Humanities in Physical Therapy: Are We ready?

Sarah Blanton, PT, DPT, NCS, Emory University
James Carey, PhD, PT, FAPTA, University of Minnesota
Bruce Greenfield, PT, MA (Bioethics), PhD, Emory University
Gail M. Jensen, PT, PhD, FAPTA, Creighton University
Nancy R. Kirsch PT, DPT, PhD, Rutgers University
Laura Lee (Dolly) Swisher, PT, MDiv, PhD, University of South Florida
Disclosure

• The speakers of this session serve as editors of a new online journal entitled the *Journal of Humanities in Rehabilitation* that they created in conjunction with the Emory Center for Digital Scholarship. The speakers receive no royalties or financial remuneration from the journal.
Session Learning Objectives

• Describe the historical evolution and integration of humanities in medicine, health, and healthcare – *past to present*

• Discuss how integration of the humanities could serve as a “transformative power” across education, practice and research
  – *Not only as a source of knowledge but as an important vehicle for preparing professionals in a doctoring profession*

• Discuss challenges and opportunities for integrating humanities in physical therapist education.

• Share perspectives on the benefits and feasibility of a Journal that would focus on the humanities
Session Agenda

• Introduction and Background
  • What do we mean by humanities?
  • Theoretical Foundations
  • Possibilities/Conception of the Humanities for Physical Therapy?
  • Setting the Context: Defining the Role of Humanities in the Health Professions

• Case/Narrative – A patient and therapist: How humanities in practice surrounds us?

• A Humanities Journal: Challenges and Opportunities
  – Why a journal dedicated to humanities in physical therapy?
  – Process of development
  – Sample material

• Panel and Group Discussion
Setting the Context: Defining the Role of Humanities in the Health Professions

*Liberal Arts to Health Professional Education*

*Possibilities/Conception of the Humanities for Physical therapy?*
Shulman’s assertion

• There is nothing more professional than liberal education, properly construed; there is nothing more liberal than professional education, properly construed;

• There is only limited potential for practical learning without engagement in liberal learning; and there is only limited potential for liberal learning without engagement in practical learning

• WE NEED EACH OTHER – to Shape the Life of the MIND for Practice
What divides our worlds?

What unites our worlds?
Virtual Divide

“Trade schools”
- Professional Schools

“Theory and no application…”
- Liberal arts/science

- PRACTICE and PERFORMANCE
- UNDERSTANDING and MEANING

Liberal arts lack real-world application
Lack foundational knowledge as they rush into the professional school

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Influencing Factors

- Increased specialization
- Popular agenda of **critical thinking**
- “Professionalization of the academy”
- Explosion of new knowledge and focus on “knowledge production” – **RIGHT ANSWERS!**
- Knowledge often disconnected from practice
- Others??
Challenging dimensions of Professional Competence

- **Context**: Working in different contexts of clinical delivery

- **Relationship**: communication skills, handling conflict, teamwork, teaching

- **Affective/Moral**: tolerance for ambiguity, emotional intelligence, respect, caring

- **Habits of mind**: metacognitive skills; critical curiosity, recognition and response to cognitive and emotional biases; ability to admit and correct errors
Moving beyond “critical thinking”
Threefold pattern of Practical Reasoning
(Sullivan, 2005; Dewey, 1933, Colby and Sullivan, 2008)

Analytical Reasoning
- Knowledge
- Objectivity
- Certainty

Inquiry
- Particular condition
- Presentation
- Concrete situation

Relationship
- Focus on the patient interaction

Science – cause and effect

Narrative thinking

Case Reasoning – best means of representing clinical judgment
Practical Reasoning

- Critical analysis is a critical aspect of the formation of practical judgment BUT it is insufficient to approach problems of decision and action.
- Students need to be able to analyze the presuppositions and consequences of multiple moral and technical traditions is essential.
Pedagogies of Practical Reasoning

• Reasoning is neither deductive from general principles nor inductive from a particular to a universal concept
• Reasoning requires moving back and forth between specific events – general ideas and common traditions – in order to interpret and engage the particular situation more completely
Integrating the Humanities and “Hard Core” Science

1) Blending the soft humanities and the hard sciences.
2) Integrating the pedagogy
3) Assessment that includes a balanced interpretation of the art and science of healing.
The Case for Finding time for Humanities

1) Time constraints limit exposure
2) Counter argument to where will we teach “that”
3) Refocusing the “science oriented student”…to the patients they will treat.
Using Technology to share content…

1) Promoting inter-professional collaboration
2) Doesn’t solve the time crunch but makes it more manageable.
3) Using existing platforms familiar to the savvy digital student
4) Broadens resource base
Humanities in the Virtual Classroom?

Is there a place for the humanities in second life?
   Appreciating the viewpoints of others
   Tolerating ambiguity
   Developing creativity
Scholarly Archives of Rehabilitation

• Technology and science evolving commendably
• Humanities are not
Unchecked Science

• “The so-called Humanists have not enough science, and Science sadly lacks the Humanities.” (Osler, 1919)
• “The extraordinary development of modern science may be her undoing.”
Making a Statement

• Topics are infinite
• Case report
Simplicity … Tenacity
A Humanities Journal

– Challenges and Opportunities
– Process of development
– Sample material
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"Ode to a Stroke"

A Life Altered

I was moving forward at a pace,
In this life called the human race,
With strength and purpose and resolve,
And little thought to how we evolve,
How simple it has been to control,
My legs stride out with steady goal,
Effortless in motion with no command,
To walk, to run, to sit or stand.

My arms reach and carry,
And hug and hold,
And accomplish tasks,
As if by fate.

And, oh! My head!
They grasp and drag and digitize,
Fingers point, Aha!
As I discover and realize.

How annihilating our bodies,
Inmate machines to behold,
Family functioning,
Without being told.

Used... that nightmarish instant,
Upholstered, unexpectant, unannounced,
When an explosion of coronary frenzies,
Renders me motionless and unawake.

I look at my lifetime array,
I tell my hand to grip, to clasp,
And wonder why it won’t respond.
Nothing works, “you dead!” I say!

Minutes ago I was healthy and hair,
Now I lie here, weak and pale,
Feeling alone in my solitude,
Facing uncertainty and mémoire.

But... lift goes on, I will survive,
I am told to work, I am aloof,
Does anyone know how angry I feel,
disengaged, in pain, a long time to heal?

My life has been altered,
Run down from behind,
I could not see it coming,
So daunting and eluding.

So... where do I go from here?
How do I rebuild my life?
When infeasible and weakness,
And horizons somehow very small?

God answers these frames directly,
He dispenses people who care,
Angels to push and travail
Encourage me in my physical reap.

Time and patience and persistence,
Offer recovery I am sure,
And faith that I will rendez,
To tomorrow to find my soul.

Poem: Ode to a Stroke, or A Life Altered

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Panel and Group Discussion

• What could humanities contribute to PT education?
• Practical Strategies for Integrating Humanities into the curriculum
  – Need not be free-standing course
• Opportunities and Examples
• What are others doing?
References

• Cheston, CC, Flickinger TE, Chisolm, MS. Social media use in medical education, a systematic review. *Acad Med* 2013;88:893-901.
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