

METAMORPHOSIS

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Abstract

A critical dialogue of the future of occupational therapy in Brazil through pragmatism and reflection. Critical reflexivity through contextual sustainability and experiential narratives are explored as means to navigate education, practice, policy and communities in order to address the needs of those who receive occupational therapy services.

Keyword: Education; Occupational justice; Occupational therapy; Occupational science.

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Resumo

Um diálogo crítico do futuro da terapia ocupacional no Brasil através do pragmatismo e da reflexão. A reflexividade crítica através da sustentabilidade contextual e narrativas experienciais são exploradas como meios para navegar na educação, prática, política e comunidades, a fim de atender às necessidades daqueles que recebem serviços de terapia ocupacional.

Palavras-chave: Educação; Justiça ocupacional; Terapia ocupacional; Ciência ocupacional.

Resumen

Un diálogo crítico del futuro de la terapia ocupacional en Brasil a través del pragmatismo y la reflexión. La reflexividad crítica a través de la sostenibilidad contextual y las narrativas experienciales se exploran como medios para navegar la educación, la práctica, las políticas y las comunidades con el fin de abordar las necesidades de quienes reciben servicios de terapia ocupacional.

Palabra clave: Educación; Justicia ocupacional; Terapia ocupacional; Ciencia ocupacional.

INTRODUCTION

I am honored to have the opportunity to engage in a critical dialogue about occupational therapy with my esteemed Brazilian colleagues. My preparation was intentional and included making outlines, reading background information, and reading previously published manuscripts. Doing so allowed me to immerse into what this potentially living document could be upon publication. Upon reflection, my experiences thus far with the Brazilian occupational therapy community have taught me that there is a humble, confident brilliance throughout the country. I recall one example which illustrates my comments. I was with a group of occupational therapists on World Occupational Therapy Day in October 2015 on the beach in Rio de Janeiro. We listened to music, danced, sang, and celebrated our profession together as a global occupational therapy family. There was a unique sense of belonging to something much greater than myself. Yet this sense is evident at conferences, at universities, within institutional settings, and in the local environments. I hope that the product created here is respectful of those who represent our profession and is a thought provoking opportunity for all of us to critically reflect upon our accomplishments, analyze our ongoing challenges, and contribute to the establishment of strategies for our future.

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I choose to be optimistic about occupational therapy. I choose to believe that the vast breadth & depth of opportunities and possibilities for occupational therapy can and will be constructed upon the capabilities and capacities¹ of the profession across the expanse of this world. I choose to consider alternative futures for occupational therapy and for those we serve at every level such that everybody has opportunity to explore and engage in occupations of choice in least restrictive environments. These choices are deliberate, intentional, and can become reality in this century. Each facet is grounded in evidence and interpretation. I will introduce the philosophical stance and set the tone for this manuscript. Throughout this manuscript, I will navigate this discussion to build upon and support my comments related to (1) training of occupational therapists, (2) how the similarities and differences of training may support or hinder occupational therapy, (3) how regional issues intersect with these constructs, (4) how these topics may encourage dialogue, (5) how occupational science relates to this discussion, & (6) how will we survive and how might we minimize inequalities throughout the world. The document will end after we travel together throughout this

¹ Capability – the **ability** to **perform** a skill. Capacity – the **potential** to **develop** a skill.

manuscript with a conclusion that reflects a plausible outcome of our journey together. Although I put forward these thoughts and interpretations and conclusions, I do not necessarily claim that this proposed pathway is the only way to navigate moving forward. Rather I choose to believe that this is one of a myriad of possibilities. Our chorus is strong and we can build critical mass and the future of occupational therapy together.

Training of occupational therapists

Elelwani L. Ramugondo spoke at the first World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) Congress on the African continent in May 2018¹. She spoke elegantly about occupational consciousness². She wove a discussion into her keynote address a tapestry that addressed topics such as how coloniality has impacted and does to current time how people perceive themselves, how they engage in occupations, and to some degree, how some of the similarities in education and practice in the global North and South exist¹. She utilized the words debility and decoloniality and dehumanization to frame her discussion and to speak about how we might move forward and “heal” these wounds. For our manuscript, I will adopt part of her message that we can “change the world”. Although caution abounds, change is conceivable.

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These concepts are meant to be implicitly included in the upcoming discussion, especially as the history of colonialism relates to realities, access to resources, and social differences.

It is possible that the construct of occupational consciousness contributed to the background or foundation for the aforementioned keynote address. Regardless, for our manuscript, it is important to consider that some of the questions related to similarities and especially differences in occupational therapy throughout the world, may be related to engagement in occupations and may be an opportunity to respond to existing social structures worldwide.

In order to address similarities and differences with the formal training of occupational therapists worldwide, with specific intent to compare and contrast the global “North” and “South”, it is important to analyze the similarities and differences between constructs such as occupation and activity³. Despite the reality that these are two separate constructs, their meaning, understanding, and usage are often linked together in occupational therapy.

With translation into languages other than English, and within contextual situations, these words hold distinctly different meanings - thus adding to the complexity of and our understanding of differences in education across the global North and South. Salles e Matsukura³ analyzed 19 peer-reviewed articles. Additionally, they wrote about the “lack of cohesion” which then contributes to lack of clarity and an inability to adequately analyze and critique with critical reflection. Their conclusion is that the complexity of these terms may mean that there may never be a universally accepted definition of occupation. It may be that what these authors frame for us in their narrative is that context linked to social needs may guide us toward occupational relevance.

Thus, occupation does shape the social differences in our world⁴. In fact, it may be that this pathway is bi-directional. Angell⁴ states that “occupational opportunities” are unequal to social inequalities. The author describes that social differences may guide who may or may not participate in occupations. It may be possible to conclude that this may also impact when and where these occupations occur. Thus far in our manuscript, the ground work has been laid for the social and contextual aspects of a locale, region, country, or hemisphere being both the origin and solution for the differences in occupation and occupational therapy. Amongst Angell’s conclusions is that intersectionality may be a means through which to address these differences.

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How can the similarities and differences of training may support or hinder occupational therapy?

Yet, organizations which work alongside the occupational therapy community also put forward educational criteria and standards. Formal occupational therapy education in the global “North”, predominated by origins and evolution over the last 100 years, is linked to organizations and accreditation agencies. In Europe, ENOTHE and COTEC have guided organizations which have directed occupational therapy education throughout the continent of Europe. ENOTHE was founded in 1995 to link educational standards throughout Europe. COTEC was created in 1986 and represents over 180,000 occupational therapists within 30 associations (<http://www.coteceurope.eu/>).

There is a graduate level educational opportunity for those practicing clinicians in Europe who desire more professional development. This offering is based upon the stance that

“With the increase of the average age, the increase of people with disabilities and chronic conditions, there is a need for highly qualified occupational therapists who are better equipped to deal innovatively with complex situations in therapy and health promotion.” A comparable statement was made by ACOTE (Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education) in the United States of America as part of an explanation to move the entry-level practice from the Bachelor to (post-professional) Master’s degree level in 1999. Ahead of this decision, ACOTE adopted this statement regarding educational standards “Given the demands, complexity, and diversity of contemporary occupational therapy practice, ACOTE’s position is that the forthcoming educational standards are most likely to be achieved in post-baccalaureate degree programs.”

In light of the background and historical context for these decisions, there might be common ground for key topics and an opportunity to link and learn from each other. Although the exact topics should be relevant for each locale, nation, and region, political and cultural narratives can serve to guide occupational therapy education. Since tension exists between current practice evolving needs of communities, and future visions, common parameters can become a point of unification and a strategy to support growth and maintain identity.

Yet, despite evidence to support these decisions, the societal and social demands, political landscapes, healthcare, and overall wealth of these aforementioned nations do not necessarily match those for the rest of the world. So, now we may have some knowledge of the origins of these North and South differences. These variances likely began before these educational decisions were shared publically, yet within the last few decades, these educational expectations have become reality. We should not solely focus upon geographical differences to attempt to understand the landscape, rather we might need to consider how this change occurs. For example, although an occupational therapist may practice in Brazil with a baccalaureate degree, the Federal University of São Carlos now offers a first of its kind in this country, a graduate level degree. We should note that this post-graduation education does not exclude the baccalaureate degree for occupational therapy. Keep in mind that this is not necessarily a cause-effect discussion. There are ongoing discussions such as those introduced by Emmel *et al*⁵, which in turn, may reflect echo comments of their colleagues, which is that more recognition of the profession within Brazil has yielded more need, and consequently more programs. These necessities, in turn, have contributed to the complex dialogue. A question remains, which is – is the future of occupational therapy in Brazil meant to move

toward required graduate level education? We will continue to explore this question throughout our discussion.

There are a wide range of similarities and differences in occupational therapy education depending upon the country. Some begin this education at the undergraduate level. Yet, others do not begin until graduate level education. These similarities and, in particular, these differences, may be understood within our dialogue. The similarities may be more accepted amongst and between cultures and countries, yet what about the differences? Do the differences act as a barrier to fulfillment of the potential of occupational therapy or do the differences strengthen our resolve? Both. Simultaneously. The differences analyzed thus far are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are contextually & situationally determinant and relevant, yet also permit for some matter of interpretation. The interpretation of these differences may be grounded in the dialogue which seeks to set the stage to direct and shape our understanding of occupation from the individual to more of a collective, community-based approach. At least part of this is linked to the social aspects of occupation within a contextual framework.

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How do regional and local issues intersect with these constructs?

The complexity of communities is possible and necessary to be analyzed, yet may need to be accomplished through a systems theory approach⁶. Fogelberg e Frauwirth⁶ suggest that Mary Reilly introduced systems theory as early as 1974. This may have led to growth in other areas and theories which evolved from this realm. Key points here include that these systems/theories are not static in nature. The dynamic nature of any complex system, including that of occupation and occupational therapy, will continue to develop and take upon new characteristics. In doing so, it may need to be operationalized differently. These authors propose that if occupation is at the core of an individual (internal) and that occupational occur in an environmental context (external), that the delicate balance of these are reflected in the system. Groups within a community fit into this proposed scenario. Since this is such an intricate discussion, we may need to add more dimensions to our discussion in order to appreciate its richness overall. Thus far, we have focused much upon the cultural, including educational aspects, of occupational therapy, yet we should also include an analysis of the social and political contributions – especially related to “collective occupations”.

How can these topics encourage dialogue?

Gerlach *et al.*⁷ write about how the global North, which has framed much of the post-colonial world, has mostly focused upon individualism through a neo-liberal agenda. This is not necessarily aligned with the needs of communities for health or occupational-based outcomes. This is important for our discussion. These authors offer that individualism may assume that people have a certain autonomy over their choice of occupation. This approach does not include the potential impact of social constraints or supports for individuals or groups. Thus, an entire section of society and policy related to this section is missed, and may even serve to reinforce the social limitations which first created these inequities. To utilize caution, neither these authors nor myself propose only one simple answer to such a complex topic, rather, that we must together critically reflect upon how we make decisions. It is possible that each part of the world, each community, each individual, including how each of these interact with each other is the lens through which we need to address a variety of occupational needs at the micro-, meso-, and macro – levels.

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This proposed lens through which the different levels may be analyzed separately and collectively may occur with more understanding of each of the previously introduced issues – cultural, social, and political. The peer-reviewed articles chosen for our manuscript to support these reflections will build upon an ongoing dialogue. This will allow us to direct our discussion to education amongst the complexities of the global North and South. I hereby propose that occupational therapy and its ability to succeed, including its differences juxtaposed to its need for continuity, is dependent upon the political-social-cultural issues or any community, region, or hemisphere.

“Culture is fundamentally important to this great profession.”⁸. This is the first sentence in a manuscript about culture and relevance related to occupational therapy worldwide. As Iwama⁸ describes, an important point of our existence as a profession is directly related to our importance to the daily realities of our clients. Thus, it is our diversity as human beings situated within our contextual realities which allows us to tell the stories of our occupational lives. This part of our dialogue is focused upon the individual aspects of occupation, at the micro - level. It also reminds us that an important part of this woven narrative is the social aspect of our occupational experiences.

Hammell⁹ explains her thoughts on interdependence as she explored occupation. This contrasts with a more “traditional” Western world (or global North) approach to measure occupation through independence. This difference may serve as another point in our dialogue of how and where there are distinctly varied views, such as those discussed thus far, upon occupation. Interdependence implies a link or a connection. It may be that the connection is the person engaging in an occupation within an environment. Once again, we return to the environment, community, collective occupations and how these constructs may not necessarily be separate. The social aspect of how we engage in occupations is central to the efficacy of occupational therapy. Hammell wrote in this 2009 article more so about an exploration of occupation as a construct. Yet, her comments about being critical, the potential reality of being “culturally specific”, and lack of attention to the rest of the world may be a form of “theoretical imperialism”⁹.

Imperialism in the form of neo-liberal policies is at the centerpiece of the political aspect of policy and how occupational therapy intersects with people with disabilities. Sakellariou & Rotarou¹⁰ analyzed case examples in an attempt to better understand how the aforementioned policies may lead to health inequalities. Unfortunately, these types of policies may lead to a direct or indirect assault upon the social determinants of health through “power differentials”. These authors write about how the 2008 global financial crisis led to Chile’s adoption of neo-liberal reform which has impacted poor, disadvantaged persons with disabilities, and overall access to resources despite the reality that this country has universal health care. The likely narrative with these policies is that disability is labelled as “negative”. Another aspect of the impact of these policies is the tendency toward “individualization” of right to access care. This is contradictory to the message developing through our manuscript. Additionally, the social inequalities alongside mounting evidence that especially with certain conditions, social determinants of health are integral to successful outcomes. Although Chile is one example, there are more examples throughout the world. Yet, ultimately, it is important to note that these policies are often political in nature – driven by nationalism, protectionism, or other –isms – and led by those persons in positions of political power. Thus, each locale, region, or part of the globe has its own story and how any direct or indirect, post-colonial, Western-driven, global North led policies impact the lives of persons with disabilities and occupational therapy.

These unique attributes of cultural-social-political interaction toward the dialogue in our manuscript should guide the reader more toward how these individually intersect with each individual alongside consideration that this individual (with or without disabilities) engages in occupations in an environment situated within a community within a nation within our world impacted by and upon through occupational therapy. Thus far, the world view of occupational therapy might not necessarily be nor should it be cohesive or homogenous in nature. Rather, to address this question of how these attributes might be understood in such a manner, the more relevant question to ask might be does the heterogeneity of these interactions link to micro-level to the macro-level? In other words, what happens if we “flip the script”? It is still too early for an answer to this question.

Part of the answer is that in some instances in the United States of America, programs do not necessarily teach occupational therapy until graduate school. This, in part, has guided the entry-level degree (by July 1, 2027) to the doctorate level. Yet elsewhere in the world, this is not the case. This imbalance in education may lead to challenges as well as opportunities. It is possible that commonality is an anchor for dialogue. A key facet I propose is to focus upon intersectionalities and how these intentional & natural overlapping of constructs permit an opportunity in a complex and dynamic state that sets the stage for dialogue at the micro-, meso-, and macro- levels.

Although our manuscript describes possible contributions to the differences in occupational therapy education throughout the world, there are commonalities and possibilities through which it may be possible to facilitate a dialogue with our collective global community. Despite the onslaught of our fast-paced world, it is both possible and necessary to reflect upon historical contexts¹¹. These historical contexts occurred in a real geographic space – and it is this space through which occupation exists. Intersectionalities may be instilled such that those instances where there is inequality. It may be possible that this is where we have a potential link to occupational therapy. The dialogue and reflection can be accomplished at all levels discussed in our manuscript. These actions can link local and individual to global and collective – and yet remain true to cultural, social, and political relevance. Garcia-Ruiz¹¹ emphasized the thoughts of others, which seems quite feasible in this instance – glocalization. This term refers to the idea to think global and act local – a perfect fit for our manuscript.

Critical reflexivity is a means through which occupational therapy may engage in dialogue beyond our manuscript in order to decrease the gaps and differences between any

area discussed including the global North and South. Kovic¹² offered this is a possible solution to “growing pains”. Kovic¹² also offered specific strategies on the micro-, meso-, and macro- levels. Keep in mind that the dialogue in our manuscript has guided us away from these terms other than as label for important geographical regions of the world with unique characteristics and histories. These strategies include the use of (consistent) peer-reviewed metrics, viability needing to be linked to rigorous studies, and data-driven decision models.

It may be possible to incorporate aspects of occupational science such as to construct a reflection, exploration, and conceptualization approach to reframe occupation through an amalgam of the following documents.

How does Occupational Science relate to this discussion?

The seminal article by Clark, *et al.*¹³ introduced occupational science as a discipline through which occupation and its many complexities may be explored. Clark and colleagues introduced the systems model as a means to address the inherent complexities of occupation. This model has been an important thread in our dialogue throughout this manuscript. Additionally, Clark and colleagues posed that occupational science should “transcend everyday knowledge”. Thus, with appreciation for the complexities of occupation, aligned with our ongoing dialogue in this manuscript, the field of occupational science may continue to have possibilities for us to consider related to our overarching construct.

Yet, occupational science alone will not solve all of our challenges. It should be incorporated along with other approaches. One such approach is the World Federation of Occupational Therapy (WFOT) Sustainability Matters: Guiding Principles for Sustainability in Occupational Therapy Practice, Education and Scholarship document (2018)¹⁴. This comprehensive 51-page document aligns occupational therapy with the universal human rights agenda. A powerful statement within this document summarizes the need for such guidelines: “Interconnectedness with the world promotes a desire to make decisions that will create a better place through engagement in occupations”¹⁴. Simultaneously, this WFOT document analyzes topics we have addressed thus far in our manuscript – especially with focus upon social injustices due, in part, to social inequalities. The authors of the WFOT document proposed that it is essentially our obligation to address these challenges. I propose to agree with this statement and further add that if we do not, then we may become irrelevant or misaligned with the core tenants of our profession.

Although thus far in our dialogue we have blurred the lines between the global North and South, it is important to note, and the WFOT documents reminds us, that the financial and social disparities in these distinct regions interact with challenges such as climate change and resource scarcity. If the threads woven thus far in our manuscript have external validity, then this part of our discussion is important to link it all together. Because of the interconnectedness of occupations to the environment, it is impossible to artificially separate these through analysis or in practice. The WFOT document is worth a read and discussion for any occupational therapy community. There are reflective questions to incorporate into discussions. Yet, for the sake of our manuscript, several key points will be included to shape our ongoing dialogue. One aspect to consider is that the WFOT document proposes to “empower and enable” persons to gain further control over their (occupational) lives and how these lives intersect with communities. Further expansion upon this concept poses that “...sustainability is really about human empowerment...”¹⁴. The WFOT document also emphasizes the need to create community groups to increase awareness in order to facilitate knowledge translation with communities. Sustainability also intersects our geographical discussion. Western societies tend to consume more than other (impoverished) part of the world. This is unsustainable. This leads to further social disparities.

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One possible global solution to these challenges is to maintain client-centered approaches with those we serve in occupational therapy. There are abundant examples of such efforts toward sustainability in Brazil. This reframing of our role means that we may be an active collaborator for “sustainable occupational performance”.

Occupational science and sustainability may funnel how we understand participation. Pereira¹⁵ analyzed the intersection of occupational science and social inclusion. This lengthy manuscript explores numerous topics in and around these constructs. Yet, as has been the practice of our manuscript, this discussion will be narrowed to focus upon the relevance to our discussion. Pereira hints that there may be intersectionalities between much of what continues to be woven throughout our manuscript. Possibilities include micro-, meso-, and macro- level engagement, the dynamic interaction between the cultural, social, and political realms, occupational science, how these constructs may intersect with policy, and the idea that there is an ethos related to social equality. Occupational therapy can and should be at the center of this complex and dynamic scenario.

Pereira¹⁵ proposed that critical reflexivity is a means through which we may analyze our contributions. This approach echoes Clark, *et al.*¹³ and Kovic¹². This approach is also adopted by Whiteford and Townsend¹⁶ in the participatory occupational justice framework. Pereira¹⁵ wrote about recognition and the struggle related to this immense challenge for those with limited access due to inequalities. This is reminiscent of the self-perception as it relates to engagement in occupations discussed by Ramugondo^{1,2}. These topics align with participation. If, as Clark, *et al.*¹³ propose, that we need to be client-centered, and if neo-liberal agendas may direct and guide (externally influenced) policies for provision of health care services such as occupational therapy, then there is a likelihood that participation is defined by “others” and independent of the individual, environment, community, or any other level. This may lead to “misrecognition” and eventually be a potential source of occupational therapy service definitions possibly inclusion of the education of occupational therapists within areas such as the global North and South.

In order to provide more directive focus upon potential research initiatives at an international global level, the WFOT created a Delphi Study published in 2017¹⁷. The immersive study design included an international representation of occupational therapists and three rounds of review overall. The results represented nearly 50% of WFOT countries throughout six continents. Results of this study yielded eight areas of priority. Here is the top three based upon member organization: (1) effectiveness of occupational therapy interventions, (2) evidence-based practice and knowledge translation, and (3) healthy aging. While this manuscript does not propose which of these or if any of these has potential, including possible relevance in Brazil, the results of the Delphi study¹⁷ offer an insight into possible opportunities to focus upon and explore for occupational therapy.

As has been threaded throughout the discussion in our manuscript, we exist in a world which is changing at swift speeds. As such, occupational therapy needs to be dynamic, reflexive, and responsive in order to have occupational relevance.

How are we going to survive and how can we minimize inequalities around the world?

Will occupational therapy survive? Yes. Absolutely. Without a doubt - with a caveat - our metamorphosis remains yet unknown. However, as a means toward this end, it may be

possible for occupational therapy to establish collaborations through capacity-building upon common ground with existing institutions in society.

The aforementioned educational examples, which can be linked worldwide, can present that background for a sustainable occupational therapy in Brazil and a model for the continent and worldwide through a reflexive dialogue about every aspect of occupational therapy.

However, it is up to the reader to make a determination if the threads woven throughout our discussion are appropriate and adequate as well as if the conclusions made and potential for our collective future is within our grasp. Ultimately, we must answer if we can be the authors of our future such that we will survive.

Karen Whalley Hammell covered much ground in her closing keynote address at the 2018¹⁸ WFOT Congress. The discussion was framed around the impact of influences of the Western world upon elsewhere. Neoliberal (individualistic) values were explored. Interdependence was presented as a value of many worldwide. Possible coercion and limited occupational choice constrained by social inequities and inequalities were presented. Information was shared that occupations which are collaborative, survival, or sacred solely within the context in which they are performed need further exploration. In echoes of the opening keynote address of the 2018 WFOT Congress by Ramugondo¹ and Hammell¹⁸ shared that we need to decolonize our minds. Hammell additionally offered insights, despite the journey we have taken in this manuscript, which imply we cannot and should not deny that the reality that the (global) North is in a position to inspire and provide “guidance or assistance” for the (global) South. These statements reflect the narrative and our exploration of the educational journey of occupational therapists in some parts of the world. Yet, Hammell also seemed to recognize our potential. A key phrase offered and shared in this manuscript is that occupational therapy should enable “the right to engage” in occupations¹⁸. This has been an implied message throughout our manuscript. Now we have sufficient evidence to weave these narratives together in order to provide a framework and guideposts for our future as a profession which seeks to be more than we might ever believe is possible.

We need to always be critically reflexive, address our experiential narratives, and how these can be linked to concepts such as pragmatist epistemology. Morrison¹⁹ incorporated the pragmatic approach espoused by Jane Addams. Morrison¹⁹ writes that occupational therapists need to explicitly recognize pragmatism in order to appreciate social actions and our role

within these constructs. As with other examples in our manuscript, it is not possible to fully address this pragmatism, yet, there are a few key attributes which intersect with our dialogue (possible intersectionalities). Some of these examples include social injustices, equal rights of persons with disabilities, and possibly even a collective responsibility to humankind. Morrison¹⁹ suggests that social occupational therapy may be a means to achieve this potential. As such, Brazil is well-positioned to lead this pathway into the future. It is possible to Brazil to lead, direct, guide its citizens and occupational therapists for the global South and for the entire world.

I hereby posit that we return to the collective roots of our profession yet with a unique 21st century perspective. I am confident that we will accomplish much and further more than maybe we think is possible for the profession in the upcoming decades and throughout this century.

“An ethos that transcends borders” and “Occupation fosters dignity, competence, and health” are two phrases from Peloquin²¹ which repeat an earlier call from 2005 from Peloquin²⁰ for us to “reclaim” our origins. This is a fitting end to our journey and woven tapestry. Peloquin²⁰ shared much for the reader, including reminders that occupational therapy is simultaneously art and science. Peloquin²⁰ stated that we are “pathfinders”. This is a powerful statement. Yet it invokes much to the reader. Although our manuscript is written first in English, I sincerely desire that its meaning is not lost in translation, yet I also recognize that to meet all of the criteria put forth in our dialogue, each individual, community, nation, or region of the world must claim and interpret meaning and relevance.

We began our journey with consideration for our occupational consciousness alongside the influence of neo-liberal policies within a post-colonial world. We have sufficient evidence to support that our individual and collective similarities are greater than our differences. We may choose to accept the possibility that we cannot accept a single definition of occupation due to educational differences which are rooted in different regions of the world, each with its own unique cultural, social, and political narrative. It is possible to overcome social inequities and to impact the guiding narrative. Yet to do so, change must occur at the local and individual level while there is simultaneous need to include our collective community and national & regional level considerations. Systems theory embedded within occupational science may be a means to begin to address these tasks. Critical reflexivity through intersectionality and experiential narratives combined with a pragmatist approach could very well be the starting point for the next steps in this journey.

Our collaborative experience through this manuscript afforded us an opportunity to reflect, analyze, and contribute to the micro-, meso-, and macro- levels of our narrative. We navigated discussions about our formal training, our similarities, our differences, and potential regional issues. We hopefully encouraged dialogue, included occupational science into the discussion, and hypothesized how we might survive as a profession. This gave us permission to consider alternative optimistic possibilities for our future throughout the world. It allowed us to explore and engage such that we could envision autonomous occupational opportunities for those we serve at all levels of society. We asked if the future of occupational therapy education in Brazil would move toward the graduate level. This question is in its infancy and although we made some initial inferences, the answer remains unknown, beyond the scope of our manuscript.

As we bring our journey together to a conclusion, and simultaneously establish beginning for our future, I share with you with these words and phrases that are woven into our manuscript which seem cohesive in their connotation. They are now part of our global vocabulary, yet you may have additional or others to add for your individual story. Nonetheless, as you move forward, I encourage you to reflect upon the influence of: healing, changing the world, occupational opportunities, collective occupations, glocalization, transcending everyday knowledge, interconnectedness, empowerment and enablement, and sustainable occupational performance.

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