

Global Perspectives in Professional Reasoning for Occupational Therapists Working on the Margins:

**New Ways of Thinking to Guide Practitioners in
Reaching Underserved Populations**

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Margins Defined

- “Fluid spaces or positions that social groups occupy on the basis of difference... A margin can be a physical place, a social space or a personal experience on the periphery of the social mainstream or dominant order. For every margin, there is a center or core that represents some form or position of authority, power and privilege.” (Duncan & Creek 2014, p. 460)
- Marginality represents a family of conditions that may be experienced by different groups in different ways
- What populations in your country or community might be considered on the margins? To what extent are these populations underserved by occupational therapy?

Professional Reasoning Defined

- *“the full range of thinking skills and cognitive processes used to guide professional actions”* (Schell & Schell, 2008).
- **a. Clinical Reasoning** – narrative, procedural, interactive, ethical, etc. used to treat individuals or groups within a clinical setting – including hospitals, rehabilitation centers, outpatient clinics, skilled nursing facilities, and home care agencies
- **b. Professional Reasoning** – offers a broader perspective for OT professionals working outside the clinic – e.g. homeless/refugee settlements, disaster relief, or community centers, such as senior housing, YMCA, clubhouses, churches, or public schools.

Broader Types of Professional Reasoning

Each can guide occupational therapists in unique or non-traditional settings.

- **Social Reasoning**
- **Political Reasoning**
- **Spiritual & Ethical Reasoning**
- **Development Reasoning**
- **Collaborative Reasoning**
- **Strategic Reasoning**
- **Nonlinear Reasoning**
- **Creative Reasoning**

Reference: M. Cole & J. Creek (Eds.) (2016) Global Perspectives in Professional Reasoning, Slack, Inc.

Social Reasoning Defined

- Social reasoning involves *“thinking about occupations from a social perspective; affirming the complex nature of occupation that is embedded in individual and community life.”*
- It includes social contexts, social expectations, sources of support, and the social groups and/or significant relationships within which occupational choices are made and performed” (Cole, 2016).
- Example: **Cecil’s work on Grand Bahama Island**



Political Reasoning Defined

Situations when appropriate: when governments present potential barriers to the needed programs or services, or when controlling political entities consent or assistance is required in order to establish needed OT programs.

Example: **Occupational Therapy in Disaster Relief in the Philippines, post tsunami.**



Summary of Global Professional Reasoning

- **Addressing Margins involves working outside the clinic.**
- **Underserved Populations may be found outside the mainstream of society, where access to occupational therapy is limited**
- **Occupational Therapists working on the Margins must develop skill for overcoming social, political, development, and other barriers to occupational justice for potential beneficiaries**

A broad range of professional reasoning strategies are necessary for occupational therapists to:

- Analyze the perspectives of multiple stakeholders in a situation where marginal populations cannot freely engage in occupations in an equitable manner.
- Overcome barriers, obtain funding, & pave the way for working in communities with marginal populations.
- Advocate for occupational justice.
- **Reference:** *Cole, M. & Creek, J. (eds.)(2016). Global Perspectives in Professional Reasoning, Slack, Inc.*
- **Thank you for attending.**