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Editorial - August 2012

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Source: *IJOT: The Israeli Journal of Occupational Therapy* / כתב עת ישראלי לריפוי  
כרך 21, אוגוסט 2012, כרך 21, חוברת 3, Special Issue on the topic of  
Teaching, Training and Supervision in Occupational Therapy / גיליון מיוחד בנושא  
העמדת הוראה, הכשרה והדרכה בריפוי בעיסוק (אוגוסט 2012)

Published by: Israeli Society of Occupational Therapy / העמותה ישראלית לריפוי בעיסוק

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/23470626>

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## Editorial - August 2012

*As occupational therapists we integrate learning processes within all the areas of our profession: pediatrics, mental health, cognitive deficits, geriatrics and others. Our therapeutic practice affords us the tools we need to transfer knowledge and help develop skills, but are these tools appropriate and sufficient for teaching the profession?*



Noami Hadas Lidor



Sigal Vax

*Professional education is a unique domain that demands learning and specialization. Over the years, we have come to understand that in order to cultivate the development of proficient occupational therapists; we must refine our educational approach, including instruction, guiding and training. To do so, we must draw knowledge from learning theories that emphasize cognitive processes, and psychodynamic theories that emphasize emotional processes. These are combined with our professional perception that continues to develop. Together they create professionals who are multi-dimensional.*

*This issue deals with the professional instruction of occupational therapy in all of its facets: educating the next generation of professionals, professional skill training for clinicians and enabling continued professional and personal development. Our goal is to illustrate the expanding perceptions, attitudes and the tools of those who are involved in instruction, training, and counseling, whether in the university or in the field.*

*The purpose of the MATAM, published in 2006 (Yalon-Chamovitz et al.), a document that is based on the OTPF, is to describe the scope of professional practice, and analyze the knowledge and activities required of occupational therapists. But the MATAM does not address the ways in which this knowledge can be imparted. It deals with the process of individualized intervention, without mentioning the processes of supervision and instruction. The therapeutic process is often accomplished in parallel with the supervision given to the occupational therapist. Despite the fact that most occupational therapists are engaged in education - whether of colleagues, other staff, or of clients and their families - the tools needed for teaching, training and supervision are not included in the baccalaureate occupational therapy curriculum. In recent years, some courses have been included in academic institutions for the training of clinical instructors, and in some of the institutions there are special courses offered in the Master's degree programs*

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that relate to methods of instruction and training. No doubt there is a need to reflect on the values, methods and tools needed to enable a broader, professional approach to teaching, supervision, consultation and training, which can result in enhanced connections between practice in the field and academic studies. We hope that this issue will contribute towards those who are involved with the work of education.

The articles and columns within this issue represent an attempt to broaden our professional knowledge of how to educate occupational therapy professionals and students. The articles describe projects in the fields of practice and academic programs that were contributed by students as well as professionals. The authors drew from their knowledge of the core principles of occupational therapy and from different and novel practice disciplines. Together, they incorporate a comprehensive view of the different areas of occupational therapy practice.

Currently, much work is done through interdisciplinary teams. Thus in recent years, we are attempting to learn, adapt and implement instructional and teaching interventions from closely and not so closely related fields, as is expressed in the article of Naama Katz and Dr. Naomi Hadas Lidor: **"Supervision through coaching - A different way of thinking for the occupational therapist working in rehabilitation"**. This is also reflected in the book review of presented by Michal De-la-vega, of the book by Hanoch Yerushalmi and Tamar Kron entitled: **"The inter-subjective approach to supervision"**.

The modern age and technology is evolving and becoming more relevant to teaching, training and supervision, as can be seen in the article written by the professional staff of the "Yesh" Project in Jerusalem: **"Supervision for occupational therapy students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Correspondence via electronic mail as a supplementary means for fieldwork education"**. This article introduces a unique model for training occupational therapy students that suits the pace and the tools available to clinical supervisors, and the incorporation of progressive technology as part of the training process. Karen Jacobs and her colleague, Nancy Doyle contributed from their experience in the professional instruction of occupational therapy students both within and outside of Boston University, broadening our understanding of the latent opportunities available through the use of advanced technology in their article: **"Learning locally and globally: An overview of distance education in occupational therapy"**. Their article discusses how to use distance learning tools and shows how they are integrated into professional instruction.

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*The technology column, written by Dr. Liat Raz-Yehene, Dr. Shira Yalon-Chamovitz, Prof. Amitai Ziv and Prof. Noomi Katz also deals with innovative technology that has been accumulated in the past years, for the purpose of occupational therapy instruction and the training of professionals **"MESER: The use of medical simulation of virtual patients in the undergraduate curriculum in occupational therapy"**.*

*The perspective of the students is no less important, for they reveal to us the dilemmas they face during their training process. In working with the students, we try to teach them to find the strength, the alternatives and the solutions from within themselves. In recent years, given our understanding that information develops at a tremendous rate and the learning required of a clinician is never complete, professional instruction has dealt more and more with the teaching of methods of how to become knowledgeable, and not only in imparting knowledge. The article: **"For me and with myself: A self-mapping tool of ethical dilemmas in occupational therapy"**, written by Naama Katz, Nili Broyer, Moriah Oshri, Yafit Shpigler, Nadia Goldman and Or Abramovitz, deals with ethical issues introduced by the students themselves. This is an article written jointly by staff and students at the Ono Academic College, who developed a tool for processing ethical issues that concern students and professionals alike. This tool can be used as a means of self-examination within the framework of training and supervision that combines emotional and cognitive perspectives in coping with ethical issues. In the **"Personal Glimpse"** column as well, the student's perspective is revealed regarding a supervisory dilemma in the practice of occupational therapy. Adi Tene, a graduate of the occupational therapy program in Tel Aviv University, describes her process of growth from a student to a professional in her own words.*

*Through the process of training, we can also promote social processes. The article: **"Project 'Keshet': A university-community collaboration for social change"**, written by Miri Tal-Saban, Cochavit Levi-Mazaki and Dr. Anat Golos, of the Department of Occupational Therapy, Hebrew University, also highlights the ethical aspects of educating professionals. This article describes how students are exposed to clinical fieldwork through a variety of different experiences and elaborates on the perspective and tools used to train the next generation.*

*Today, many occupational therapists appreciate the opportunity presented in educating our future clinicians and other professionals. This vital work represents not only an additional channel for professional development, but also serves to strengthen our professional and public stance. This is a method*

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*of embodying our attitudes and thinking processes within the next generation of occupational therapists. In addition, the task of supervision results in the transfer of our knowledge within the domain of occupational therapy and of functional approaches, to other areas within the disciplines of education, consultation, psychology, etc.*

*The practices involved in training and supervision incorporates parallel processes between our direct work with consumers and the supervision of staff members. We meet with the consumer in times of crisis, and enable learning, adaptation, change and integration within a new, different reality. The processes include identifying strengths, acquiring knowledge and skills, and sometimes even the incorporation of a new world-view that enables the acquisition of a different perspective of the other and of the self. We can see the parallels between the supervisor and the professional, between the professional and the consumer and between the supervisor and the entire directory of the professional system. They all acquire new attitudes and innovative tools, and for all of them the goal is to achieve self-actualization, fulfillment, independence, control and choice. As supervisors and educators, we serve as role models for our students, and they serve as role models for their clients. The clients themselves can represent a model for their families and their environment. Thus, we are able to initiate circles of influence that widen.*

*This issue is designated for every occupational therapist who participates in the supervision, instruction and training of students, occupational therapists, consumers, other professionals and families.*

*We wish you all a pleasant and an instructive reading experience.*

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