In the pursuit of the professionalisation of occupational therapy

Europe, within ENOTHE in particular, is an essential place of exchange and coordination for the lecturers of occupational therapy programmes. After 30 years of practice, and widely influenced by the works to which I have contributed in the terminology group, three elements stand in the centre of the professionalization of occupational therapy in the French-speaking context: 1) the vocabulary of occupation, 2) the academic development, 3) practice based on the relation between occupation and activity.

Occupational therapists within education and even more in practice, always have difficulty in adopting the terminology of their discipline and in building it as a discipline we can be proud of. Effort remains necessary for occupational therapists to reach Master's degree level facilitating the access to positions of higher responsibility. Another effort is essential to increase the access to doctorate level study and as a consequence to the control of the disciplinary development of research and theory.

Whilst talking of occupation and unfolding the concept in all its complexity, we forget however that the practice of occupational therapy also consists in knowing how to reduce the complexity to simpler elements in particular around the activity proposed to the client in order to overcome her or his occupational dysfunctions. These activities which may be far from the preferred, normal habits of the person, fit nevertheless into an occupation that is little related to the science of occupation, in order to follow an occupational therapy intervention in rehabilitation or at the hospital. We should, especially in hospitals, be able to better articulate the activities proposed with this occupation, often temporary, but giving more reality.