

# Evolution of Occupational Therapy Practice: Life History of Ivelisse Lazzarini, OTD

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## Introduction

- This life history is one of 30 life history interviews which are part of a larger project, *Histories of Individuals Who Have Been Influential in Developing Occupational Therapy (OT) at the National Level and Beyond*. The purpose of study is to provide current and future generations of occupational therapists a view of the history and how occupational therapy practice has evolved from its inception to current practice through the life history stories of occupational therapists who have held leadership roles at the national level and beyond. It is anticipated that the life history process will be a powerful way to gather this information.

## Dr. Ivelisse Lazzarini

- **Dr. Lazzarini** graduated with her doctorate of Occupational Therapy from Creighton University and her Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy from Temple University. She is an academic leader, administrator, and an accomplished educational administrator.
- **Current Position:** Founding Chair and Professor at the University of Monmouth in Long Beach, NJ
- **Past Positions:**
  - Associate Dean Applied Health Sciences and OT Program Director at Pfeiffer University
  - Founding Chair and Professor Purcell School of Professional Studies at Le Moyne College
  - Program Director Occupational Therapy Program And Assistant Professor at Temple University
  - Assistant Professor at Creighton University
- **Licensure:**
  - State Associations: DL, PE, NY, NC, NJ
  - American Occupational Therapy Association

## Timeline Literature Review

- She remembers Medicare Fraud being a huge issue due to the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) in 1997. This created caps on private practitioners in practice, which impacted hospitals, graduate medical education, and access to health care (Important Events in Occupational Therapy by Decades, n.d.)
- According to Dillon (2001), leaders must lead through serving others and their needs. Dr. Lazzarini implements this type of leadership everyday as she educates students and serves as founding chair for a professional program.



## Methodology

**Participant Selection:** The participant was selected from a participant list compiled through purposive sampling by the project directors. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interview and the project was approved by the UND Institutional Review Board and because of the study design the formal IRB process was waived.

**Interview Schedule:** The semi-structured interview was guided by an interview schedule developed using the Kawa Model. The student researchers modified the interview questions as needed for each individual interview.

## Data Analysis

- The interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim by the interviewers and initial thoughts and feelings were recorded. The Kawa Model was used as a guide for data analysis.
- The interviewers then analyzed the transcription to find codes. From codes, three categories emerged. The researchers then identified key themes from each of the categories, and then patterns. A final assertion was created to summarize the finding and to capture the overall meaning.

## Findings

### Professional Journey

- Dr. Lazzarini's background in mechanical engineering provided a foundation to enhance her understanding and knowledge of OT, resulting in a passion for ongoing growth and development.
- She is adamant about being involved in the profession and serving as a leader in everyday practice and taking advantage of opportunities at the national level.
- Dr. Lazzarini is proud to have partnered with Claudia Allen in working with the Allen's Cognitive Levels.
- She is proud to have traveled to different countries to promote complexity science and teach OT.

### Aspects of OT

- Initially when learning crafts, she did not appreciate the impact this would have on her future practice, she emphasized the importance of activity analysis in modifying crafts to be client centered.
- The practice of OT is influenced by geography and cultural values, she stressed the importance of using media that is representative of the background of the client.
- Dr. Lazzarini expressed the importance of accountability and following the code of ethics when providing and billing for services.

## Findings (continued)

### Advocacy for OT

- Dr. Lazzarini advocates that the profession should go to one degree, the OTD, and she is passionate about creating OTD programs to promote this change.
- Dr. Lazzarini values the holistic view of OT and continues to advocate for the profession to fully understand individuals.
- She inspires others to continue her work in cognition and complexity science and to strive to be a role model for others in the profession.

## Assertion

- Dr. Lazzarini is passionate about occupational therapy education and she uses her experiences to advocate, educate, and provide leadership for the profession.

## References

- Important Events in Occupational Therapy by decades. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.otcentennial.org/events/events-by-decades>
- Dillon, T. H. (2001). Authenticity in occupational therapy leadership: A case study of a servant leader. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 55, 441-448.
- Turpin, M. & Iwama, M. (2011). *Using occupational therapy models in practice a field guide*. New York: Churchill Livingstone Elsevier.