



# Reducing the Translation Load: Examples from Field Research in Occupational Therapy

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# How do researchers choose their research questions?

- ◆ Passion, fascination, intellectual curiosity, knowledge for its own sake
- ◆ Moral and service impulses, for the greater good, to serve society, to serve a profession or discipline that serves society
- ◆ Opportunities, funding, mentors
- ◆ Reputation, ambition, career-building
- ◆ Unfolding research program, sequence of questions
- ◆ Strategy within existing knowledge
- ◆ Combinations of the above



# Types of Knowledge

(Dickoff, James, & Wiedenbach, 1968; Meleis, 1997)

- ◆ **Level IV: Prescriptive**—theories and research on making changes in existing conditions (medicine, pharmacy, engineering)
- ◆ **Level III: Predictive**—theories and research that predict sequence and model expected occurrences (economics, weather)
- ◆ **Level II: Factor-relating**—theories and research that delineate how factors are related to each other through typologies, effects on each other, or other relations (biology, physics)
- ◆ **Level I: Factor-descriptive**—theories and research that identify, name, and describe factors and dynamics (anatomy, anthropology, chemistry)



## Questions to consider:

At what level are your current or anticipated research questions?

Can individual research questions include multiple levels?

What level of knowledge do the rehabilitation sciences most require?

- ◆ Level IV: Prescriptive
- ◆ Level III: Predictive
- ◆ Level II: Factor-relating
- ◆ Level I: Factor-descriptive



# At what level of knowledge is most translational science research?

*Translational science appears primarily to be an approach in which the research question is at descriptive, relational, or predictive levels of knowledge, but a clear argument for the way in which that research will be important to effective interventions (prescriptive knowledge) must be made in order to obtain funding.*

- ◆ Level IV: Prescriptive
- ◆ Level III: Predictive
- ◆ Level II: Factor-relating
- ◆ Level I: Factor-descriptive



# Strengthening Translation

- ◆ Big science
- ◆ Research agenda sequence
- ◆ Consumer leadership
- ◆ Clinician leadership
- ◆ Research in context
- ◆ Active translation to practitioners



# Crossing Levels: The USC-OT Well Elderly Research Group

- ◆ Levels I and II: Themes of Meaning in the Elderly—qualitative interview and observation study, how well elders construct meaning through adapted doing. (Jackson, 1996, *Occupational Science*)
- ◆ Level IV: Quantitative study showing use of occupation-based approach resulted in greater reductions in mortality and morbidity than did a social group or an activities program. (Clark et al, 1997, *JAMA*)
- ◆ Level III: Study of cost-savings. (Hay et al, 2002, *J Am Geriatrics Society*)
- ◆ Level IV: Dissemination fidelity study for the *Lifestyle Redesign* approach.



## Less Translation Required: Some In-progress, In-context, Level IV Field Research Projects in OT

- ◆ Development of OT Interventions for Youth at Risk (Fehringer, Marshall, & Pierce): Action research study of service provision over 2.5 years in multiple sites
- ◆ Transitions of Youth at Risk in Kentucky (Baltisberger, Estes, Fehringer, Marshall, Nolan, Pierce, & Powell): Multi-method and inter-professional study of transition services and experiences of youth in 105 non-traditional KY educational settings (KECSAC).



## Some In-progress Level IV Research Projects in OT (cont.)

- ◆ Perceptions of Pediatric Occupational Therapists of Occupation-based Practice (Estes & Pierce): Qualitative interview study, 23 therapists
- ◆ Perceptions of International Occupational Therapists of Occupation-based Practice (Corr, Lo, & Pierce): Q-methodology, awaiting funding from Leverhulme Trust



## Some In-progress Level IV Research Projects in OT (cont.)

- ◆ Therapeutic Use of the Physical Environment in the History of OT (Marshall, Myers, & Pierce): Grounded theory study of use of treatment objects and spaces in OT literature
- ◆ Development of OT Interventions to Support Sleep Medicine for Children with Apnea and Obesity (Pierce & Summers): Participatory action research study of home and clinic based interventions in response to input from children, families, and physicians, Good Samaritan/UK Sleep Clinic



## In summary:

- ◆ How do you choose your research questions? What drives you?
- ◆ At what level of knowledge will you pose your research questions?
- ◆ Do you plan to be a translational researcher?
- ◆ Will you consider Level IV Prescriptive research that requires less translation by being embedded in service provision?
- ◆ Or, other options!



Good luck with your research!

Follow your passion.

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