM.0b013e3181a42398.
- Tibbitts et al. (2010). *Human rights education core competencies*. Human Rights Education Association. http://www.hrea.org/HRE%20Competencies_9-10.pdf

Studying Occupation

LECTURER: Clare Hocking

AUT offers two papers focusing on occupation, both available on campus or by distance.

Participation and Health explores the relationship between the things people do and their health, which involves understanding why people do what they do, and how that contributes to competence and satisfaction, builds identity, conveys culture, and structures society.

Enabling Participation explores how occupation can be put to work to restore and promote health.

QUALIFICATION: Certificate of Proficiency, Honours degree, Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma of Health Science (Occupational Practice), or a Masters degree.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS: All health professionals can enrol. Those with a Bachelors degree can enrol direct into the Masters. Holders of a Diploma or Health Department Certificate initially enrol into the Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma.

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SPOTLIGHT ON OCCUPATION

Human Rights Poster at CAOT Conference

AUTHORS: Hocking, C., Townsend, L., Merritt, B., Paterson, M., & Thibeault, R.

SUMMARY: As occupational therapists increasingly take an occupational perspective of human rights, educators worldwide will need to ensure that entry level graduates have the requisite human rights competencies. This poster, developed by members of the World Federation of Occupational Therapists International Advisory Group: Human Rights and Canadian colleagues, was designed to stimulate discussion about how that might happen. One idea was to promote critical consciousness among students by providing opportunities to discuss their own assumptions, privileges, values and biases – and to share stories that reveal the experience and conditions of injustice. Another idea was to promote critical action, using group projects where students develop a plan to promote occupational justice and participation.

COMMENT: Liz Townsend and Brenda Merritt reported that the poster was well received, raising some interesting questions about how to 'do' human rights in practice. It seems that the best way to do that is to create spaces for people to tell practice stories, and to work together to tease out the ways that human rights are implicitly addressed, then to identify ways to make occupational rights more explicit.

Reference: (2010). *International Advisory Group: Human Rights – Educating Occupational Therapists*. Available from <http://www.wfot.org.au>

Occupational Meanings of Food Preparation for Goan Canadian Women

AUTHORS: Beagan, B. & Etowa, J.

SUMMARY: 50 African Canadian women aged 40-60 years were interviewed in this qualitative study. These women identified spiritual occupations which were described as essential to their health and well-being, that served as a buffer against the cumulative and pervasive effects of racism. Racism is experienced by all of these women from the moment they step out of their homes, either directly or to others. It impacts on all of their occupations from food and clothing choices to how they spend their leisure time. Some occupations were completed in order to try and manage the stress caused by racism and/or the anticipation that it could occur at any time.

COMMENT: Racism impacts on the occupational choices that these women have and changes the quality of their experiences. The purpose of some occupations may be changed and these women may require greater personal resources in order to participate in society. This is an example of occupational injustice and it could be argued that these women do not have full citizenship as a result.

Reference: *Journal of Occupational Science*, 18(3), 210-222

Graduates as innovators: Informing the profession on occupational rights and justice



AUTHORS: JENNI MACE, VALERIE WRIGHT-ST CLAIR, YVONNE THOMAS AND THELMA BURNETT

SUMMARY: We recently pulled ideas together to further develop the work of the World Federation's drive to educate occupational therapists on occupational rights and justice. The result was a workshop at the recent 24th Australian National Conference. Prior to the conference Australian and New Zealand educators were asked how occupational justice and human rights were being taught within their schools. The stories from six of these universities were shared. Theories from the medical profession on how to raise critical consciousness and action in students were presented and used to promote discussion on how occupational rights and justice related to the participants own work or teaching.

COMMENT: All involved agreed that a consistent philosophy and language of rights and justice should be embedded across a curriculum and not just in one specific paper. Participants also felt that education needed to be available to practitioners as well as students to ensure the integration and sustainability of occupational justice beyond the classroom. It is hoped that the collective ideas of all who were involved in the workshop will be published in the near future.

Reference: Kumagi, A., & Lypson, M. (2009). Beyond cultural competence: Critical consciousness, social justice, and multicultural education. *Academic Medicine*, 84(6), 782-787. DOI: 10.1097/ACM.Ob013e3181a42398.

