



## Welcome to the fourth issue of *Spotlight on Occupation*

Occupational scientists and interested occupational therapists from around the globe gathered together in May 2010 at the World Federation of Occupational Therapists congress in Santiago, Chile. The International Society of Occupational Scientists (ISOS) <http://isos.nfshost.com> workshop "Sharing the world of occupational science" opened up the opportunity for the many participants to explore how this emerging science is growing and developing internationally.

If you are looking for opportunities to feed your hunger for understanding occupational science, consider attending in the Joint Conference of the Society for the Study of Occupation: USA (SSO:USA) and the Canadian Society of Occupational Scientists (CSOS) in London, Ontario, Canada, 14-16th October 2010. This symposium, "Redefining Boundaries and Bridges in Occupational Science," promises to be a show-stopper on the occupational science calendar this year.

Read more at: [www.csoscanada.com](http://www.csoscanada.com) or [www.sso-usa.org](http://www.sso-usa.org)



EDITORS VALERIE WRIGHT-ST CLAIR, CLARE HOCKING, AND JENNI MACE (L-R)

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- OCCUPATIONAL EMPOWERMENT FOR MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS
- RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN OCCUPATION, PLACE AND IDENTITY
- CAREGIVING FOR CHILDREN AFTER TBI
- GYMNASTICS FOR COORDINATION DISORDER
- STUDYING OCCUPATION

### Performances and places of identity: Conceptualizing intersections of occupation, identity and place in the process of migration

**AUTHORS:** Suzanne Huot & Debbie Laliberte Rudman (2010)

### Sewing in the lives of immigrant women

**AUTHORS:** Christina Boerema, Mary Russell & Alejandra Aguilar (2010)

### The need for belonging: The impact of restrictions on working on the well-being of an asylum seeker

**AUTHORS:** Nicole Burchett & Ruth Matheson (2010)

**SUMMARY:** The authors of this cluster of articles present varied perspectives on the relationships between occupation, place and identity. Theoretical support for the impact change in place can have on identity is drawn from Goffman's notion of performance and Bourdieu's notion of habitus (Huot & Laliberte Rudman); immigrant women in South Australia are found to have sustained their identity and bridged cultural traditions through sewing and needlework (Boerema, Russell & Aguilar); and being prohibited from working is shown to threaten the identity and sense of belonging of an asylum seeker (Burchett & Matheson).

**COMMENT:** Together, the articles demonstrate the richness of bringing multiple perspectives and research methodologies to bear on a common human experience – moving from one place to another. The authors underline the power of everyday occupation to manage life transitions and raise important questions about a community's responsibility to support and welcome its newly arrived members.

Reference: *Journal of Occupational Science*, 17(2).

## A model of occupational empowerment for marginalized populations in community environments

**AUTHOR:** Fisher, G., & Hotchkiss, A. (2008)

**SUMMARY:** The model described in this article emerged from Fisher and Hotchkiss' work in a women's shelter, where they found traditional occupational therapy models difficult to apply to the specific needs of marginalized groups. They found that for this population, their environments and background were disempowering, promoted occupational deprivation and resulted in learned helplessness. Whilst they did not employ traditional grounded theory data collection, open, selective and axial coding was used to analyze data and construct theory. The resulting model has six linear stages; Disempowering environments, Occupational deprivation, Reinforced learned helplessness, Empowering occupational therapy programming, Empowerment through occupation and Promotes positive occupational change.

**COMMENT:** Students here at AUT have found this 2008 article informative in developing programmes for community organisations. Whilst CMOP-E (2007) also addresses occupational justice issues, Fisher and Hotchkiss' focus on issues of disempowerment and helplessness provides useful guidance for this emerging occupational therapy practice area.

Reference: *Occupational Therapy in Health Care*, 22(1), 55-71.



## Parents caregiving for children after a TBI: Structuring for security

**AUTHORS:** Jones, M., Hocking, C., Wright-St.Clair, V. (2010)

**SUMMARY:** Although research shows that families make a difference to the outcome for children with a brain injury, little is known about the occupations that are involved for families who care for them. This grounded theory study involved interviewing and observing five families engaged in everyday occupations at home and in the community.

It revealed that parents learn to shelter their child from physical and emotional harm by structuring the environment and the child's occupations. To achieve that, they actively manage the child's behaviour and at the same time, set things up so that they can join with others in the community. Their success is mediated by having a routine and other people who support them, and by acquiring practical knowledge of the danger signs, the consequences of not holding things together, and their child's need to be part of things.

**COMMENT:** The findings suggest that children's progress and participation is facilitated by helping families in the context of their caregiving occupations, to predict and manage risks, develop caregiving structures, and to establish community supports. That is, consistent with the assumption that occupation supports health and well-being, parents focused on what their children want and need to do, and what needs to be done to help them join in others.

The fact that parents are not engaged in legal processes to secure compensation, because medical and rehabilitation services are publically funded in New Zealand, means these results need to be interpreted with caution in contexts where services are less available.

Reference: *New Zealand Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 57(1), 4-13.



MARGARET JONES

## Participation of boys with Developmental Coordination Disorder in Gymnastics

**AUTHORS:** Hessel, S. (pictured), Hocking, C., Graham Davies, S. (2010)

**SUMMARY:** While gymnastics is known to be accessible for children with DCD, the features that enable them to participate have not been identified. In this ethnographic study the first author, an experienced gymnastics coach, recruited 3 boys aged 7-8 to join an established general gym group for boys of mixed ages and abilities. Semi-structured interviews with the gymnasts, their parents and two other coaches, and observations



over two 9-week terms revealed that the individualised, graded approach to skill attainment enabled successful participation. The boys' participation was also supported by the appeal of the gym equipment and an enabling coaching style, emphasising demonstration, using equipment to provide visual cues, and repetition of verbal prompts. Additionally, the mixed ages and abilities of the other boys meant that there was a culture of gymnasts helping each other, and that the gymnasts were perceived as being 'within the range of normal behaviour' for boys.

**COMMENT:** This study breaks new ground in revealing the nature of the interrelationship between an occupation, an environment and individual capacities for occupation. It sheds light on the features of occupations and environments that therapists and parents might seek to support the participation of children with impairments. This is an important finding because the parents in the study had wanted their children to experience gymnastics, but had not believed they would be able to participate, and because researchers have raised concerns about the fitness levels of children with DCD and their relative lack of playmates and engagement in play activities.

Reference: *New Zealand Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 57(1), 14-21.

## Studying Occupation

**LECTURER:** Clare Hocking

**OUTLINE:** 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.

Contact: [clare.hocking@aut.ac.nz](mailto:clare.hocking@aut.ac.nz)