

# The SRV JOURNAL

---

ISSN 1932 - 6963

December 2012 • Volume 7 • Number 2

www.srvip.org

---

## ARTICLES

- |                  |    |  |
|------------------|----|--|
| W. Wolfensberger | 8  | Learning Role Theory From Fiction  |
| E. Rissinger     | 10 | One For All and All For ... Some   |
| G. Mann          | 15 | Parental Reports of the Experiences of Students with Impairment in Queensland: An SRV-based Critique |
| J. Armstrong     | 32 | The Indispensable Mindset  |
- 

## REVIEWS & MORE

- |         |    |   |
|---------|----|---|
| D. Race | 49 | BOOK 'Advanced Issues in Social Role Valorization Theory' by W. Wolfensberger |
|         | 54 | List of Items to be Reviewed  |
- 

## TRAINING

- |  |    |                                     |
|--|----|-------------------------------------|
|  | 56 | Calendar of SRV & Related Trainings |
|--|----|-------------------------------------|
- 

## COLUMNS

- |              |    |  |
|--------------|----|--|
| M. Tumeinski | 37 | On a Role  |
| M. Tumeinski | 42 | The Ring of Words: On Rhetoric, Writing & Social Role Valorization Dissemination |
| S. Thomas    | 57 | Social Role Valorization News & Reviews  |
- 

## FEATURES

- |  |    |                      |
|--|----|----------------------|
|  | 5  | SRV Focus Question   |
|  | 55 | Discussion Questions |

# The SRV JOURNAL

---

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Marc Tumeinski                      Joe Osburn  
Jane Barken                         Judith Sandys, PhD  
Jo Massarelli

## EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

John Armstrong                    Peter Millier  
Erica Baker-Tinsley                Thomas Neuville, PhD  
Tom Kohler                         David Race, PhD  
Zana Lutfiyya, PhD                Susan Thomas  
Tom Malcomson, PhD               Ed Wilson

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

WE BELIEVE THAT SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION (SRV), when well applied, has potential to help societally devalued people to gain greater access to the good things of life & to be spared at least some negative effects of social devaluation.

Toward this end, the purposes of this journal include: 1) disseminating information about SRV; 2) informing readers of the relevance of SRV in addressing the devaluation of people in society generally & in human services particularly; 3) fostering, extending & deepening dialogue about, & understanding of, SRV; & 4) encouraging the application of SRV as well as SRV-related research.

We intend the information provided in this journal to be of use to: family, friends, advocates, direct care workers, managers, trainers, educators, researchers & others in relationship with or serving formally or informally upon devalued people in order to provide more valued life conditions as well as more relevant & coherent service.

*The SRV Journal* is published under the auspices of the SRV Implementation Project (SRVIP). The mission of the SRVIP is to: confront social devaluation in all its forms, including the deathmaking of vulnerable people; support positive action consistent with SRV; & promote the work of the formulator of SRV, Prof. Wolf Wolfensberger.<sup>†</sup>

## EDITORIAL POLICY

INFORMED & OPEN DISCUSSIONS OF SRV, & even constructive debates about it, help to promote its dissemination & application. We encourage people with a range of experience with SRV to submit items for consideration of publication. We hope those with much experience in teaching or implementing SRV, as well as those just beginning to learn about it, will contribute to the *Journal*.

We encourage readers & writers in a variety of roles & from a variety of human service backgrounds to subscribe & to contribute. We expect that writers who submit items will have at least a basic understanding of SRV, gained for example by attendance at a multi-day SRV workshop (see this issue's training calendar), by studying relevant resources (see page 4 of this journal), or both.

We are particularly interested in receiving submissions from family members, friends & servers of devalued people who are trying to put the ideas of SRV into practice, even if they do not consider themselves as 'writers.' Members of our editorial boards will be available to help contributors with articles accepted for publication. The journal has a peer review section.

## INFORMATION FOR SUBMISSIONS

WE WELCOME WELL-REASONED, CLEARLY-WRITTEN submissions. Language used should be clear & descriptive. We encourage the use of ordinary grammar & vocabulary that a typical reader would understand. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is one easily available general style guide. Academic authors should follow the standards of their field. We will not accept items simultaneously submitted elsewhere for publication or previously electronically posted or distributed.

Submissions are reviewed by members of the editorial board, the editorial advisory board, or external referees. Our double-blind peer review policy is available on request.

Examples of submission topics include but are not limited to: SRV as relevant to a variety of human services; descriptions & analyses of social devaluation & wounding; descriptions & analyses of the impact(s) of valued roles; illustrations of particular SRV themes; research into & development of SRV theory & its themes; critique of SRV; analysis of new developments from an SRV perspective; success stories, as well as struggles & lessons learned, in trying to implement SRV; interviews; reflection & opinion pieces; news analyses from an SRV perspective; book or movie reviews & notices from an SRV perspective.

## SEND CORRESPONDENCE TO

Marc Tumeinski, Editor            Phone: 508.752.3670  
*The SRV Journal*                    Email: journal@srvip.org  
74 Elm Street                        Website: www.srvip.org  
Worcester, MA 01609 US

## TYPEFACE

Main text is set in Adobe Garamond Pro & headlines in Myriad Pro, both designed by Robert Slimbach.

# A Brief Description of Social Role Valorization

## From the Editor

IN EVERY ISSUE we print a few brief descriptions of SRV. This by no means replaces more thorough explanations of SRV, but does set a helpful framework for the content of this journal.

The following is from: Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency, p. 58.

*... in order for people to be treated well by others, it is very important that they be seen as occupying valued roles, because otherwise, things are apt to go ill with them. Further, the greater the number of valued roles a person, group or class occupies, or the more valued the roles that such a party occupies, the more likely it is that the party will be accorded those good things of life that others are in a position to accord, or to withhold.*

The following is from: SRV Council [North American Social Role Valorization Development, Training & Safeguarding Council] (2004). A proposed definition of Social Role Valorization, with various background materials and elaborations. *SRV-VRS: The International Social Role Valorization*

*Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, 5(1&2), p. 85.

*SRV is a systematic way of dealing with the facts of social perception and evaluation, so as to enhance the roles of people who are apt to be devalued, by upgrading their competencies and social image in the eyes of others.*

The following is from: Wolfensberger, W. (2000). A brief overview of Social Role Valorization. *Mental Retardation*, 38(2), p. 105.

*The key premise of SRV is that people's welfare depends extensively on the social roles they occupy: People who fill roles that are positively valued by others will generally be afforded by the latter the good things of life, but people who fill roles that are devalued by others will typically get badly treated by them. This implies that in the case of people whose life situations are very bad, and whose bad situations are bound up with occupancy of devalued roles, then if the social roles they are seen as occupying can somehow be upgraded in the eyes of perceivers, their life conditions will usually improve, and often dramatically so.*

---

If you know someone who would be interested in reading  
*The SRV Journal*, send us their name & address  
& we'll mail them a complimentary issue.

# Resources to Learn about Social Role Valorization

## From the Editor

- **A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization**, 3rd (rev.) ed. Wolf Wolfensberger. (1998). (Available from the Training Institute at 315.443.5257)
- **PASSING: A tool for analyzing service quality according to Social Role Valorization criteria. Ratings manual**, 3rd (rev.) ed. Wolf Wolfensberger & Susan Thomas. (2007). (Available from the Training Institute at 315.443.5257)
- **A quarter-century of normalization and Social Role Valorization: Evolution and impact**. Ed. by Robert Flynn & Ray Lemay. (1999). Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press. (Available from the Training Institute at 315.443.5257)
- **A brief overview of Social Role Valorization**. Wolf Wolfensberger. (2000). *Mental Retardation*, 38(2), 105-123. (Available from the Training Institute at 315.443.5257)
- **An overview of Social Role Valorization theory**. Joe Osburn. (2006). *The SRV Journal*, 1(1), 4-13. (Available at [http://srvip.org/about\\_articles.php](http://srvip.org/about_articles.php))
- **Some of the universal 'good things of life' which the implementation of Social Role Valorization can be expected to make more accessible to devalued people**. Wolf Wolfensberger, Susan Thomas & Guy Caruso. (1996). *SRV/VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, 2(2), 12-14. (Available at [http://srvip.org/about\\_articles.php](http://srvip.org/about_articles.php))
- **Social Role Valorization and the English experience**. David Race. (1999). London: Whiting & Birch.
- **The SRV Implementation Project website, including a training calendar** [www.srvip.org](http://www.srvip.org)
- **SRVIP Google calendar** [http://www.srvip.org/workshops\\_schedule.php#](http://www.srvip.org/workshops_schedule.php#)
- **Blog of The SRV Implementation Project** [blog.srvip.org](http://blog.srvip.org)
- **Abstracts of major articles published in The SRV Journal** <https://srvjournalabstracts.wordpress.com/>
- **Social Role Valorization web page (Australia)** <http://www.socialrolevalorization.com/>
- **SRV in Action newsletter (published by Values in Action Association) (Australia)**  
contact [viaainc@gmail.com](mailto:viaainc@gmail.com)
- **Southern Ontario Training Group (Canada)** <http://www.srv-sotg.ca/>
- **Alberta Safeguards Foundation (Canada)** <http://absafeguards.org/>
- **Values Education and Research Association (UK)** <http://vera-training.webs.com/>
- **A 'History of Human Services' course taught by W. Wolfensberger & S. Thomas (DVD set)** <http://wolf-wolfensberger.com/>
- **Video of Dr. Wolfensberger teaching on the dilemmas of serving for pay** <http://disabilities.temple.edu/media/ds/>

# SRV FOCUS QUESTION

IN EACH ISSUE, we publish a focus question & invite you our readers to submit a 200-300 word response to the question. Commentaries on the question, if accepted, will be published in the following issue. All submissions are subject to editing. Please email your responses to [journal@srvip.org](mailto:journal@srvip.org).

*Several articles in this issue raise SRV-related topics in respect to school settings for children & teens with impairments. Education is one of the major role domains referred to within SRV (Wolfensberger, 1998, 30) & has clear relevance to many SRV-related training & implementation issues, such as personal social integration & valued societal participation (Wolfensberger, 1998, 122-124; Lemay, 2006).*

*What valued social roles are available for young people within school settings in general? How would we 'rank order' these roles from both a culturally valued analog & a conservatism corollary perspective (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 2007, 30-31; Wolfensberger, 1998, 124-127)? How might the availability of such valued roles vary depending on the type & location of a school (e.g., private versus public, religious versus secular, age of student body, economic level of the students & surrounding area, etc.)? What are the good things of life (Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso, 1996) particular to the education role domain? What SRV tools can concerned servers (including teachers, aides, administrative staff, family as well as paid & voluntary servers) use to better help societally devalued students gain & hold onto valued roles within schools, hopefully broad bandwidth roles, with an eye towards greater access to the good things of life which are generally available in schools?*

*What are some of the potential barriers (physical, societal, resource-related, attitudinal, etc.) to helping children & teens with impairments get & hold onto valued roles within schools? Keep in mind that these barriers may vary depending on age for example. How can these barriers be minimized? What SRV strategies can help mitigate the negative effects of such barriers? How can we at least raise awareness of these potential barriers?*

*The concept of role accumulation or role enhancement discussed in the roles column in this issue (see p. 37) can also generate useful SRV-relevant insights & strategies in terms of schools. What other valued social roles can the role of student help open the door to? To what degree might a child or teen with impairments need to be engaged in the role of student (in terms of time & participation) to gain access to some of the available good things of life? And so on. We encourage you to discuss these issues & questions with others, & we welcome your written thoughts, comments, manuscripts & stories.*

## REFERENCES

Lemay, R. (2006). Social Role Valorization insights into the social integration conundrum. *Mental Retardation*, 44(1), 1-12.

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

Wolfensberger, W. & Thomas, S. (2007). *PASSING: A tool for analyzing service quality according to Social Role Valorization criteria. Ratings manual*. (3rd rev.ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

Wolfensberger, W., Thomas, S. & Caruso, G. (1996). Some of the universal 'good things of life' which the implementation of Social Role Valorization can be expected to make more accessible to devalued people. *SRV/VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, 2(2), 12-14.

*Announcing the publication and 'appearance' of*

## **APPEAR:**

# OBSERVING, RECORDING & ADDRESSING PERSONAL PHYSICAL APPEARANCE BY MEANS OF THE APPEAR TOOL

*a publication by Wolf Wolfensberger<sup>†</sup>*

PERSONAL APPEARANCE (INCLUDING SO-CALLED 'SELF-PRESENTATION') is certainly one of the most immediate, and often also one of the most powerful, influences on how a person will be perceived and interpreted by others, and in turn, on how others will respond to and treat the person. Personal appearance is also one of the domains of social imagery, which is a big component of Social Role Valorization (SRV): the more observers positively value a person's appearance, the more likely they are to afford that person opportunities to fill valued roles, and thereby access to the good things in life. Unfortunately, the appearance of many members of societally marginal or devalued classes is far from enhancing, or is even outright repellent to many people, and increases the risk that bad things get done to them, or that good things are withheld from them.

This 2009 book explains all this. APPEAR is an acronym for **A Personal Physical Appearance Evaluation And Record**. It documents the powerful influence of personal appearance on attitudes, social valuation and social interactions. The book explains the many components of personal appearance and the ways in which these features can be changed for better or worse. It also includes a very detailed checklist, called the APPEAR tool, which identifies over **200 separate elements** of personal physical appearance, so that one can review a person's appearance features from head to toe, noting which are positive, which are neutral, which are negative—all this with a view to perhaps trying to improve selected aspects of a person's appearance about which something can actually be done. The book also explains how such an appearance review, or appearance 'audit,' would be done.

The book contains a sample APPEAR checklist at the back, and comes with three separate (free) checklist booklets ready for use in conducting an individual appearance audit. Additional checklists may be ordered separately (see order form on next page).

Reading the book, and especially using the APPEAR tool, can be useful as a consciousness-raiser about the importance of appearance, and in pointing out areas for possible appearance improvement. An appearance audit using APPEAR can be conducted by a person's service workers, advocates, family members and even by some people for themselves. It could be very useful in individual service and futures-planning sessions, and in getting a person ready for a new activity, role or engagement (for instance, before entering school or going on a job interview).

Studying and applying the APPEAR tool can also be a very useful follow-up to Introductory SRV training, as it deepens one's understanding of image and appearance issues.

---

**ORDER FORM ~ APPEAR**

Name  
Address

City  
Zip or Postal Code

State or Province  
Country

|                              | Indicate Quantity | Price (see below for prices) |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| APPEAR book                  | _____             | \$ _____                     |
| Sets of 20 APPEAR Checklists | _____             | \$ _____                     |

Subtotal \_\_\_\_\_  
 Less any discount for quantity purchases (see below) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Add shipping & handling:  
 15% for domestic addresses, 20% elsewhere \_\_\_\_\_  
**TOTAL \$** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**ORDERS FROM US & ELSEWHERE ~ OTHER THAN CANADA**

\$15 US for book  
 \$35 US for each set of 20 Checklists

*Mail completed form, with full payment (CHECK OR MONEY ORDER) in US funds, to:*

Syracuse University Training Institute  
 301 Huntington Hall  
 Syracuse, New York 13244 USA  
 phone: 315.443.5257; fax: 315.443.4338

---

**ORDERS FROM CANADA**

\$20 CDN for book plus HST  
 \$40 CDN for each set of 20 Checklists plus HST

*Mail completed form, with full payment in Canadian funds, to:*

Valor Press  
 200, du Comté Rd  
 PO Box 110  
 Plantagenet, Ontario K0B 1L0 Canada  
 phone: 613/673-3583  
 e-mail: sduchesne@instvalor.ca

---

**DISCOUNTS ON BULK PURCHASES**

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 10% discount for 25-49 Books       | 10% discount for 10-19 sets of Checklists |
| 15% discount for 50-99 Books       | 15% discount for 20-29 sets of Checklists |
| 20% discount for 100 or more Books | 20% discount for 30 + sets of Checklists  |

# Learning Role Theory From Fiction

Wolf Wolfensberger<sup>†</sup>

THERE IS A HUGE FICTION LITERATURE that includes characters from various societally devalued classes. Consider, for instance, the many novels (especially in the English language) that have mentally retarded characters in them. I possess perhaps the largest collection of such novels in private hands.

In many of these novels, the mentally retarded character plays a minor role, and is minimally described—maybe only briefly mentioned. In others, this character plays a central role, and perhaps even lends his or her name to the title of the book. Relatively well-known examples of the latter are *Tim* (Colleen McCullough, 1974) and *Flowers for Algernon* (Daniel Keyes, 1966), later made into the film “Charlie.”

A question of interest to our readership is, “How is the mentally retarded character depicted and interpreted in a work of fiction?,” assuming the character makes more than a cameo appearance. The reason this question is of interest is that an author’s presentation of a character who is a member of a specific class is likely to mirror the perceptions of that class held by at least a portion of the presumed readership population. Whatever stereotypes the public may hold of members of a specific class at a certain period in time are apt to be found in the depiction of such a member by a fiction writer of that era—with one exception: fiction writers are sometimes more sympathetic to distressed people than the rest of the populace,

and may function as opinion leaders toward attitude improvement. This means that they are apt to depict a devalued person in terms and ways that the public may only be likely to do some years or decades later, if ever. This explains why early 20th century fiction writers have been apt to interpret mentally retarded characters more favorably than their contemporaries, anticipating the shift in public opinion about mental retardation that took place since ca. World War II.

In fiction, writers are challenged to limn characters in ways that are coherent and plausible, and that explain what they “do,” why and how. This implies that the writers will have much to say about the roles that a character plays in their novel. In turn, the writer will have to describe the role cues and role elements of that character, much as are outlined in Social Role Valorization (SRV) teaching: personal appearance, physical settings, activities, social juxtapositions, language, etc. (Wolfensberger, 1998, 64-69).

However, if the author wanted to portray such a character positively, then the character would be apt to be portrayed in role-enhancing ways. For example, SRV teaching has pointed out that members of certain societally devalued classes are apt to be expected to play certain negative roles (though often also certain positive ones). So if a character is meant to be understood as being of impaired intelligence, we are apt to see the character portrayed as occupying the following



devalued roles: eternal child, village idiot, court or house fool, clumsy clod, sex offender against children, and/or arsonist.

Another challenge to a writer is how to concretize the role cues and messages so that the depiction of the character corresponds to the intended message. Writers are respectively criticized or lauded for the way in which they do this. For instance, a writer may be criticized for not attaching the kind of description of a character that would make his or her action in the novel credible, or even ‘anticipatable.’

All this means that well-characterized figures in a novel can teach readers a great deal about how a role can be perceived and conveyed via the role cues and messages used by the writer. The writer is even apt to bring to the reader’s consciousness the meaning of behaviors that the reader may have encountered, but had not consciously examined or thought about. For instance, a writer might depict a person as a “miser” in ways that the reader had seen in real life, but had never consciously associated with the “miser role.” A reader’s response may thus be one of “of course,” and may help the reader to identify tendencies toward miserliness in people in real life later on. This is one of many ways in which fiction can be formative of readers.

It is also in this way that a reader may learn a lot about particular roles, and even about role theory. So even if one is not particularly interested in fiction, it can be very profitable to read about the fictionalized lives of the kind of people one deals with in one’s professional or informal service life.

In this connection, I draw readers’ attention to a 2008 book entitled *Idiocy: A Cultural History* (P. McDonagh, 2008). This is an intellectual tour de force in linking the fictional treatment of people of low intelligence to the way they were perceived in particular historical eras, mainly from the late 1700s into the recent past, and mainly in the literature of England, though to some extent also in the literature of other English-speaking countries. Many such works of fiction are painstakingly re-

viewed, which by itself is a major contribution, and useful to anyone interested in the treatment of mentally retarded characters in fiction.

While McDonagh’s book suffers greatly from poor organization, its content makes up for this weakness. But beyond that, the author relates these works to what was going on in the larger society during that period of time. And he does it not only in respect to novels, but also poetry, such as William Wordsworth’s 1798 long and controversial poem, *The Idiot Boy*. ❧

SEE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON PAGE 55

#### REFERENCES

Keyes, D. (1966). *Flowers for Algernon*. New York: Harbrace.

McCullough, C. (1974). *Tim*. New York: Fawcett Popular Library.

McDonagh, P. (2008). *Idiocy: A cultural history*. Liverpool, England: Liverpool University Press.

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

---

WOLF WOLFENSBERGER, PHD, developed both *Social Role Valorization & Citizen Advocacy*, & authored over 40 books & 250 chapters & articles. He was Emeritus Professor at Syracuse University & directed the Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency, Syracuse, NY (US).

---

#### THE CITATION FOR THIS ARTICLE IS

Wolfensberger, W. (2012). Learning role theory from fiction. *The SRV Journal*, 7(2), 8–9.

# One For All and All For ... Some

Emily Rissinger

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following article was excerpted from a longer paper written as part of a university course taught by Dr. Thomas Neuville at Millersville University (see Neuville, T. with Smith, C. (2008). SRV & teacher prep: Not just a course, but a course of action. The SRV Journal, 3(2), 18-25). The original course assignment involved a study of the model coherency concept in Social Role Valorization, & involved observation at a school setting. We encourage professors & students across many fields to study & work with the ideas of SRV & PASSING, as these ideas have broad relevance & applicability, & can be profitably studied at many academic levels. As you read this article, you might ask yourself: what SRV issues are identified by this writer-student? How is this student-writer understanding & applying SRV ideas? What issues related to devaluation, unconsciousness, interpersonal identification, social roles, image & competency enhancement, etc. does the writer identify? And so on.*

## Introduction

THE MOTTO OF ALEXANDRE DUMAS'S classic novel *The Three Musketeers* is "One for all and all for one" (Dumas, 2006), which highlights the importance of being loyal. For the musketeers, it is the importance of their loyalty to each other, but this saying has often been interpreted as one's loyalty to all mankind. The reason I chose my title "one for all and all for ... some" is to draw attention to the way society excludes

many people from what it states all people should deserve. Many times we try to justify things as being for the "greater good," but greater does not pertain to all. Many times it only applies to those who are socially valued. People who are viewed as less competent, for example, are often cast aside into institutions or other segregated settings. Society tries to justify sticking to a "greater good" mentality by making exceptions, blindly trying to accommodate everyone the best they can. This may reflect an unconscious attempt by those in societally valued groups to try to keep their consciences clear, by creating institutions for negative outliers of society and making separate places for people outside the norm. For those who cannot live on their own, we create institutions. Stereotyping these people as incompetent and grouping them comes easy to us. It is human nature to unconsciously judge and group others.

For the good of society, we make public schools free to all students, regardless of societal status. This makes things good for all ... that is, until we look deeper into school services. Again we can find in public schools the concept of "greater good," which can mean that some individuals get excluded. This pattern continues on and on within many service models. If needs are not addressed, things will not go smoothly and soon "greater good" looks like a pathetic excuse to ignore other important needs of individuals. Those needs that are neglected may be the

ones most important for individual growth and development; needs that all humans deserve to have met.

### Model Coherency

**W**HEN A MODEL OF SERVICE works incorrectly it “could unnecessarily create new problems; in a worst case scenario, the recipient would suffer more harm than good, or even death” (Wolfensberger, 1998, 117). That is why it is so important that services should strive towards the best, most coherent model in order to satisfy the needs of recipients. The model must make sense and prevent wounds, which refers to the emotional scarring and other negative treatments which commonly occur when members of a society are devalued or looked at as subhuman, one of the common historical role perceptions. This issue is addressed within Social Role Valorization, a term developed by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger. Wolfensberger (1934-2011) lived through the terrors of the Holocaust growing up in Germany (Bersani, 2001). He moved away from home for much of the war, but the dehumanization of the different types of people must have affected him greatly. At age sixteen, he came to the United States and later became a citizen. As one of the first students to ever graduate with a psychology degree focused in mental retardation, Wolfensberger used this knowledge to change society’s view of devalued people within humanity with his writings (Bersani, 2001).

‘Model coherency’ is a term coined by Wolf Wolfensberger to measure human service models and make sure they are coherent, meaning they do what they are meant to do. According to Wolfensberger, the most ideal social service “would be derived from the real, primary, and urgent needs of the people being served, and all of its process components would match harmoniously with each other and the content to facilitate effective address of those needs” (Wolfensberger, 1998, 116).

Models are examined for coherency, based on assumptions and a triangular continuum of ‘who,’

‘how’ (the process), and ‘what’ (content). ‘Who’ describes the service recipients, asking if those being served are getting all the services they need, and if they require the service. ‘How’ is based on the process. It examines how those being served are grouped, who works for the service, whether those employed use the correct language and methods, if the setting is isolated (since that can cause others to believe segregating them is better), etc. ‘What’ is based on content (Cocks, 2001, 15). For a model to be coherent, it must make sense to members of a culture. A model would not be coherent, for example, if others in the culture were asked if they would live that way and they refused (Wolfensberger, 1998, 117).

### Apparent Responses to Wounding Experiences

**A**S SEEN IN Maslow’s ‘hierarchy of needs,’ one must have many components satisfied before focusing on something beyond physical needs. Maslow’s hierarchy has five steps (Darity, 2008, 11). The first is the base of the pyramid, since one needs to fill these needs before moving up the pyramid. This stage contains physiological needs, which are all the basic needs such as for shelter and food. Some services tend to cover this stage fairly well. The next step of the pyramid, after those needs are met, is the need of safety. If one does not feel safe and secure, one will not be able to focus on the next need, which is for love. (Love and the following needs may not be addressed as often in human services, perhaps since the other needs can seem more urgent.) One need in this ‘love’ category is for belonging. Many people are wounded because they feel left out, yet numerous services may not focus on this step of Maslow’s hierarchy. The next step after love is esteem. Lastly, when all of the steps are achieved, one can strive for self-actualization. Not many people have achieved this goal, and many with disabilities within services have even fewer opportunities to work toward this goal (Darity, 2008, 12).

In a service for all Americans, such as public school, many things may need to be adjusted to move toward better quality service. Two examples of this are the location of the school and the amount of money the school receives.

At a public city school which I observed as part of a university course, I realized that many children were bundled together in a corner one day because the heat was shut off. Because they could not afford to heat the school that day, a lot of the students' learning was hindered, among other problems. This is not good for many reasons, since city school children are already stereotyped as being behind in school; a day when they come to school and do not learn will only amplify that stereotype if viewed by an outsider.

If students are too hot or cold, and thus their physical needs are not being met, they may not be able to focus on anything besides meeting those physical needs, and thus may not be able to learn effectively. As pointed out by Wolfensberger, "there is no point in addressing certain needs or problems if more fundamental needs or problems are not addressed first (e.g., for shelter, security, sufficient nourishment)" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 111). This is just one of the many examples of things that could be fixed within a human service.

Based on Wolfensberger's statement above, pertaining to the nourishment aspect, we must make sure students are getting healthy foods to eat. The food served at the public school which I observed was mostly just warmed-up canned goods, which are low in nutritional value. Students thus did not get the energy they needed for their day. If they had energy and felt healthier, they would be more up for activities and learning. What students had to eat everyday was essentially "institution food," words which my local grocery store had labeled over the canned good items. Everything was made in bulk with a luke-warm feel, nothing especially made for any one student. It was for the whole group, which deindividualized these students even more, especially when giving them only two options to choose from. Maybe if they had some

fresh fruit or veggies more often, it would help them focus and be happier, healthier students.

Since the students get free lunch and breakfast at school, this topic is relevant to all of them. The students also could not leave the school to get something else to eat. The budget from the government only funded so much, but I think that they should have been allowed more. Because it is good to be healthy, spending money on better food will save the government money down the road. If I were to try to fix this school, I would also give more options with healthier choices for meals.

Drawing on the SRV concept of relevancy, another problem within this public school that I saw was that of competency-related needs. Many students were trying so hard to be seen as competent in so many areas, especially the English language learners. I believe it would be beneficial and relevant for teachers to incorporate more Spanish into their lessons. Not only would it help those students become more competent in English, but it would help the students fluent in English become better at Spanish too.

I also think that if the teachers allowed the students to go to the bathrooms by themselves without an adult, it would spark a feeling of trust with the students and a feeling of competency when they come back, able to walk the hallway and return alone.

For the SRV concept of potency, Wolfensberger states that, "whatever processes are employed should be the most effective and efficient means for addressing a party's needs, so that one makes the best use of the time of the recipients, rather than addressing the need in a fashion which is not particularly pointed or effective, or outright wasting of their time" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 144).

One of the needs I saw in the school that was not addressed often was students' need to be loved. The children needed to be loved and given attention. Since I learned that these children often did not get this at home, they so often acted out in class. This wastes everyone's time. All children should be praised often, even for small progress. Children

like to know that they are improving and that someone cares. For this I feel it would be good, for example, for the teacher to work out lunch dates for each student to spend time with her during the week. Then the teacher could have a conference with them, get to know them, and give that child some meaningful attention for once. This would make students feel loved and wanted.

Another thing that might be helpful would be field trips that allow children to practice their newly learned competencies, such as a field trip to the bank to help them learn the importance of money. The students together can save spare change for something they can all enjoy, like a bean bag chair for the reading center, or glow in the dark stars for the ceiling. This way the children see the importance of learning about money.

Defined by Wolfensberger, model coherency is described as, “the right servers should be using the right materials, methods, and language, in the right settings, in order to do the right thing for the right recipients, who are grouped in the right way” (Wolfensberger, 1998, 116). The setting I observed had a few of these things, but not many.

When a person is stereotypically grouped with other people in a ‘special’ group, it can take away their identity and make them forget what they know; it also does not focus on their needs. In a child’s school life, the general education classroom is their main place, their ‘home,’ at least for their time while in school. Taking children away from general education into special education pulls them from where they want to be and encourages other students to lump them into a ‘stupid’ category.

Making classrooms ‘inclusive’ will help all children, more than one could even imagine. It can help make all students be seen as valued among their peers, since they are all part of the group, and allows many opportunities for not only learning about school subjects, but learning about people. By breaking down the barriers and mysteries of those who are different than the norm, inclusive classrooms allow students to get to know those

children, rather than taking them out for special needs instruction.

Trying to rate the program I observed in the public school on their model coherency was a difficult challenge for me. I feel the students would benefit from using more English/Spanish mixed books and lessons, as I stated earlier. This would help students feel included. I also feel students are not grouped appropriately by age level. Just because a student is in second grade does not mean they are developing the same as any other eight-year old. If we broke down grades based on ability, we might be able to teach all students better. If the school was a bit cleaner, with a steadier temperature, it would be a better environment for fostering learning. Teachers should also all have relevant training in how to better understand their students and how to make the entire general education classroom more suited for all students.

### Conclusion

**K**NOWING THAT PEOPLE of all ages, races and abilities levels can be devalued by other groups of people has enlightened me and brought to light so many issues I had never truly thought about. To teach a child with disabilities in an inclusive classroom goes beyond just teaching a subject. It becomes about teaching all students, and about helping them to accept and create new values they can project on to society. This diminishes the idea of a “greater good” that unconsciously highlights only those valued individuals within a society, and instead accepts all individuals as humans who should have their needs met. As a future teacher, I have better realized: the importance of teaching acceptance, the value of all human beings, and the importance of emphasizing the rights that all people deserve. Everyone should be required to step back and look at the big picture and see all humans as valued. While all people and institutions are not perfect, it does not mean we should not strive for excellence. We should try to use more relevant and potent

strategies. It means we should also learn to see the faults that are shadowed in our own unconscious thoughts and actions, and try to counteract them with love and acceptance. ☺

SEE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON PAGE 55

#### REFERENCES

Bersani, H. (2001). Wolf Wolfensberger: Scholar, change agent, and iconoclast. *Journal of Religion, Disability & Health*, 4(2/3), 1.

Cocks, E. (2001). Normalisation and Social Role Valorisation: Guidance for human service development. *Hong Kong Journal of Psychiatry*, 11(1), 12-16.

Darity, W.A. (2008). Maslow, Abraham. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 11-12.

Dumas, A. (2006). *The three musketeers*. Introduction and Notes: B. Cooper. Barnes & Noble Classics.

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

---

EMILY RISSINGER is a junior at Millersville University (US), with a dual major in Early Childhood & Special Education. A native of Pennsylvania, Ms. Rissinger had been in different versions of special education in her primary grade years.

---

#### THE CITATION FOR THIS ARTICLE IS

Rissinger, E. (2012). One for all and all for ... some. *The SRV Journal*, 7(2), 10-14.

# Parental Reports of the Experiences of Students with Impairment in Queensland: An SRV-based Critique

Glenys Mann

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This paper was presented at the Fifth International SRV Conference, Canberra, ACT, Australia, in September 2011.*

## Introduction

**M**ANY COUNTRIES HAVE DEVELOPED education policies that reflect a commitment to the education of all children within a common schooling system. The impact of these policy changes on the day-to-day experiences of students with disability is of current interest to educators. Student experiences can be explored in a number of ways. One of these ways is through the perspectives of their parents. How well parents understand their children's experiences is perhaps a moot point; however, given their primary role in children's lives, particularly while they are at school, it could be argued that the parental perspective is a legitimate one.

This paper will discuss the experiences of students with disability in Queensland, Australia, as described by their parents, and will analyze these experiences using a Social Role Valorization (SRV) framework. Developed by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger, SRV is founded on the premise that a person's well-being depends largely on their social roles; those who occupy positively valued roles are more likely to experience the good things of life, while those who occupy roles that are devalued by others are more likely to be badly treated by them (2000). Particular attention will be paid in this

analysis to the SRV theme of personal social integration and valued social participation. "Personal social integration and valued social participation" require, according to Wolfensberger, "(a) valued participation, (b) with valued people (c) in valued activities that (d) take place in valued settings" (1998, 123). It will be demonstrated that these elements provide an effective framework for evaluating the experiences that parents describe.

## Education in Queensland for Students with Impairment

**A**S IN MANY OTHER PLACES in the world, Queensland education systems (including state, church and private) continue to grapple with the issue of how best to educate students with disability. Historically excluded from formal schooling, Queensland students with disability have, over the past 30 years, become entitled to a free, state education. This entitlement has been enacted through the provision of 1] separate, specialist schools; 2] specialist (and sometimes separate) provision within the grounds of a regular school (now called Special Education Programs or SEPs); 3] integration at regular schools (described by Bourke & Carrington, 2007, as an approach which requires the student to "fit" the classroom); 4] inclusive education programs (described by Graham & Sweller, 2011, as an approach which requires that school systems and cultures change to "fit"

the needs of all students); and sometimes 5] a combination of these approaches.

The more recent of these approaches, inclusive education, is in line with a worldwide trend. Although subject to debate about how it is interpreted (Hodkinson, 2010), inclusion can be generally understood as “part of a human rights agenda that demands access to, and equity in, education” for historically marginalized students (Florian, 2008, 202). One of the factors in the move to inclusive education has been the introduction of legislation to protect the entitlement of students with disability to education without discrimination. The UK, for example, has seen the instigation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001); the United States of America, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1990); and Canada, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982).

The Education Standards of Australia’s Disability Discrimination Act (2005) has been the legislation of significance to Australian students with disability. Prior to this, inclusion was attempted, albeit sporadically, and there is evidence that Queensland education authorities had begun the process of adopting an inclusive philosophy. For example, an Inclusive Education Summit was held in Queensland in 2002. One outcome of the summit was the definition of inclusive education as “a process of responding to the uniqueness of individuals, increasing: their presence, access, participation and achievement in a learning society” (Ministerial Taskforce on Inclusive Education, 2004, 5).

Although the move to inclusive education had already begun, it was placed firmly on every Queensland school’s agenda in 2005 when the Education Standards became Australian law. In line with legal requirements, Education Queensland (EQ) developed an Inclusive Education Statement in 2005, and inclusive education policies through which the goals outlined in that statement would be implemented in Queensland state schools. This approach to education was vali-

dated in 2008 when Australia signed the international Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability (United Nations), Article 24 of which outlines a goal of “full inclusion” through “an inclusive education system at all levels.”

### Parent Advocacy for Inclusive Education

**A** LONGSIDE THE LEGAL ARGUMENT, another factor in the move to inclusive education has been the impetus of parents to claim regular school enrolments for their children with disability (Yssel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff & Swart, 2007). One avenue through which parents in Queensland have had the opportunity for influence has been the state-wide advocacy organization, Queensland Parents for People with a Disability (QPPD), whose mission includes the vigorous defence of “justice and rights for people with disability” (2011), and whose membership primarily comprises parents of children with disability. In the 30 years of its existence, QPPD has spearheaded strong and ongoing advocacy for the valued and meaningful participation of students with disability in regular, neighbourhood schools. The organization embraced the changes to legislation and policy described above, in the hope that these would bring the welcome and belonging that families of students with disability were seeking (QPPD, 2009). The new inclusive policies and laws legitimized QPPD’s expectations for inclusive education and made it reasonable to imagine that children with disability would be able to participate in Queensland education programs on “the same basis as a student without a disability” (Education Standards, 2005).

As Jenkinson (2001) argued, however, laws and policies do not always provide the guidance that is needed. In spite of the new legislative and policy frameworks, their implementation seemed to be problematic. Observations made internationally (e.g., in the United Kingdom by Lloyd, 2008, and Gibson, 2006) that inclusive policy has not been followed through with inclusive practice, seemed to also be the case in Queensland. QPPD



continued to receive calls from concerned parents (about issues such as part-time placements, pressure to go to special segregated schools, and lack of accessibility for learners with disability) in the years following the introduction of the legislation (QPPD, 2011).

### QPPD's Research

**T**O UNDERSTAND PARENTAL CONCERNS in more depth, QPPD undertook research into parents' perspectives of their children's experiences in the Queensland schooling system, and sought to find out about barriers that families experience when their sons and daughters have a disability (defined in Education Queensland under six categories: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Impairment, Physical Impairment, Speech-Language Impairment, and Vision Impairment). Participation in the research was voluntary and any parent who wished to participate was welcome. While other family members and friends were invited to participate, only one person who was not a parent (a grandparent) provided responses that were included in the analysis.

The research was undertaken in two stages. Firstly, a questionnaire was developed by a survey reference group (comprised of QPPD parent members) for use both online (via Survey Monkey) and through phone interviews during the week 22-26 March 2010. Forty-four questions were designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative information (see Appendix 1). Twenty-nine questions were multiple choice and fifteen were open-ended. Most multiple choice questions provided the option of adding a comment. There were 179 responses to the survey. One hundred and thirty-nine questionnaires were answered in full. While this is only a small proportion of the families of a child with disability living in Queensland, the data presented below offers a worthwhile insight into how effectively inclusive education policies are being implemented. Families were notified of the survey via QPPD's networks and through

community media outlets. All Queensland families of students with disability were targeted. Disability was not defined within the flyer, so participants self-identified as the parent of a child with a disability. Secondly, focus groups were conducted. Three groups were held with a total of 25 participants, all of whom had responded to flyers advertising the groups.

The children represented in the research ranged in age from four years to early adulthood; however the majority of children were in their primary school years. The survey did not require parents to identify their children's EQ disability category (outlined above). Children from all EQ disability categories, except hearing impairment, were represented in the focus group interviews.

QPPD's research results were analysed using an SRV framework for a presentation at the 2011 SRV Conference in Canberra. This article will expand on that presentation. Key findings from the study will be reported using both unpublished data and data from the QPPD research report<sup>1</sup> (including both survey and focus group research). Findings will be discussed within the original survey context (i.e., Education Queensland's inclusive education policy), and then within an SRV framework, with particular reference to the concept of "personal social integration and valued social participation."

"Personal social integration and valued social participation" and inclusion have been described as similar concepts (Lemay, 2006). Both offer a vision of a "good school life" for students defined as disabled, and a response to the disadvantage and inequality that this group of students (along with other devalued or marginalized groups) have historically experienced. In this way the goals of SRV are "not dissimilar to the goals of 'inclusion', if that term is taken beyond a narrow version involving physical inclusion" (Race, Boxall & Carson, 2005, 512). There are, however, differences between the approaches in how these goals should be pursued and in the emphases of the two constructs. For example, an SRV focus would be

on individual students and socially valued roles, while those who promote inclusive education see the school environment as the focus of change, and rely on educational practices that accommodate and welcome diversity to produce an optimal school experience. Those who argue for inclusive education would likely acknowledge that school environments are not truly inclusive if students with disability are not in socially valued roles; however, the concept of valued roles is not explicitly articulated in inclusive rhetoric.

While an inclusive argument is founded on the entitlement of students with disability to education on the same basis as other students, SRV theory makes clear that according rights is an empty exercise, if it is done involuntarily and without an equivalent values-base. The literature on inclusive education is, in fact, plagued with examples of the incongruity between what is espoused and what actually takes place in schools.

The mismatch between inclusive policy and the day-to-day experiences of students with disability can be ascribed, in part, to the ambiguous nature of inclusion. Differences in how inclusion is understood and interpreted make inclusive education difficult to implement with consistency and problematic to evaluate. It is proposed that SRV, as an alternative framework, can contribute to a clearer understanding of the situations and experiences that parents describe; and is an important tool for making transparent the dynamics of devaluation that are apparent in schools in spite of inclusive education rhetoric.

### Results

**R**ESULTS FROM THE QPPD investigations and analysis will be presented under four headings: presence, access, participation and achievement, as these are the key components of the original definition of inclusive education in Queensland (see above). These elements were also considered in the development of the QPPD survey. Queensland's current inclusive education policy retains a focus on access, participation and

achievement. All verbatim reports in the following discussion come from the data collected during the QPPD investigation.

#### *Presence*

MOST PARENTS (78%) indicated that their children with disability were enrolled in regular schools. Approximately 61% of these children were enrolled in schools with a Special Education Program (SEP). Forty-six parents (approx 30%) indicated that their child had changed schools (this did not include normative changes, e.g., from primary to secondary); 50% because they were not happy, and 35% because they were asked or persuaded to leave. Just over a third of parents said that their child's current school was not their school of choice.

Written comments give an insight into the issue of presence in schools. There were stories of rejection; for example, "I was told he couldn't be enrolled and asked to go away. No acceptance of us at all" (QPPD, 2011, 13); and evidence of the high emotional cost that some parents paid so that their child could attend regular schools, for example, "Having to fight, constantly monitoring how things are going" (QPPD, unpublished), and "we spent a lot of time in anguish" (QPPD, unpublished). Parents also spoke of having no choice about where their child was enrolled, for example, "There was nowhere else to go. I was forced" (QPPD, 2011, 12); of enrolment that was conditional on funding, for example, "Very stressful to think about ... the school refuses to take my kids with a disability without more funding. It apparently costs more money to say hello and tell my children where to sit and when to go" (QPPD, 2011, 13); and of part-time presence in schools, for example, "My sons have one hour of school a week each and no support for this time" (QPPD, 2011, 18).

*Alignment of results with EQ policy and broader understandings of inclusive education.* The evidence shows that a large percentage of students with dis-

ability are enrolled and present in regular schools in Queensland. That some Queensland students with disability are not enrolled in the general school system is still consistent with EQ's definition which refers only to a non-specific 'learning society.' This is also consistent with the subsequent EQ Inclusive Education Statement (2005) which, while broader in its description of what an inclusive education entails, is also non-specific about where the valuing of diversity that it refers to will take place. This lack of attention to 'place' is, in turn, consistent with the view held by some (e.g., Forbes, 2007) that inclusive education is not a matter of setting, but of being part of the learning process and the wider learning community. An implication of this belief is that education in a special school, or exclusion from a regular school, is in line with an inclusive policy.

This interpretation of inclusive education would not be accepted by everyone. Some (e.g., Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011) would argue that enrolment in special schools and rejection from the general school system (including part-time and conditional enrolment) is not consistent with inclusive philosophy. The experience in Queensland schools could well reflect the problematic nature of defining and understanding inclusive education and the oft-reported variation in how inclusion is interpreted and therefore implemented by educators (e.g., Bourke, 2010).

Perhaps there would be more agreement, however, that the cost to families of seeking presence in regular schools is out of step with the ethos of inclusion. EQ's Inclusive Education Statement (2005) states that inclusive education is "underpinned by respectful relationships between learners, teachers and caregivers" and that as part of its commitment to inclusive education EQ "ensures that students, teachers and community members from diverse groups feel safe and free from discrimination, bias and harassment."

The recognition that families have authority in decision-making and are legitimate partners in a collaborative process is a well-recognized facet of

inclusive practice (e.g., Yssel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff & Swart, 2007; Leyser & Kirk, 2004). The QPPD research suggests that, in Queensland, the inclusive rhetoric of respectful and collaborative partnerships between parents and teachers is not yet a reality for all.

*An SRV perspective.* Wolfensberger was wary of inclusion as a strategy for getting the good things in life because attempts to implement inclusive philosophy so commonly lack elements which are vital for "[s]ocial role-valorizing integration" (1998, 124). Others have validated this caution. Researchers have reported that, in spite of inclusive rhetoric, rejection, segregation, congregation and low expectations continue to be experienced by students with disability (e.g., Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011). SRV is clear that, while insufficient on its own, the 'where' of education is indeed vital. The definition of "personal social integration and valued social participation" identifies four essential elements, and one of these involves place; that is, in valued settings. While there may be different opinions as to the school settings that are typically valued in Queensland (e.g., private vs. state schools), there would be general agreement within the broader population that it is regular rather than special schools that have a higher status and therefore would be seen as the valued educational setting. This is not to say that special schools were not liked or even preferred by some participants in the QPPD research; just that they are not the school settings that families, generally, would be seeking for their children.

From an SRV perspective, the results (that some students with disability continue to be excluded from valued educational places) provide evidence that devaluation exists in Queensland schools in the form of rejection and distantiation (the putting or keeping at a distance) of students with disability. SRV also provides an insight into the personal cost to many parents who sought presence in valued settings for their children. Wolfensberger posited that hurtful things

are more likely to happen to societally devalued people and outlined a number of common 'wounds' (Wolfensberger, 1998, 12-21), many of which were to be found in the experiences described by parents in the survey. The quotes below show that, in the enrolment process, students (and therefore parents) had experienced the following:

- systematic rejection in that "people [teachers] really do not want that person [the student with a disability] around" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 14), for example, "was asked to leave as the teachers weren't able to deal with him ... in other words—he was in the 'too hard basket'" (QPPD, 2011, 15);

- their sons and daughters being cast into devalued roles: role of menace or object of dread where students are "perceived and interpreted as a threat to others" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 15), for example, "The principal informed us among other things 'he could not sleep at night with a child like my son at his school' and 'he was fearing for the safety of the other pupils' " (QPPD, unpublished);

- role of burden or object of charity, where teachers are moved by sense of guilt or duty "but not gladly nor with any positive feeling" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 15), for example, "we know of other children who have not been readily accepted into the school. Feel we are the school's evidence that they are practicing inclusive education" (QPPD, unpublished);

- a loss of control in their children's lives with respect to enrolment and schooling decisions, where "[i]t is other people who gain power over them and make decisions for them" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 18), for example, "we felt completely locked out of the process and powerless—the parents were not thought to know anything" (QPPD, 2011, 13);

- sons and daughters deindividualised, where they "are subjected to mass management ... rather than getting what they need" (Wolfensberger, 1998, 20), for example, "At both enrolment interviews we were told that it probably wasn't the place for my son ... the only knowledge they had was that [he was] autistic" (QPPD, 2011, 13);

- sons and daughters experiencing discontinuity with places, for example, "My son has had many school changes—this has affected him emotionally ... I needed to capitulate about special school so that there would be no more changes for him until he finished school" (QPPD, 2011, 13).

*Summary.* Parental reports indicate that a large number of students with disability, but not all, are present in regular schools. Many of these schools have an SEP provision. There is evidence that presence in regular schools can come at a high cost to families. Using an SRV perspective, the rejection and separation of any students with disability from regular schools is an example of the devaluation of this group. Parent descriptions, examined through an SRV framework, provide illustrations of the wounding that is experienced when students have a characteristic (in this case disability) that is negatively valued in schools.

### **Access**

WHILE A LARGE NUMBER of respondents indicated that their children had regular enrolments and so were physically present in schools, this did not necessarily equate to classroom access. Approximately half of the children from the survey were enrolled in schools with SEPs, and while the provision of SEPs did not automatically equate with segregation, results suggested that there was a link. Forty-three percent of students in schools with SEPs spent half their time or less in regular classrooms, as opposed to 14% of students in schools that did not have an SEP, for example, "Spends all her time in the unit. Supposed to go to the classroom but it doesn't happen" (QPPD,

2011, 18), and “Doesn’t even have a seat in the classroom” (QPPD, 2011, 18).

Not surprisingly, there was a similar link between the provision of SEPs and access to areas outside the classroom. Children with disability were more likely to spend lunch breaks in regular playgrounds if they were in schools without SEPs (76% children in state schools without SEPs as opposed to 35% students in state schools with SEPs).

*Alignment of results with EQ policy and broader understandings of inclusive education.* The high percentage of students enrolled in schools with SEPs and reported as having little time in regular settings could be seen as another example of the confusion arising from EQ’s lack of clarity about ‘place.’ Once again, the vagueness of both EQ’s definition and the Inclusive Education Statement (2005) gives educators a wide scope regarding what could be seen as inclusive. Segregated classrooms fulfill the description of a ‘learning society’ and, therefore, meet the criteria according to EQ documents. It would seem that schools have interpreted the policy, with regard to ‘where’ students with disability learn, in varying ways, and, therefore, Queensland parents seeking inclusive education could not confidently expect that enrolment in regular schools would equal access to regular classrooms.

In the wider education literature, opinion is divided as to whether special education is, as Florian (2008) described, an answer to the problem of implementing inclusive education or is, in fact, part of the problem. Some would interpret the use of special classes as a strategy for enabling schools to be inclusive (e.g., Forbes, 2007; Zigmond & Kloo, 2011). Others would interpret the practice of special classes as exclusion and a barrier to inclusive education (e.g., Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011; Lloyd, 2008). The survey results indicate that SEPs are used widely as an educational setting for students with disability. Clarity about how they operate would be helpful.

*An SRV perspective.* Wolfensberger’s caution regarding inclusion is as valid with respect to classrooms as it is to schools. The experiences reported by research participants support this need for caution (QPPD, 2011). There is evidence of the damage that can be done to vulnerable students when either inclusive policy is equated with physical presence alone, for example, “Lots of periods of the day where he is left sitting with no support” (QPPD, 2011, 28); or students are rejected from regular classrooms.

QPPD’s results show that, for many students, enrolment in regular schools is not enough to ensure role-valorizing experiences. Parents’ descriptions of class groupings within schools highlight, again, that ‘place’ is an issue when students have disability and that devaluation continues to occur even in ‘inclusive’ schools. Parents described their children being put at a distance from the classroom community, for example, “Not wanted by teachers—too hard. Easier to be out of class ... easier to pass the buck” (QPPD, 2011, 19); of being treated less well, for example, “Battled for 3 years. Specific teachers don’t want my daughter in their class” (QPPD, 2011, 18); and of enforced congregation as well as segregation, for example, “My son seeks out the regular kids but is still grouped with the ‘unit kids’ as they call them” (QPPD, 2011, 25).

While presence in regular classrooms does not guarantee valued social roles, this does not mean that SRV would promote the use of segregated classrooms. As outlined above, Wolfensberger (1998) was clear that “personal social integration and valued social participation” is more likely in valued settings (but also requires other elements). Valued settings in schools would generally be accepted to be regular rather than special classrooms. This is not to suggest that some parents do not sometimes prefer special classes, or that special classes do not do valued work, rather that they would not be the option chosen by the broader student/parent population.

Being with ‘valued others’ (within ‘valued settings’) is a second element that is critical if students are to experience ‘personal social integration and valued social participation’ (Wolfensberger, 1998). QPPD findings indicate that an SEP provision in the school was more likely to result in students being grouped with other devalued students (in this case, those with disability), and less likely to result in students spending time with non-devalued students. The lack of opportunities to be present with valued students can be explained as both the result of being devalued; and also a way that the cycle of devaluation continues.

Results suggest that when the role of “SEP student” replaces that of “classmate,” other important roles become less likely, for example, the roles of “playmate” and “team member.” It could also be argued that the provision of SEPs leads to what Lemay (2006, 2) described as “role muddle.” What marks students as being in the role of “class member” is who teaches them, where they spend their time and what they spend their time doing. The uncertainty of some parents regarding these details (e.g., who was responsible for teaching their children, which classroom they spent their time in, and what activities/curriculum they were following) indicates a ‘muddle’ around the role that children played in schools when they had a disability.

Confusion over a child’s ‘teacher’ was one example, for instance, “Teacher aides remove my son from his class and take him to a room alone where he is supposedly instructed by them—a person with no educational training or skill as a teacher” (QPPD, 2011, 18).

Lemay (2006) explained that for someone to achieve a particular role (e.g., the role of “class member”), that role must be recognized by others in reciprocal roles (e.g., the “class teacher”). The class teacher is usually easy to identify for students who do not have a disability. For students with disability, however, the classroom teacher may be unwilling to take on this role (and so deny their students the reciprocal role), for example, “The teacher at the school said that if she had wanted to

teach special school kids she would have studied for it” (QPPD, 2011, 15). Staff may be confused about who should take the primary teaching role, when students are identified as being with the SEP and/or are only part-time in their classroom.

Similar to the wounds described by participants whose children had been rejected, and/or sent to segregated, congregated schools, there is also evidence of the wounding experiences that were associated with the provision of SEPs, for example, the loss of opportunities; “Dropped off and picked up from the SEU. Little mixing, when the school had assemblies, stayed in the yard and watched from there” (QPPD, 2011, 19).

There is evidence from the QPPD survey that some teachers have recognized the lower status of SEPs and have attempted to rid them of their negative image (e.g., participants spoke of flexible models of support, name changes, regular students’ involvement, etc.), and to assist students in more role-valorizing ways, for example, “The school tries to support by going into the classroom rather than segregating” (QPPD, 2011, 18), and “She goes at her own pace, as do all of the children in the class. She may do less complicated activities but nevertheless still participates at her level of ability on the same topic that is being taught” (QPPD, 2011, 22).

*Summary.* QPPD results indicate that even when enrolled in regular schools, students with disability do not necessarily experience inclusion in regular classrooms. Accessing the valued places of the school environment appears to be more difficult if the school has an SEP. From an SRV perspective, separation from the regular classroom is a sign of devaluation and will have a negative impact on experiences of “‘real’ integration” (Lemay, 2006, 3). Parent descriptions provided illustrations of the wounds to students that occur as a result.

### **Participation**

THE THIRD COMPONENT OF THE EQ inclusive education definition and of the QPPD survey

is “participation.” Those who argue for regular school and classroom enrolment (e.g., Florian, 2008) agree that inclusion is more than just a matter of ‘access,’ and that while presence is a necessary prerequisite for inclusive education to occur, it is not enough on its own. Some research comments highlighted the negative experiences of students when they were present but not participating, for example, “He’s totally disengaged in the mainstream, which is a third of every day, this child literally sits there and just doesn’t speak” (QPPD, 2011, 95).

The QPPD research explored the notion of participation and found that approximately 60% of students mostly or always followed the same classroom program as their classmates. While this finding is encouraging, it also highlights the percentage of students (37%) who only sometimes, or never, followed the same program. (A small percentage of parents did not know what program their child was following.) Given the proportion of students spending most of their time segregated from regular classroom (see above), it is to be expected that they will not be participating in classroom programs. Participant comments illustrated this experience: “She is withdrawn from the whole lot. It has gotten worse as she has gotten older” (QPPD, 2011, 22).

A link was apparent between the provision of an SEP and participation in the classroom program. Students were more likely to be included in the program if the school did not have an SEP. Eighty-six percent of students in schools without SEPs were mostly, or always, following the classroom program; as opposed to 58% of students in schools with an SEP. Parental comments gave an insight, for example, “Because there is not enough aide support she has to go the SEU more if she needs help. She isn’t able to stay in the classroom” (QPPD, 2011, 19).

In contrast, while some parents indicated that it was a struggle to have work suitably adapted, for example, “I am continually asking for a modified program but they won’t do it” (QPPD, 2011, 22).

Results showed that if there was an SEP provision, classroom programs were more likely to be modified. Forty-eight percent of parents whose children were in schools with SEPs said the program was mostly or always modified, whereas this figure was only a third in schools without SEPs. “Last teachers have been a godsend—modified and followed the same program adapted. This term it is all coming together for her” (QPPD, 2011, 22). This is the only result in which SEPs were linked to more inclusive outcomes; a conflict in findings which suggests that while teachers in SEPs are more skilled at modifying programs, they are more likely to present that modified work in a special, segregated classroom.

Parental responses to questions about participation in play provide further evidence of the link between disability and an impoverished school experience. Approximately two-thirds of parents indicated that their children only sometimes, rarely or never, participated in play with other children, and for students enrolled in schools with an SEP program, socializing with peers was less likely.

*Alignment of results with EQ policy and broader understandings of inclusive education.* While EQ’s referral to “access” could be seen to mean entry to the learning as much as the buildings of a school, it is not explicit about the ‘what’ of learning. Whether the intention of the definition is participation in the activity of learning itself or participation alongside other children in the classroom program is not specified. Once again, the vagueness of the definition invites different interpretations and broadens the scope of what could be considered to be inclusive. Consequently, the QPPD results which suggest that many students are not participating in classroom programs do not necessarily conflict with EQ’s definition of inclusive education.

EQ’s later Inclusive Education Statement (2005) suggests that a curriculum that meets the needs of diverse learners is an indicator that inclusive teaching and learning is taking place. While not

true for all students in the QPPD survey, there is evidence that the provision of an SEP is linked to curriculum accessibility and, therefore, to this aspect of inclusive schooling.

In the broader literature on inclusive education, the issue of participation rather than just presence is a critical one (e.g., Bourke & Carrington, 2007). There is an argument that mere enrolment in the regular classroom and school is not sufficient to meet educational needs and that students in these settings are likely to have limited access to learning (Forbes, 2007). Underlying this argument is a belief that classroom teachers, for a number of reasons, find it difficult to ensure the meaningful participation of diverse groups of students, or to make the curriculum accessible to all. Consequently, smaller targeted groups and alternative curricula are recommended for effective and meaningful participation.

Others would agree that physical presence alone is not desirable; yet do not accept that separate, alternative teaching is the answer (e.g., Bourke, 2010). School reform, it has been reasoned, is the answer to ensuring meaningful participation, not only for students with disability, but for all students. These disparate views make it difficult to assess whether what is happening for Queensland students is meeting the requirements of EQ inclusive education policy and the broader notions of inclusive education. The experience of students could be interpreted as either routine exclusion or participation in more 'suitable' and 'meaningful' programs.

*An SRV perspective.* For "personal social integration and valued social participation" to occur (Wolfensberger, 1998, 123), four components are necessary (as outlined above). It is the first of these (valued participation) that offers a powerful insight into the research results, and it does this by its emphasis on students' involvement being valued.

According to Wolfensberger, role valorizing integration is only successfully achieved on a voluntary basis. "Even the placement of impaired chil-

dren in regular school classes—commonly called 'inclusion'—could lack the element of valued participation. In fact it is often because the presence of a devalued person is coerced that this presence is neither desired nor valued" (1998, 124).

Although the EQ Inclusive Education Statement does refer to valuing diversity, social justice, "responding optimistically" to the needs of disadvantaged students, and ensuring that students feel "safe and free from discrimination," the element of students with disability being desired or valued is missing from this document, as it is from the definition of inclusive education. There was considerable evidence that these qualities were also missing from participants' day-to-day experiences. Approximately 24% of families did not feel happy at their current school; approximately 35% of families that had changed schools had done so because they had been persuaded or told to go elsewhere; and 49% of parents indicated that the work of the classroom had only sometimes, or never, been made accessible for their child. The finding that 36% of students were either mostly or fully in a segregated location could be interpreted as further indication that students with impairment are not always wanted or valued in regular schools and classrooms.

Desired rather than forced participation is a distinction that can help greatly in understanding what participants said about their experience in Queensland schools, for example, 1] the widespread hope for a quality of welcome and belonging; 2] the ongoing 'cost' when enrolment in a regular school was not freely given but had to be fought for; 3] the reluctance to go to schools where children were not wanted nor welcome (in spite of inclusive education policies which give this entitlement); and 4] the satisfaction and relief described by some families who had moved to a segregated school because they felt their child was not wanted in the regular school, for example, "I am happy with the special school we have chosen ... unwelcome and totally unsupported at the mainstream school" (QPPD, unpublished).



SRV maintains that if role-valORIZING integration is to occur, students would not only be welcome participants but would be engaging in ‘valued activities.’ It could be said that specialist, alternative programs are valued by some educators and parents (e.g., Zigmond & Kloo, 2011), and indeed, Wolfensberger (1998) points out that offering identical activities to members of diverse groups may not result in meeting the pressing needs of the individuals within those groups. However, in the broader school context, the regular curriculum and its associated activities would be seen to be that which is ‘valued’ by the community. So participation in the work of the regular classroom (alongside regular students) is a key ingredient of role-valORIZING integration. In addition, when what is considered valued, or important, for valued students is not considered important for students with disability, this can be explained as both a consequence of students being devalued, and a process by which the devaluation (and wounding) of students with impairment continues.

The wounds experienced when participation in valued activities is not supported can be seen in parental comments, for example;

- Rejection; “The work is too hard, so he goes back to the unit” (QPPD, 2011, 19);
- Treated as an eternal child; “My son has often complained of the babyish material for these subjects” (23);
- Deindividuation; “What is effective for the class is not necessarily effective for my son” (28);
- Impoverishment of world experience; “Wanted a reading book like everyone else; was told they didn’t have time to put it in his bag” (28).

*Summary.* Results indicate that even though students are present in regular schools, this does not always equate with participation in classroom programs. There was conflicting evidence regard-

ing the role of SEPs in assisting with participation, that is, while SEPs were more likely to lead to the modification of programs, they were less likely to lead to participation in regular classrooms. The emphasis in SRV theory on participation being valued and desired rather than coerced adds a dimension that is not obvious in EQ documents. Evidence of exclusion from “valued activities” illustrates the absence of “personal social integration and valued social participation.”

### **Achievement**

THE FINAL COMPONENT of EQ’s definition refers to “achievement,” and given that the core business of a school is education, it makes sense that the successful learning of its students would be one marker of an inclusive school. Learning can take many forms and is not always through the formal curriculum. The QPPD survey asked parents about both formal, academic learning and about social outcomes. Fifty percent of parents felt that their child’s academic teaching was effective or very effective, with approximately 31% choosing ineffective or very ineffective. The remaining twenty percent were neutral. Some parental comments illustrated dissatisfaction with the teaching process, for example, “... except that we want them to teach him! Not just have him sit there in the classroom” (QPPD, 2011, 14). Approximately 20% of parents indicated that either their child was not taught reading or that they were not aware of what teaching was happening in this area.

Regarding social outcomes, just over 90% of participants said that their child only sometimes, rarely, or never spent social time with peers outside school hours; “... has no friend to speak of” (QPPD, 2011, 29).

As in other questions, the provision of SEPs appeared to be a factor. Sixty-one percent of students in schools with SEPs never invited friends home to play as opposed to 43% of children in state schools without SEPs. There was an indication in comments by parents that special congregated

groups and lack of support for social connections contributed to this outcome, for example, “Teachers do not support children at social times. Lunch hours are big stressors” (QPPD, 2011, 29).

*Alignment with EQ policy and broader understandings of inclusive education.* EQ’s 2005 statement claims that inclusive education in Queensland “maximizes the educational and social outcomes of all students” and provides all students with what they need for “success in schooling and beyond.” These are complex tasks and difficult to assess. QPPD’s research had the scope to only provide a small glimpse. While it would appear that many parents found their child’s teaching to be effective, those who did not shared examples of the emptiness (and frustration for parents) of presence without true participation and learning, for example, “It’s just a babysitting service—there’s not much teaching going on. GRRR! It’s a constant battle to have his work/assessment appropriately set” (QPPD, 2011, 23).

Broader understandings of inclusive education assume that student success is an indicator of an inclusive program (Ashman, 2008). That some participants were not happy with their children’s learning outcomes hints that the espoused policy has not always been effectively implemented in all Queensland schools.

Responses to questions about social outcomes provided perhaps the most compelling results of the QPPD survey and another window into the experiences of Queensland students with disability. Given the number of students who were described by parents as present and participating in classrooms, it was surprising that so few had developed any substantial relationships. While the formation of friendships may not be a reliable indicator of the implementation of education policy, nor is it an automatic outcome for any student, it has been argued that the development of relationships is evidence of truly belonging in a school or class community (e.g., Williams & Downing, 1998).

*An SRV perspective.* The elements outlined by Wolfensberger (1998) as being necessary ingredients for “personal social integration and valued social participation” do not include “achievement.” However, “SRV informs us of the importance of enhancing the personal competencies of people (especially if they are devalued or are at risk)” (1998, 108). Alongside image enhancement, developing competencies is fundamental to creating and maintaining valued roles for vulnerable people.

According to SRV theory, competency development is put at risk by segregation with others who constitute negative role models (Wolfensberger, 1998, 110), the denial of opportunities to contribute to growth and development (108), and low expectancies (108); all of which were described by some participants, for example, “It can be very frustrating as each year my son was taught the same thing. He was sick of repeating the same information, and learning how to write his name yet again” (QPPD, 2011, 23).

Wolfensberger (1998) also maintained that schedules and routines that make no demands on people contribute to their deterioration and inactivity. The life wasting that results is identified by SRV as a wounding experience, with students “denied opportunities, challenges, experiences and their earlier potential ... wasted or destroyed” (21). Again, descriptions by participants provided evidence that students with disability continue to experience this wound, for example, “One hour is insufficient for any learning. ‘[Work]Sheets’ is what one son conveyed, the other says ‘they don’t know what I am supposed to do so I wander around till you come and get me’ ” (QPPD, 2011, 23).

The social experiences (and lack of them) described by participants can also be viewed through an SRV lens. There was some evidence, for example, of students in the role of trivium or object of derision (where students are the “butt of jokes, laughed at, teased and tormented” (Wolfensberger, 1998, 15); “I am just grateful if the amount

of times my children are ridiculed by mainstream students is minimized” (QPPD, 2011, 25); and of sons and daughters experiencing social and relationship discontinuity, for example, “His best friend had to move to a private school ... This was very hard on my son who hangs out with people that also were friends with this boy but he says they are not really friends.” (QPPD, unpublished), and “She has one friend but if that friend has other things to do then my child is on her own” (unpublished data). There was also evidence of the loss of chances for the development of relationships, for example, “She is never given the opportunity to lunch with the others. All her time is spent in the unit—even lunch time” (QPPD, 2011, 25).

The most powerful result was the lack of relationships with other students. Sherwin (2011) wrote at length of the elusiveness of valued relationships for those who are devalued. Many of her points were illustrated by the QPPD research. The experience of community “witnessing,” for instance, could be seen in the example of the student watching assembly from the yard of the SEP (see p. 24). The experience of “community presence,” but with limited community participation or engagement with valued others, has been illustrated throughout the discussion above. Sherwin’s reference (2011, 25) to service systems as a “receptacle for the person with a devalued status” (from which they visit the community), has a clear parallel in the SEPs of the school system. Her assertion that social relationships are more likely to develop if a person is in valued roles and participating in tasks and relationships with valued others, was supported by QPPD evidence that the role of “SEP student” had an impact on the social experiences of students. It could be seen that when children were not truly in the role of “classmate,” other roles and relationships were less likely to develop.

*Summary.* Parental reports suggest that, with respect to academic and social outcomes, inclusive

policies are not being implemented consistently. The lack of social relationships for students with disability is an area of particular concern. An SRV framework helped to identify the risks to competency development from the comments made by parents, and also to explain the lack of success with academic and social learning that some parents described.

### Conclusion

RESULTS OF QPPD RESEARCH have been explored within the context of EQ’s inclusive education policies and, also, using SRV theory (particularly the theme of “personal social integration and valued social participation”). It was found that ambiguous inclusive education statements and descriptions make it difficult to discern whether policies are being effectively implemented. Contributing to this difficulty is debate about inclusion and variation in the understanding and implementation of inclusive philosophy. There would be differing opinions, for example, regarding whether those students who are not present or participating in regular schools and classrooms are the product of a failure of inclusive education policies or of diverse understandings of inclusion. Large numbers of students enrolled in regular schools indicates a more inclusive approach, as do the percentages of students reportedly participating in classroom programs; however, parental descriptions of the difficulties associated with regular school enrolment, the segregated approach used in regular schools, and the lack of meaningful relationships between students suggest that what is happening for some students with disability equates more to physical ‘presence’ than a welcoming, inclusive experience. Results show a link between the provision of SEPs and a segregated approach to education. The exception to this was the likelihood that programs would be modified for students with disability and so enable greater access to the curriculum.

An SRV framework provided a sharper tool for understanding the experiences of students,

particularly through the clearly defined elements of “personal social integration and valued social participation.” While vague education policies allow a broad scope of practice to be described as “inclusive,” an SRV lens helped 1] to identify that current practices, in spite of changes to names and policy, continue to devalue students with disability; 2] to name the negative roles that were assigned students as a result of this devaluation (e.g., burden, menace); and 3] to draw attention to the subsequent wounding of children, for example, rejection, separation and life wasting. Importantly, the principles of SRV assisted in the understanding of the issue of social relationships (or lack thereof), for example, the link between the role of “classmate” and that of “friend” and “playmate.”

Clearly, those who have an interest in the education of students with disability want good things for them (e.g., learning, success, friendship, contribution) and want to prevent bad things (e.g., exclusion, loneliness, failure). Achieving this is undoubtedly a central tenet of the vision of inclusive education and a goal of inclusive education policy; however, the QPPD research suggests that the development of new policies is not enough to bring about good intentions. There is a strong indication that the ongoing debate among educators and the variation in how inclusive education is defined, understood and implemented allow devaluation and wounding to persist unchallenged in Queensland schools.

In its pursuit of good things for devalued people, SRV has offered a great deal to families and service systems, and has the potential to offer much to the education system. It is a theory which can assist educators to understand and challenge practices that devalue students with disability, and which can give clarity to what teachers need to pay attention to if the goals of inclusive education or “personal social integration and valued social participation” are to be achieved. ☺

SEE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ON PAGE 55

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to acknowledge the members of Queensland Parents for People with a Disability (QPPD) for the work they have done & continue to do on behalf of students with disability & their families. Thanks to Jane Sherwin & Greg Mackay from Values in Action Association, Queensland for their feedback & advice. Thanks also to Associate Professors Monica Cuskelly & Karen Moni of the School of Education, University of Queensland, for their assistance with the writing of this article.

#### ENDNOTE

1. A report of the research was titled ‘Diving for Pearls’ & can be accessed via QPPD’s website ([www.qppd.org](http://www.qppd.org)).

#### REFERENCES

- Ashman, A.F. (2008). School and inclusive practices. In R.M. Gillies, A. Ashman & J. Terwel (Eds.), *The teacher’s role in implementing cooperative learning in the classroom*. New York: Springer, 163-183.
- Bourke, P. (2010). Inclusive education reform in Queensland: Implications for policy and practice. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14(2), 183-193.
- Bourke, P. & Carrington, S. (2007). Inclusive education reform: Implications for teacher aides. *Australasian Journal of Special Education*, 31(1), 15-24.
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. (1982).
- Department of Justice Canada. (2005). Education Standards, Disability Discrimination Act.
- Evans, P. (2004). Educating students with special needs: A comparison of inclusion practices in OECD countries. *Education Canada*, 44(1), 32-35.
- Florian, L. (2008). Special or inclusive education: Future trends. *British Journal of Special Education*, 35(4), 202-208.
- Forbes, F. (2007). Towards inclusion: An Australian perspective. *Support for Learning*, 22(2), 66-71.
- Gibson, S. (2006). Beyond a ‘culture of silence’: Inclusive education and the liberation of ‘voice.’ *Disability & Society*, 21, 315-329.

- Graham, L. & Jahnukainen, M. (2011). Wherefore art thou, inclusion? Analysing the development of inclusive education in New South Wales, Alberta and Finland. *Journal of Educational Policy*, 26(2), 263-288.
- Graham, L. & Sweller, N. (2011). The inclusion lottery: Who's in and who's out? Tracking inclusion and exclusion in New South Wales government schools. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15(9), 941-953.
- Hodkinson, A. (2010). Inclusive and special education in the English educational system: Historical perspectives, recent developments and future challenges. *British Journal of Special Education*, 37(2), 61-67.
- Jenkinson, J.C. (2001). *Special education: A matter of choice?* Melbourne: ACER Press.
- Lemay, R. (2006). Social Role Valorization insights into the social integration conundrum. *Mental Retardation*, 44(1), 1-12.
- Leyser, Y. & Kirk, R. (2004). Evaluating inclusion: An examination of parent views and factors influencing their perspectives. *International Journal of Disability, Development & Education*, 51(3), 271-285.
- Lloyd, C. (2008). Removing barriers to achievement: A strategy for inclusion or exclusion? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12, 221-236.
- Ministerial Taskforce on Inclusive Education. (2004). *Report of the ministerial taskforce on inclusive education (students with disabilities)*. Brisbane: Queensland Government.
- Queensland Government. (2005). *Inclusive education statement*. Brisbane, Australia: DETE.
- Queensland Government. (2008). *Inclusive education*. Brisbane, Australia: DETE.
- QPPD. (2009). *All children belong together*. Brisbane: QPPD.
- QPPD. (2011). *Diving for pearls*. Brisbane: QPPD.
- Race, D. (1999). *Social Role Valorization and the English experience*. London: Whiting & Birch Ltd.
- Race, D., Boxall, K. & Carson, I. (2005). Towards a dialogue for practice: Reconciling Social Role Valorization and the social model of disability. *Disability & Society*, 20(5), 507-521.
- Sherwin, J. (2011). 'The desire for friendship comes quickly, friendship does not': An exploration of valued roles and relationships. *The SRV Journal*, 6(2), 22-31.
- U.K. Special Educational Needs and Disability Act. (2001).
- United Nations. (2008). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability*.
- U.S. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (1990).
- Williams, L. & Downing, J. (1998). Membership and belonging in inclusive classrooms: What do middle schools students have to say? *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 23(2), 98-110.
- Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.
- Wolfensberger, W. (2000). A brief overview of Social Role Valorization. *Mental Retardation*, 38(2), 105-123.
- Yssel, N., Engelbrecht, P., Oswald, M., Eloff, I. & Swart, E. (2007). Views of inclusion: A comparative study of parents' perceptions in South Africa and the United States. *Remedial & Special Education*, 28(6), 356-365.
- Zigmond, N. & Kloof, A. (2011). General and special education are (and should be) different. In J.M. Kauffman & D.P. Hallahan (Eds.), *Handbook of Special Education*. New York: Routledge, 160-172.

---

GLENYS MANN is currently at the University of Queensland, both working & studying in the area of inclusive education. SRV has been influential in her roles as parent and teacher.

---

#### THE CITATION FOR THIS ARTICLE IS

Mann, G. (2012). Parental reports of the experiences of students with impairment in Queensland: An SRV-based critique. *The SRV Journal*, 7(2), 15-29.

#### APPENDIX 1— SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How did you find out about this survey?  
QPPD; school; a friend; service organisation; other (please specify)
2. Current QPPD member  
No; yes
3. Please insert the date you completed the survey

4. How are you completing the survey?  
*Online; hard copy; phone with QPPD interviewer*

#### Background Information—Parent

5. Education (highest educational qualification you have achieved)  
*High school certificate; diploma; university degree; postgraduate qualification; other (please specify)*
6. What is your occupation?
7. Suburb/Town  
*City/Town; postcode*
8. Marital Status  
*Single; divorced; married; other*
9. What do you know of the following? (*Don't know of it; aware but haven't read; have read it*)  
EQ Inclusive Education Policy (or Catholic Education equivalent); DDA Standards for Education; CRPD

#### Background Information—Student

10. How old will your child be at their 2010 birthday?
11. How many children in your family?
12. Position of child in family
13. School Stage  
*Prep; Primary; Secondary; Post-secondary; other*
14. School in 2010 (Note: Special Education Program [SEP] is the current term for what was an SEU or Special Education Unit)  
*State Special School; Split Placement; State Regular School with SEP; State Regular School without SEP; Catholic Education School; Queensland Independent School; Other*
15. If your son or daughter has a split placement, what are the placement options?
16. If your son/daughter has changed schools at this stage of their schooling, why did they change? (This does not refer to usual changes of school, e.g., from primary to secondary)  
*Asked or persuaded to leave first school; unhappy with first school; relocated (if unhappy or asked to leave please describe why)*
17. Would you consider your current school to be your local school?  
*No; yes*
18. Do your other children attend, or have they attended the same school?  
*No; yes (if not why not?)*

#### Access to Classrooms—Physical Presence

19. How much time does your child spend in regular classrooms?  
*N/A Special School; none of the time; some of the time; half*

- of the time; most of the time; all of the time; + comments*
20. When is your child physically separate from his/her class?  
*N/A Special School; Always; for all academic lessons but participates in non-academic subjects; only for maths and English; only at the student's request, e.g., for a break; other*
21. Why is your son/daughter physically separate from his/her class? (Please tick as many choices as relevant)  
*Regular program is too difficult/not suitable; for one-on-one instruction; behaviour issues; funding; lack of aide support; other (please specify)*
22. Does your son/daughter spend lunch breaks in the regular playground?  
*N/A Special School; never; sometimes; mostly; always*
23. How satisfied are you with the amount of time your child spends with classmates without a disability?  
*Very dissatisfied; dissatisfied; neutral; satisfied; very satisfied + comments*

#### Participation

24. Does your child follow the same classroom program as the rest of the (regular) class? (They may not be doing exactly the same thing, but they are participating in the same subject/activities/program at a relevant level.)  
*N/A Special School; don't know; never; sometimes; mostly; always + comments*
25. Is the regular curriculum modified for your child?  
*Don't know; never; sometimes; mostly; always*
26. Is your child currently being taught the following? (*don't know; no; yes*)  
Reading; Writing; numeracy + comments
27. Is your child given homework regularly?  
*No; yes + comments*
28. How effective do you feel the teaching process is for your child? (Do you believe they are getting 'good teaching'? Are they learning?)  
*Very ineffective; ineffective; neutral; effective; very ineffective + comments*

#### Social Outcomes

29. When he or she is at school, does your child play or socialise with other children?  
*Don't know; never; rarely; sometimes; mostly + please add whether children with disability, without, both*
30. Does your child invite friends home from school?  
*Never; rarely; sometimes; often + children with disabilities; without; both*
31. Is your child invited out by other children from school?  
*Never; rarely; sometimes; often + children with disability; without; both*
32. Is your child happy to go to school? Does he/she feel

welcome there?

*Never; sometimes; usually; always + comments*

33. Do YOU feel happy to be in the school? Do YOU feel welcome there?

*Never; sometimes; usually; always + comments*

### Enrolment

34. In what year did you undertake the enrolment process for your current school?

35. How was the process similar to the process for your other children?

36. How was it different?

37. Is your current school your first choice?

*No; yes (if not, why not? What were the barriers to the school of your choice?)*

38. How did you decide on the school?

*Recommended by friends; my other children go there; our local/closest school; other; told or advised to by education staff (which education staff and why?)*

39. What was important to you in choosing a school for

your child with a disability? If there were different considerations to choosing a school for your other children, what were these?

40. Are you happy with your child's current enrolment?

*Very unhappy; unhappy; ok; happy; very happy (if you are not happy, why not? Ideally where would you like your child to be?)*

41. Times or examples of when you feel your child is well included?

42. Times or examples of when you feel your child is NOT well included?

43. What would be your three priorities for improving the schooling experience for your son or daughter?

44. Have you any other comments about the schooling experience?

# The Indispensable Mindset

**John Armstrong**

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This paper was presented at the Fifth International SRV Conference, Canberra, ACT, Australia, in September 2011.*

## The Influence of Assumption Perspectives in Early Developments of Normalisation & SRV

**I**N THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF Normalisation and later Social Role Valorisation (SRV), Wolfensberger recognised the essential role which individual and collective assumptions play in human affairs (Wolfensberger, 1998, 116). For instance, any effort to serve the needs and interests of another party will immediately generate or draw upon assumptions about such crucial things as: the nature of the world, the meaning of life, the nature of human nature, who the people are and what needs do they have, what 'solutions' or responses are called for, etc. (Wolfensberger, 1998, 108-109). In truth, many of these assumptions remain unexplicated and possibly unconscious to the people making them. Yet no matter how unconscious and unexplicated assumptions may be, they will inevitably generate many actions<sup>1</sup> that can coalesce into service models and even form service cultures (Schein, 2010). Many features of service models cannot be explained without reference to and discovery of these underlying assumptions—which is no mean feat; since assumptions are not directly observable and therefore can only be

inferred (presuming one can do this accurately enough) from the actions observed.

Assumptions also occupy a significant place in our understanding of unconsciousness and its role in social and societal devaluation. From the SRV theme of unconsciousness (Wolfensberger, 1998, 103-104), we can learn that much human activity, including the potential to devalue others, can come from what are often unconscious assumptions about a devalued party, which nonetheless affect the actions of the observer(s) toward that party, without the observer(s) necessarily having full awareness of this.

Additionally, assumptions play a central role in the formation of one's expectations of other people and of the view of their learning and growth potential (Wolfensberger, 1998, 105-106). For example, the assumption that people could grow and develop if given the right opportunities was captured in the phrase, 'developmental growth orientation' used in the evaluation tool PASS 3 (Wolfensberger & Glenn, 1975). PASS 3 contained a rating cluster (114) by that name, comprised of three ratings: Physical Overprotection (R1141); Social Overprotection (R1142); and Intensity of Relevant Programming (R1143). This concept later widened to become incorporated within the developmental model, a central theme of SRV, and subsumed within key ratings of PASSING (2007) such as R231 Program Address of Recipient Needs, R232 Intensity of Time Use, etc.



### The Rise of the Mindset Perspective

**W**HILE THE CONCEPT OF ASSUMPTIONS exists as a framework for understanding what might be thought of as largely unexamined notions and ideas that result in either adaptive or maladaptive actions, especially for our topic in the lives of other people, they are apparently very hard to measure or test under experimental conditions, as mentioned earlier. You might say that assumptions are too small to be seen and identified in any singular and objective sense and can only be inferred—itsself a process of interpretation open to much bias—by observing the actions that assumptions generate.

Social scientists have begun to refer to the construct of ‘mindset,’ a collection of related assumptions, which is then ‘large’ enough to be seen and categorised in useful ways. It would seem apparent that Wolfensberger was aware of this as he shifted focus in his later writings from assumption language to mindset language, or at least added mindset language to the teaching (Wolfensberger, 1998, 105-106). The potency of this emphasis is that mindsets can be identified and named, and therefore be understood and potentially altered. Mindsets are not just a theoretical construct, but also a practical one. Note that the concept of ‘mindset’ can negatively imply certain rigidity or resistance to change, even in the face of compelling evidence, though the concept of mindset also has positive interpretations.

We see in the re-development of SRV teaching material<sup>2</sup> conducted by Wolfensberger in the late 1990s that he incorporated three new themes into the leadership level teaching framework and within the SRV monograph, 3rd (revised) edition (105-106, 116-118, 118-120). One of these themes was “the power of mindsets,” which refers to the ideas and expectations that one party holds about another party. Within SRV theory, the aim is to shape the mindsets of observers so that they are more likely to hold positive, realistic ideas and expectations about socially devalued persons and groups (Wolfensberger, 1998, 105).

In respect to the developmental model specifically, the mindsets that incorporate mental expectations and beliefs which people carry toward others can subsequently either generally facilitate or prevent their growth and development, particularly their potential for holding valued social roles (Wolfensberger, 1998, 105-106, 108). Indeed, a mindset can propel a party either more towards normative, typical and valued expectations about other people, or conversely toward negative expectations, conforming to one of more devalued stereotypes<sup>3</sup> and socially devalued roles.

### An Example of Related Recent Research into Mindsets

**S**OME RECENT AND PROLONGED RESEARCH into mindsets has provided useful additional material relevant to understanding, teaching and applying SRV. For instance, Dweck (2000) found contrasting mindsets as illustrated in two broad questions: 1) what expectancies do people hold towards themselves and others regarding intelligence, and 2) what other broad attributes do we give ourselves and others, as captured in our mindsets?

It appears for example that as soon as children begin to evaluate themselves in respect to others, they begin to form mindsets about their own intelligence (Dweck, 2006), that also generalise into perspectives about other people (though this latter point was only evident in later research). Her research into mindsets regarding intelligence is especially relevant to the developmental growth orientation in SRV. Through experiments with people across a variety of ages (young children, adolescents and adults) and settings (kindergarten, school and college) conducted over a thirty-year period, her team exposed an all-too-common ‘fixed,’ deeply-seated mindset that contributed to a series of actions which limited that person’s own growth. These actions or orientations prevented people’s development and progress, even to the extent that they avoided challenge in an attempt to validate their own ability but without ever actually

putting it to the test. In other words, engaging in hard work and effort was seen as running the risk of exposing them to actual failure, something people with fixed mindsets could not countenance.

These patterns of avoidance had people seeking constant validation that they were essentially smart, capable and clever (or conversely, negative reinforcement that they were hopeless failures and dummies). “Clever people don’t need to work hard, they should find everything easy—that’s why they are smart, that’s what makes them clever.” However, when faced with the (inevitable) difficult task and the possibility of failure (as for instance when people go to university for the first time and take on the role of university student), they might quickly plunge into despair, especially if they lack the strategies for counteracting the prospect of failure. This merits further reflection for those engaged in SRV teaching and implementation: what might we learn from this pattern in regards to societally devalued and wounded people?

On the other hand, Dweck’s research indicates that people who operate with a growth (or even mastery) mindset understand intelligence as something that can be developed but only with much sustained effort. This mindset leads people to seek a challenge, to enjoy being tested and to attempt progressively harder things. While intrinsically no smarter than the ‘fixed-mindset’ people, their orientation allows them to recognise challenges as opportunities for expanding growth and development, and therefore to be embraced and even sought out.

The same people who have fixed mindsets about their own intelligence generally also hold such views about the intelligence of others (Gervey, Chiu, Hong & Dweck, 1999; as cited in Dweck, 2000) and about the personalities of other people; views such as, can they be trusted or are they reliable?<sup>4</sup> Such views were often formed from only a single encounter with an observed party (cf. Wolfensberger, 1998, 35). In other words, fixed mindset people tended to form rigid stereotypes of others faster, with more assurance and with less in-

formation than those with a growth mindset, who considered the behaviour of someone they had just observed to be potentially due to many explanatory factors outside of the person (Gervey et al., 1999). This pattern can be seen often in the mindsets and interactions of teachers, human service staff, medical and clinical personnel, etc.; to the detriment of societally devalued people in services.

Dweck and her colleagues believe that we all probably hold fixed mindsets about some, even many things, but that mindsets can also change once one becomes aware of the alternatives. What they have found is that encouraging someone to put out effort is more likely to promote a growth mindset, whereas an emphasis on outcomes—such as winning, or proving one is the best or the smartest—is more likely to secure a fixed mindset with its resultant tendencies.

Most of Dweck’s research concerns the response of normatively capable people in relation to their sense of self. While she offers some comments about the likely outcomes of people with very low expectations of themselves, I have seen little direct research in this body of literature addressing that problem directly.

### Some Potential Implications for the Teaching & Use of SRV

**T**HE STRENGTH OF SRV AS a meta-theory is very much based on the validity and empirical rigour of the related theories which SRV relies upon. If the work of Dweck contains such validity then the following implications might also apply to SRV:

- The implications for expectancies of growth and development apply to all of three parties: the devalued party, anyone closely interacting with that party (worker, agency, parent), and anyone observing such interaction (what Wolfensberger referred to as the party of first, second and third part);
- A fixed mindset has strong links to the “failure set” and “avoidance mentalities” seen in deeply wounded people, who have often concluded that

they are indeed failures, and it is therefore fruitless to even attempt new experiences or challenges (Wolfensberger, 1998, 22);

- The “Theories of Self” (Dweck, 2000 and 2006) might therefore strengthen the understanding which SRV holds concerning the power of a devalued person’s own expectancy set about themselves, and in particular, the strategies that a second party might utilise to encourage and facilitate the development of a growth/mastery mindset in a party of the first part;

- Fixed mindsets could sharpen the distinction between those people resistant to change, compared to those willing to take a reasonable risk. Dweck’s research on mindsets provides valuable insight into such dynamics and even suggests a course of action that could potentially help ‘move’ some parties formerly resistant to effort, especially when that party feels exposed as a failure;<sup>5</sup>

- Though not explicitly covered by Dweck’s research, Schein’s work with organizations suggests that service cultures can become fixed, i.e., believe they are already optimal, and thus become risk averse, avoiding any challenge and failing to adjust to new demands, while simultaneously creating and maintaining positive illusions and rhetoric of excellence. Such organizations tend to reach a plateau (at best) in achievement for themselves and for those they support. Many PASSING (2007) scores from introductory workshops could reflect aspects of the above scenario;

- SRV and SRV teachers have commonly tried to describe “assumptions” as an underlying and often unconscious thought process that profoundly affects such things as role expectancies right through to service models. However, I am suggesting that assumptions may not be very amenable to study because of their implied narrow dimension. Therefore, a theory utilising a discussion of assumptions alone may threaten its legitimacy in some teaching contexts, not because it is inaccurate or implausible, but because it is difficult to demonstrate it. Mindsets comprise and coalesce from a larger set of assumptions, and therefore have more dis-

cernible patterns that theoretically can more easily be studied. People could have many differing assumptions, but share the same broad mindset which can be demonstrated and reliably shown to operate distinctly from other mindsets;

- The current discussion of mindsets and expectancies in the teaching and writing of SRV is generally limited to a description of what mindsets are and how they relate to expectancies about people. There is room within SRV teaching to incorporate additional material on mindsets, such as related above, that also shows the interrelationship with the themes of Unconsciousness, the Developmental Model, and Role Expectancy; and how those themes discuss the mindsets that would be necessary as devalued people and their supporters strive towards greater access to ‘the good things of life’ (Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso, 1996).

### Conclusion

**D**R. WOLFENBERGER always described the main teaching events of SRV as “Introductions to SRV,” which sometimes amazed us as we sat through four days of lectures: if this is the introduction, what is the main bit like! I think he always appreciated that he was describing a framework, a kind of skeletal picture from which a great deal of additional material could be developed. His emphasis on leadership development encouraged learners to dive into the background material underlying SRV, and to keep researching new material. His own resource files, and his development of three additional themes for SRV, illustrate this emphasis. As well, his newly released book, “Advanced Issues in Social Role Valorization Theory” (2012), further exemplifies this process of ongoing learning and theoretical development of SRV.

SRV then might be seen as a framework that permits much flesh to be added. Indeed, as a meta-theory, it relies heavily on pre-existing and emerging knowledge to be relevantly added to our understanding of how humans evaluate and treat each other, but also how this might be used wisely

so that vulnerable people can experience the ‘good things of life.’

Thus any serious student, teacher and implementer of SRV cannot restrict themselves to only SRV literature, but should be encouraged to search the fields of knowledge and assess edifying connections or clarifying corrections that can still be made to our understanding of SRV. I very much encourage your research, learning, questions and comments in this regard, both personally as well as within the pages of this *Journal*, and through other forms of constructive interaction. ☺

#### ENDNOTES

1. Schein (2010) refers to actions as ‘artefacts’, as though the actions are only representative symbols of our assumptions. Thus assumptions or the sum total thereof is what the culture of a service really is (or corporation or program). The artefacts are representations of that culture.

2. What we came to know as the ‘SRVX10 themes.’

3. There is a view that people tend to form views that reflect polarised positions, especially once they contain some emotional content for the person.

4. This tendency to blame most/all behaviour on a person’s innate tendencies, and undervalue the importance of the situation and context that influences behaviour, has also been called the “fundamental attribution error” (Ross, 1977).

5. Dweck comments that people with fixed mindsets are concerned that ‘failing’ means they actually become a ‘failure’ (Dweck, 2000). There is also the fear for some devalued people that they actually will live down to the low expectations and stereotyped roles that others believe about them, thus trying something new or risky might fuel that fear into becoming a reality. Some might manage this by not trying at all.

#### REFERENCES

Dweck, C. (2000). *Self theories: Their role in motivation, personality and development*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.

Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. NY: Ballantine Books.

Gervey, B., Chiu, C., Hong, Y. & Dweck, C.S. (1999). Differential use of person information in decision-making about guilt vs innocence: The role of implicit theories. *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25, 17-27.

Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. In Berkowitz, L. (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology*, Vol. 10. New York: Academic Press, 173–220.

Schein, E. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th Edition). San Francisco, CA: Jossey & Bass.

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

Wolfensberger, W. (2012). *Advanced issues in Social Role Valorization theory*. Plantagenet, ON: Valor Press.

Wolfensberger, W. & Glenn, L. (1975, reprinted 1978). *PASS (Program Analysis of Service Systems): A method for the quantitative evaluation of human services: Vol. 1. Handbook: Vol. 2. Field manual* (3rd ed.). Toronto: National Institute on Mental Retardation.

Wolfensberger, W. & Thomas, S. (2007). *PASSING: A tool for analyzing service quality according to Social Role Valorization criteria. Ratings manual* (3rd rev. ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

Wolfensberger, W., Thomas, S. & Caruso, G. (1996). Some of the universal ‘good things of life’ which the implementation of Social Role Valorization can be expected to make more accessible to devalued people. *SRV/VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, 2(2), 12–14.

---

JOHN ARMSTRONG works as a consultant & Senior SRV Trainer in Australia & New Zealand, & is a corresponding member of the North American SRV Development, Training & Safeguarding Council. See his website <http://www.socialrolevalorization.com/>

---

#### THE CITATION FOR THIS ARTICLE IS

Armstrong, J. (2012). The indispensable mindset. *The SRV Journal*, 7(2), 32–36.

# On a Role

**Marc Tumeinski**

THE PRIME PURPOSE of this ongoing column continues to be to explore the key concept of social roles: in regard to learning and teaching about roles, as well as in light of working to help socially devalued people to acquire socially valued roles with an eye towards greater access to the ‘good things of life.’

In this column, I will briefly explore the related sociological concepts of role enhancement and role strain. Simply put, the idea of role enhancement (or role accumulation) analyzes the potential effects of a person having multiple (and perhaps related) social roles, and proposes that multiple roles benefit the role incumbent. Conversely, the construct of role strain theorizes that multiple roles can negatively interact and thus become not beneficial but rather ‘damaging’ to the role incumbent (e.g., causing stress or strain). Various theorists debate the validity and interaction of these two constructs. Nonetheless, the related theoretical concepts of role enhancement and role strain have applicability within Social Role Valorization (SRV) theory, in terms of training as well as application. The aim of this column is to briefly describe and analyze these concepts in light of SRV. In particular, I will draw on a number of contemporary academic articles (see the references listed at the end of this column) which are focused on aging and roles for elders, particularly the role of volunteer. I will use these articles as a springboard to illustrate the theoretical context of

role enhancement and role strain, while also looking for connections to SRV.

The description and analysis offered here are by no means exhaustive, but are meant to serve as an invitation to, and a basis for, our readers to do further study and analysis of these ideas, either with others or on their own, with an eye towards SRV training and implementation. I also encourage our readers to submit manuscripts further exploring these and other role-related topics in terms of SRV.

## Lessons from Role Enhancement & Role Strain for SRV

WHAT POTENTIAL LESSONS might we draw from contemporary study, debate and dialogue about role enhancement and role strain?

- Having roles brings greater access to the good things of life. For example, the various articles which I read in preparation for this column mentioned such role benefits as meaning, purpose, direction, health, eudemonic well-being (i.e., that helps one to reach human potential), access to resources, social connections, power, prestige, emotional gratification, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive affect, positive relations with others and social engagement (Chrouser Ahrens & Ryff, 2006, 801-802, 804, 808-809; Rozario, Morrow-Howell & Hinterlong, 2004, 414-416, 424; Morrow-Howell, Hong, McCrary & Blinne, 2012, 176). Many of these examples overlap with the SRV teaching concept of the ‘good things of life’ (Wolfensberger, Thomas & Caruso, 1996).

A related point is that regular engagement and participation in a role is required to access the benefits of a role, e.g., at least two hours per week in the volunteer role, continued over a year (Lum & Lightfoot, 2005, 50; cf. Hinterlong, Morrow-Howell & Rozario, 2007, 351). This time and engagement factor has clear implications to making a role inventory (Wolfensberger, 1998, 83) and identifying role goals (Wolfensberger, 1998, 84-95), for example.

In regard to the specific benefit of improved health mentioned above, or at least of a more positive perception of one's health, Hinterlong, Morrow-Howell and Rozario (2007, 363) ask what the demonstrated link between role performance and health might be due to. For example, is the link due to a *particular* role identity (e.g., a benefit of only certain roles, such as the productive role of volunteer), a certain level of *commitment* to a role, the perceived *centrality* of the role in a person's life, etc.?

Some role privileges are seen as inherent in the exercise of the role, while others come from regular (even daily) interaction with role partners, i.e., those people that one comes into contact with due to one's role (Sieber, 1974, 569; Thoits, 1986, footnote 1, 259). The role of paid worker, for example, brings a paycheck (inherent to the role) and potentially a range of social relationships and interactions (requiring role partners). Insofar as this distinction holds, it could make for an interesting SRV-related staff training exercise or university assignment. In terms of SRV application, this distinction could help servers set role goals for a particular person or group (Wolfensberger, 1998, 84-95). Note that the concept of role partner brings to mind the emphasis within SRV on the social nature of roles, as well as the idea of role complementarity.

Role theorists describe the positive potential outcomes of role accumulation specifically, such as concomitant role privileges, greater overall status, security, more resources for status enhancement, greater ego gratification, etc. (Sieber, 1974, 569; Rozario, Morrow-Howell & Hinterlong, 2004, 414; Baruch & Barnett, 1986, 578,

583; Haski-Leventhal, 2009, 3). Again, this connection could generate a number of SRV learning exercises for staff or students, plus implementation pointers for SRV application. For example, what specific valued roles in *combination* (including by enlargement or accumulation) are possible and probable, from a culturally valued analogue perspective (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 2007, 30-31)?

- Role strain can take several forms, including role overload (due to time constraints) and role conflict (due to discrepant expectations) (Rozario, Morrow-Howell & Hinterlong, 2004, 415; Sieber, 1974, 567). Role strain may contribute to poorer health, competing pressures, hostility, distraction, psychological dismay, etc. SRV theory warns of the possibility of role failure stemming from role overload as well as role conflict.

- Some sociologists propose that role enhancement runs the risk of role strain, but conclude that it is worth the risk (Sieber, 1974) or that the risks can be mitigated. For example, additional roles may provide greater protection via an increased social network (Rozario, Morrow-Howell & Hinterlong, 2004, 425). Which social roles and/or which role domains are more likely to generate an increased social network for individuals or groups? A useful exercise, for SRV training and implementation, could be to rank order various social roles (and the role domains) in terms of their potential for social relationships, either for a particular individual or a group (Wolfensberger, 1998, 122-124; Lemay, 2006).

Sieber points out that "Another way in which multiple roles might compensate for role strain is through providing numerous buffers against failure in the instrumental and expressive domains of action" (1974, 573; cf. Hiemstra, 1982 & Loucks-Atkinson, 2005). Though he does not elaborate, this is an interesting claim to explore; e.g., what are instrumental actions, what are expressive actions, what specific instrumental and expressive

actions are tied to a particular role or role domain, what would create failure in instrumental and/or expressive actions, how might certain valued roles compensate for instrumental or expressive failure, etc. Such claims do raise SRV relevant questions. Can the risks or potential downsides of role strain be purposefully mitigated? If so, how? Leadership level SRV workshops do explore these questions to a certain extent.

### Relevant SRV Concepts

THE ARTICLES REFERENCED ABOVE did not explicitly take into account several relevant concepts included in SRV theory, but which are nonetheless consistent with the articles' findings (and sometimes are implicit within a particular article), such as:

- The distinction of valued versus devalued social roles (Wolfensberger, 1998, 29). The articles which I studied basically assumed that additional roles were socially valued, but did not directly acknowledge or name the reality of devalued social roles.
- The reality of role band width (Wolfensberger, 1998, 31-32).
- The variety of possible role domains (Wolfensberger, 1998, 30), though Sieber (1974, 569) does indirectly raise this idea.
- The SRV understanding that acquiring more of at least some valued roles will likely require additional or greater competencies (Wolfensberger, 1998, 31).

### Potential Implications for SRV

WHAT CAN WE EXTRAPOLATE from the above ideas to the likely outcomes of holding multiple valued social roles for impaired people? Several questions and possibilities stand out:

- Are these concepts applicable across varied levels, from the individual person to primary and secondary social systems to the societal level (Wolfensberger,

1998, 78-80; cf. Gomperts, 2006-07)? A point suggestive of societal-level action—which uses the language of valorization (though not as far as I can tell because of SRV)—made by Rozario, Morrow-Howell and Hinterlong (2004, 426) is that “the valorization of caregiving as a productive role might lend further credence to the creation of supportive policies that will ensure caregiver and care receiver well-being.”

- Are the above points transferable to helping other societally devalued groups (i.e., not only elders) acquire and hold onto valued social roles? If so, how so? What adaptations may be necessary?
- What about other socially valued roles in other domains (Wolfensberger, 1998, 30), beyond just the volunteer role?
- How might these concepts be applicable to someone who has never had valued social roles, or perhaps only a few or low-bandwidth societally valued roles?
- How might a person or group be supported to actually take on additional valued social roles? In regard to elders, for example, bringing someone into new, potentially high commitment roles can require (Morrow-Howell, Hong, McCrary & Blinne, 2012, 191-192; McBride, 2006-07, 67-69; Henkin & Zapf, 2006, 73-75) the following:
  - \* building on past experience;
  - \* making such roles (more) accessible, including through creating relevant physical and social infrastructure;
  - \* outreach and information sharing, including through: normative settings, mediating institutions (schools, churches), informal networks, available media;
  - \* positive incentives; taking advantage of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators;
  - \* the power of positive societal expectations;
  - \* training and leadership development;
  - \* ongoing facilitation, perhaps building on training and incentives as mentioned above.

• In what ways can a developmental perspective on moving from primary broad bandwidth roles to secondary narrower bandwidth roles set a foundation for role accumulation (Lemay, 2006)? Can the process of role cascading be taken advantage of in regard to role enlargement or accumulation (Lemay, 2006)? And so on.

### Concluding Note

THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF ROLES, as currently incorporated within SRV and PASSING, has a wealth of concrete implications in terms of training, evaluation and implementation. Much work has been done on this, and much more can be done, building on Wolfensberger's initial framework while incorporating contemporary research. How can existing SRV circles around the world continue this work with an eye towards helping societally devalued groups and individuals gain greater access to the good things of life? This is one of our challenges, and one I hope that our readers will continue to take up. ☺

### REFERENCES

- Baruch, G. & Barnett, R. (1986). Role quality, multiple role involvement, and psychological well-being in midlife women. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(3), 578-585.
- Chrouser Ahrens, C. & Ryff, C. (2006). Multiple roles and well-being: Sociodemographic and psychological moderators. *Sex Roles*, 55, 801-815.
- Haski-Leventhal, D. (23 October 2009). Elderly volunteering and well-being: A cross-European comparison based on SHARE data. *Voluntas*, 1-17.
- Henkin, N. & Zapf, J. (Winter 2006). How communities can promote civic engagement of people age 50-plus. *Generations*, 72-77.
- Hiemstra, R. (1982). Elderly interests in the expressive domain. *Educational Gerontology*, 8, 143-153.
- Hinterlong, J., Morrow-Howell, N. & Rozario, P. (2007). Productive engagement and late life physical and mental health: Findings from a nationally representative panel study. *Research on Aging*, 29, 348-370.
- Gomperts, J. (Winter 2006-2007). Toward a bold new policy agenda: Five ideas to advance civic engagement opportunities for older Americans. *Generations*, 85-89.
- Lemay, R. (2006). Social Role Valorization insights into the social integration conundrum. *Mental Retardation*, 44(1), 1-12.
- Loucks-Atkinson, A. (2005). The contribution of expressive versus instrumental activity restriction to the well-being of caregivers. PhD Dissertation. University of Georgia (Athens, GA).
- Lum, T. & Lightfoot, E. (2005). The effects of volunteering on the physical and mental health of older people. *Research on Aging*, 27, 31-55.
- McBride, A. (Winter 2006-2007). Civic engagement, older adults, and inclusion. *Generations*, 66-71.
- Morrow-Howell, N., Hong, S., McCrary, S. & Blinne, W. (2012). Changes in activity among older volunteers. *Research on Aging*, 34: 174-196.
- Rozario, P, Morrow-Howell, N. & Hinterlong, J. (2004). Role enhancement or role strain: Assessing the impact of multiple productive roles on older caregiver well-being. *Research on Aging*, 26, 413-428.
- Siebert, S. (August 1974). Toward a theory of role accumulation. *American Sociological Review*, 39(4), 567-578.
- Thoits, P. (April 1986). Multiple identities: Examining gender and marital status differences in distress. *American Sociological Review*, 51(2), 259-272.
- Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.
- Wolfensberger, W. & Thomas, S. (2007). *PASSING: A tool for analyzing service quality according to Social Role Valorization criteria. Ratings manual.* (3rd rev.ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.
- Wolfensberger, W., Thomas, S. & Caruso, G. (1996). Some of the universal 'good things of life' which the implementation of Social Role Valorization can be expected to make more accessible to devalued people. *SRV/VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, 2(2), 12-14.



---

MARC TUMEINSKI is a trainer for the SRV Implementation Project in Worcester, MA (US) & editor of *The SRV Journal*.

---

**THE CITATION FOR THIS COLUMN IS**

Tumeinski, M. (2012). On a role. *The SRV Journal*, 7(2), 37–41.

**A NOTE ON THE WORD ‘ADVOCATE’**

THE NOUN ‘advocate’ comes from a Latin term *advocatus*, meaning someone summoned or ‘called to’ (ad-vocare) another person, particularly to help that other person, often in the context of a court of justice. It has had various related meanings over the centuries—such as someone who pleads another’s cause, someone who intercedes or speaks for or on behalf of another, a defender—and has been in use in English since at least the 14th century.

In Shakespeare’s *Richard III* (I. iii. 87), the character of Elizabeth the Queen says of herself that she was never an enemy to her brother-in-law Duke Clarence “but have been, An earnest advocate to plead for him.”

The noun ‘advocacy’ refers to the work of pleading or supporting, again on behalf of another person or persons, or for a specific cause.

In verb form, advocate means to defend, especially to defend or to raise one’s voice in support of a particular proposal or tenet.

Related words include advocateship (the office or role of advocate), advocating, advocation (calling to one’s aid; pleading or advocacy), advocator (one who publicly stands up for someone or something), advocatory (pertaining to advocacy) and advoke (to call or summon to oneself). Advocate and advocacy are also related to the word ‘patron’ (see the December 2010 issue of *The SRV Journal*).

These words can point us to Wolfensberger’s seminal work on Citizen Advocacy, as well as advocacy efforts by parents, friends, servers, etc. We might fruitfully study what the **role** of an advocate can entail, particularly in light of SRV theory, as well as how servers might advocate for a vulnerable person in ways which still support that person in valued social roles, and does not put them in devalued roles (e.g., such as burden or child).

*Source information from the Oxford English Dictionary*

# The Ring of Words: On Rhetoric, Writing & Social Role Valorization Dissemination

**Marc Tumeinski**

*Writing represents a unique mode of learning—not merely valuable, not merely special, but unique ... Writing serves learning uniquely because writing as process—and—product possesses a cluster of attributes that correspond uniquely to certain powerful learning strategies.*

~ Janet Emig, 'Writing as a Mode of Learning'

WE LIVE IN AN INCREASINGLY complex society; and helping vulnerable individuals and groups to be positively valued in society—to have access to the 'good things of life' through valued roles—is itself complex, particularly in today's world of complicated human service systems. If we are committed to being truly helpful to societally devalued people, then we may be called to develop and use the skills and habits of perception, observation, decision-making, evaluation, analysis, planning, and so on, in this endeavor. This does not come naturally but takes work and time, and is instrumental to leadership development. Not only does it not come naturally, but societal pressures and human service structures can all too often push against taking the time to stop and think, to look and see, to reflect and plan. What then can we do?

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of teaching two undergraduate university courses—one on the topic of 'community support services' and another on the sociology of deviance. In both courses, I drew deeply from my background in Social Role Valorization (SRV) and PASSING train-

ing and implementation. The students in both courses were generally either already working in a variety of fields broadly related to human service, or were preparing to do so. As I put together these courses, one of my goals was to help prepare these students for the pressures described above. But again, the question was how exactly? One approach I tried was to incorporate opportunities for writing, not just for the sake of writing itself but as a handy tool of reflection, communication, observation, analysis and decision-making. I am certainly not alone in this approach:

*The increasing complexity of human lives and situations requires that clinicians be able to clearly express the meaning of their professional judgments so that others can understand and implement them appropriately. Capturing the concrete world by translating observations into narrative is thus a crucial skill for all clinicians. Other kinds of social workers need the ability to build persuasive arguments that convince [others] of a plan or certain path of action. Community workers not only need to advocate in writing but they must also craft appeals to foundations and governmental agencies and write proposals that will result in funding for needed programs and services. It is not overly dramatic to say that the lives of clients can be significantly dimin-*

*ished by social workers' inability to write well, or significantly enhanced by strong writing proficiency in social workers. (Alter & Adkins, 2001, 496-497)*

By design, both university courses involved weekly writing across multiple assignments; some of the writing assignments were stand-alone, others were cumulative over the semester. In this aspect of my teaching, I also tried to make writing more relevant for the students by drawing deeply on my own SRV and PASSING experience, e.g., writing examples to use in teaching SRV workshops, developing exercises and discussion questions, writing PASSING reports, composing a letter to family members, putting together job descriptions, developing plans, etc.

Why stress the practice of writing, given these two course topics and the student body? "Good writing is essential for effective social work practice" (NASW, 2011). On some levels, it would have been far easier for me not to incorporate writing. A fair number of students expressed a dislike for writing; many more (based on what I read in their submissions early in the semester) had not been well prepared to write clearly and coherently. As an instructor, assessing student writing takes lots of time and effort.

Why bother? One compelling reason is that writing can effectively foster leadership development. One study, for example, identified "nine purposes of social work writing: to understand and care for the self; to communicate the self to others; to understand the perspective of others; to describe; to analyze; to be accountable; to persuade diverse audiences; to participate in knowledge-building; and to represent the profession to society" (Falk & Ross, 2001).

I believe that the work which many of these students were already doing, or were hoping to do upon graduation (e.g., in schools, group residences, psychiatric programs, nursing homes, prisons, homeless shelters, etc.), cries out for perceptive, thoughtful and reflective servers who can com-

municate well with a number of different 'audiences.' This is certainly consistent with Wolfenberger's emphasis on leadership development. He wrote prolifically, not just his published work but countless unpublished texts, letters, memos, reports, thought papers, 'standard operating procedures,' book reviews, etc. One lesson that we can draw from his vast corpus is that he frequently revised his writing; we can in a sense trace how his thinking developed over the course of his writing, but I would even say *because* of his writing, rewriting and revision.

Writing is certainly not the only way to encourage reflection nor does it guarantee thoughtfulness, nor is it the only pedagogy I used in these courses. Still, developing the habit and skill of analytical and reflective writing is one tried-and-true tool. In my own experience as a server and as an SRV trainer, I certainly have come to appreciate the power and benefits of taking the time and making the effort to write in relation to my service work, even when it was not easy or no one else read what I wrote. Writing may not come easy but it is a skill that can be learned and improved, even becoming a useful habit, and can be harnessed as a tool to improve human service.

- Why ask students and staff to write? Better writing makes for better communication, e.g., in letters, memos, emails, reports, progress notes, meeting minutes, etc. Poor communication can degrade service quality. The time and effort involved in writing can however help to bring greater depth and clarity to our communication. In some fundamental ways, many of the tools we use today to learn and communicate in university education, and in the work world, push against taking the time to write clearly and coherently. At the same time, the prevalence of Twitter, blogs, emails and text messages may in some ways also give us a tiny 'hook' to begin to engage students and workers in longer, more reflective and analytical writing. There is a quantitative and qualitative difference between a text message and an essay or

a report obviously, but it can at least be a place to start building, under the right circumstances. As a university instructor, I can easily require students to write; human service employers and supervisors could similarly require, promote and teach certain forms of writing vis-à-vis their employees, with an eye toward leadership development.

- As Wolfenberger taught, writing can help us to further develop the ability and habit to think and reason more clearly, to practice critical thinking, to ask pertinent questions, to identify alternatives and test assumptions, to seek ideas and input from a variety of sources, to make connections between ideas. Human services of all kinds stress the importance of such critical thinking, and can benefit from its exercise. My experience has been that the pressures of university course loads, work, family obligations, etc. can sometimes push students to be satisfied with their gut reactions, first impressions or first drafts when completing course work, readings and assignments. I have seen this in services as well. Human service administrators and staff may have a hard time at first seeing the sense or utility of writing: why spend time on something that is not ‘billable’ or immediately relevant?

However, putting down words, phrases, notes, sentences and paragraphs—in some organized fashion—about a particular topic, question or situation forces us to think, clarify, make distinctions, anticipate potential consequences, consider alternative viewpoints, and so on. Even rough or draft writing can be beneficial. At the very least, tak-

ing the time can push us not to make snap judgments, not to rush to decision, not to do the first thing we think of. Even more though, putting our thoughts into concrete nouns and verbs invites us to think more clearly and coherently. Some students groan and gripe when I require them to revise and resubmit, and to get feedback from their class peers. Yet I do so because writing, drafting, re-writing and revising can help students learn the habit of taking the time to think, re-think and reflect, and to try to communicate their thoughts clearly with other people, more effectively even than an informal or quick conversation.

- Writing is also a good way to generate a range of ideas and plans, and/or to identify patterns within organizations. Writing can help students and servers learn and practice formulating relevant questions; a necessary skill in human service work (e.g., in conducting meetings or interviews, meeting new people, hiring and supervising, etc). And so on.

- Writing additionally can help us to be self-reflective, to identify our strengths but also our biases and stereotypes. This is a key aspect of leadership development. It can help us to think clearly about what is important to us and to our role as learner or server. SRV and PASSING underscore the importance of heightened consciousness on the part of servers. Reflective writing and journaling—for example, in terms of social devaluation, wounding, social roles, the conservatism corollary,

**Since you are reading this journal,**

why not tell someone else about it? We believe Social Role Valorization is an important tool that concerned individuals can use to address social devaluation in people’s lives. As someone who shares that belief, encourage others to read and subscribe to the only journal dedicated to SRV. Information available at [http://www.srvip.org/journal\\_general.php](http://www.srvip.org/journal_general.php).

etc.—can be an instructive part of SRV-relevant training. In PASSING workshops, the process of keeping a written record on easel paper for the entire team during a ‘foundation discussion’ or as part of the conciliation process can be a very instrumental and practical tool of learning. Writing a PASSING report provides another leadership opportunity for consciousness raising, examination of mindsets and stereotypes, discernment of patterns, etc.

- Writing can also invite students and servers to step into the shoes of another person—another of the major themes of Social Role Valorization—through trying to better understand the person, their life circumstances, pressing needs, key relationships, etc.

- Writing too can help students and servers to become better observers: of other people, of those they are supporting, of relevant environments (e.g., where someone lives or works or goes to school), of their own actions, of pertinent social policies and practices (as helpful or hurtful), etc. Taking the time and making the space to mindfully reflect on what we have observed, and writing our observations, can help us to understand better what we are observing but also point out possible gaps in our knowledge and observations. What are we missing? Learning to write can also help us become more careful readers, e.g., of reports, files, memos, proposals, applications, etc.

ALL IN ALL, observation, communication, self-reflection and critical thinking are key skills for servers, and thoughtful writing can help students and staff to further develop and hone these skills. Many of the articles we have published in this *Journal* over the past years are solid examples of the above lessons, as are the host of PASS and PASSING reports which have been written.

What kind of writing assignments might we try in university or in services, with an eye toward the

above skills? Below are some examples, though many more are available.

- ‘Translating’ an actual human service policy into language that a next door neighbor would be able to understand.

- Writing an (imaginary) letter to the editor about a particular social policy.

- Getting students to write an (imaginary) letter to a parent of a child with impairments, perhaps to introduce themselves, to set up an important meeting or to gather information. What would they want to say to parents? How would they say it? What would they want to ask of parents and family? How would they describe their role and their approach? And so on.

- Another writing exercise is to ask students (or staff) to describe their (future) role as a server: what would it take to carry out the role, what would they do day by day, what would they need to learn, what would be the struggles, how would it benefit the person served, how would they work together cooperatively with others, etc.

- I regularly use ‘mini-assignments,’ e.g., asking students to find sources (such as a YouTube video, popular movie, documentary, website, song, book, article, journal, etc.) relevant to the course topic, and then in a paragraph to describe why and how it is relevant. I typically ask students to post these mini-assignments online so that other students in a class can read and see each others’ sources and commentary.

THESE ARE JUST A FEW sample ideas; I encourage teachers, instructors, trainers, supervisors and employers to consider these ideas, and how they might be adapted for their own classroom or human service program. Please share your examples and ideas with us, by submitting them to this *Journal* or by posting on our blog (blog.srvip.

org). More importantly, I encourage you to write, and to help others write, as one very highly useful leadership development tool. ☺

*Bright is the ring of words when the right man rings them.*

*- Robert Louis Stevenson, Songs of Travel*

#### REFERENCES

Alter, C. & Adkins, C. (2001). Improving the writing skills of social work students. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 37(3), 493-505.

Falk, D. & Ross, P. (2001). Teaching social work writing: An integrative approach. *The Journal of Baccalaureate Social Work*, 6(2), 125-41.

National Association of Social Workers. (2011). Strengthening your writing skills: An essential task for every social worker. *Leadership ladders: Steps to a great career in social work*.

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

Wolfensberger, W., Thomas, S. & Caruso, G. (1996). Some of the universal 'good things of life' which the implementation of Social Role Valorization can be expected to make more accessible to devalued people. *SRV/VRS: The International Social Role Valorization Journal/La Revue Internationale de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*, 2(2), 12-14.

---

MARC TUMEINSKI is a trainer for the SRV Implementation Project in Worcester, MA (US) & editor of *The SRV Journal*.

---

#### THE CITATION FOR THIS COLUMN IS

Tumeinski, M. (2012). The ring of words: On rhetoric, writing & Social Role Valorization dissemination. *The SRV Journal*, 7(2), 42-46.

*Announcing the availability of*  
**A SET OF FIVE DVDs OF TWO PRESENTATIONS BY DR. WOLF WOLFENSBERGER**  
**ON THE HISTORY OF HUMAN SERVICES**

In 2009, the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities produced a set of DVDs, based on a videotape, of two one-day presentations on the history of human services presented by Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger & Susan Thomas at Millersville University in Pennsylvania. The first day is entitled "An Interpreted Pictorial Presentation on the History of Human Services with Emphasis on the Origins of Some of Our Major Contemporary Service Patterns, & Some Universal Lessons for Planning & Structuring of Services Which Can Be Learned from This History." It constitutes approximately 6:15 running time.

The second day is entitled "Reflections on a Lifetime in Human Services, from Prior to the Reforms of the 1950s-70s to the Present, with Implications for the Future: What Has Gotten Better, What Has Gotten Worse, What Is the Same, & What Lies Ahead." It constitutes approximately 3:50 running time.

Each day consists of lecture presentations on the topic, using many overheads & slides (photos & illustrations). At the end of each day, the presentation draws out some lessons from the coverage to contemporary services.

The set of five DVDs takes about 10 hours to show. The set is currently on sale for the reduced price of US \$350 or two for US \$500, which includes permission to show the DVDs to others; for instance, in teaching a class or conducting a seminar.

To order, complete the attached form & send it, along with full payment, to the address on the form on the next page.

**DAY 1: An Interpreted Pictorial Presentation on the History of Human Services**

- 1a Pre and Post Greco-Roman Times (26:33)
- 1b Early Christianity and the Middle Ages (28:03)
- 2a Medieval Hospice and Hospital Design (32:01)
- 2b The "Menacization" of the Afflicted (10:35)
- 2c The Rise of Pauperism (29:42)
- 3a Deportation and Exile (16:28)
- 3b Containment and Confinement (15:47)
- 4a Degradation and Elimination of the Altar (11:46)
- 4b The Panopticon and Central Observation Stations (28:11)
- 5a Service "Deculturation" and Moral Treatment (17:09)
- 5b "Menacization" Images and Associations with Leprosy and Contagion (23:58)
- 6a The Association of Hospices with Houses of Detention (13:43)
- 6b Various Beliefs That Played a Role in Menacization (4:59)
- 6c Human Service Assumptions Based in Materialism (14:18)
- 6d Further Menacization Through "Treatments" Based on Punishments (31:23)
- 6e Regimentation and the Use of Military Imagery (17:07)
- 7a Historical Lines of Influence in the Perversion of Western Human Services (14:51)
- 7b Core Realities, Strategies and Defining Characteristics of Contemporary Services (31:21)
- 7c Some Conclusions (10:53)





# REVIEWS MORE

**ADVANCED ISSUES IN SOCIAL ROLE VALORIZATION THEORY.** By W. WOLFENBERGER. Plantagenet, ON: Valor Press, 440 pages, 2012. **REVIEW AVAILABLE ONLINE @ [www.srvip.org](http://www.srvip.org)**

**Reviewed by David Race**

THE DAY ON WHICH I began this review saw the frequent use of the words 'role' and 'roles' in a very public forum in the UK. At the end of that day, the General Synod of the Church of England, because of an insufficient majority in the House of Laity voting in favour, rejected the authorisation of women to serve in the role of bishop. Given that for over twenty years women had been serving as ordained priests in the Church of England; that in many of the other countries who are part of the Anglican Communion women already serve as bishops; and that the principle of their being bishops had already been adopted by the Synod a year ago, then the competence and ability of women to take up the role was not in doubt. Logic and reason, as well as the great majority of ordinary churchgoers tested in surveys and polls, would seem to have made the move a matter of empirical obviousness. Yet, on the basis of 'religion,' either a belief in a literal interpretation of certain passages in the Bible at the 'evangelical' end, or a desire to 'return to Rome' at the other, a small minority at the extremes of the House of Laity succeeded in blocking the move.

By the time this review appears, there is a remote possibility that the decision may have changed, but my point in beginning this review with the story is twofold. One, to alert the reader to my perspective as coming from the UK, with its quirky, one might even say arrogant, attitude to any issues of reason and religion that appear to come from outside these shores. Second, the timing of the General Synod decision, in the view of the general public, gives the views of Bishops

in the House of Lords no credibility when that House itself, and its representativeness or exclusivity, is under debate. This has parallels with my view, expanded below, that this book is the right book at the wrong time, mainly for reasons which Wolfensberger himself discusses in its pages.

The UK experience of normalization and Social Role Valorization (SRV) has been, in my view, strong in terms of its effects on services for people with learning disabilities, but weak in separating out the empiricism of SRV as a theory. Part of the reason for this, which I have discussed elsewhere (Race, 1999), has to do with the teaching of both normalization (or 'normalisation,' the use of which spelling by people in the UK implies more than just English pedantry) and SRV. This teaching through workshops, including both PASS and PASSING, had a considerable effect on the application of the ideas, but lacked a theoretical backing, especially in the 1980s, when the development of SRV from normalization coincided with the greatest impact of the ideas in practice in the UK. Had such a book as this appeared during that time, the rejection and even hostility to SRV coming from the UK, especially from the academic world, might not have been so great. Wider changes in the academic world and in the world of human services, very much forecast in Wolfensberger's other writings and adduced in this book in chapters four and five, may well have still prevented serious consideration of the empirical validity of SRV even with such a book. As it was, even the 1998 monograph, which is the first exposition of SRV using the 'ten themes,' and my own 1999 text came, in my view, too late for serious attention to be paid to SRV as a social science-based theory, especially in the UK, where the academic disability world was totally dominated by proponents of the so-called 'social theory' of disability, seen as a) originating in the UK and b) having the academic recognition not afforded to SRV.

Over a decade later, the book is immensely rewarding to someone like myself, in that it has the depth of argument and logic that I would have found invaluable in my teaching role in various universities in the 1990s and later, but I fear it will largely be confined to what Michael Kendrick, in his Foreword, calls 'insiders.' Kendrick maintains that such is the author's intent, and there certainly is much that rings many bells with those of us who would be classed in that category. This would be especially true in chapters four, five and six.

My opening account of the peculiarly English goings on at the Church of England General Synod fits well into the issues of SRV and 'worldviews and values' discussed in chapter four. Though occasionally letting slip his empirical hat to reveal his own value positions, Wolfensberger lays bare the reality of the power that 'religion,' defined as he does in its broadest sense, has over empirical reason and evidence, even over what is actually defined as empirical. That chapter alone should be recommended reading for all people entering the world of human services with high ideals, though with even further depth given in chapter five, the two combined would serve that purpose even better.

Similar thoughts, but more in terms of general efforts by people to change things for the better, would be held about chapter six, an extended version of Wolfensberger's fascinating and amusing keynote presentation to the 2003 International SRV conference in Calgary. As someone who attended that presentation, I find its written version even more important, and also am again reminded of the 'English experience' of normalization and SRV, and what I consider the greatest period of its impact—the 1980s and early 1990s. Wolfensberger's combination of the literature on change, and his use of the example of the period in the early 1990s when the US Department of Agriculture set up an army of local agricultural specialists all over the country, called "county agents," under a scheme entitled the Cooperative Extension Service, rang many bells regarding successful change

agency in the 1980s and early 1990s by SRV adherents, but also why that declined rapidly thereafter. In particular the notion of 'local champions' being important reminds me of key individuals in local government and NHS services in the UK in the period referred to above, enabling 'hotspots' of SRV implementation to grow in a number of areas, but then to see them diffused as services moved much more to the 'independent sector' and to a market place of welfare. Once again, a reason why this is the right book at the wrong time, though there are at least suggestions in the chapter that are not totally reliant on a reader being an 'SRV insider' to be useful.

Ironically, in view of the foregoing, I would consider the first three chapters, covering an overview of SRV theory, the role of theory in science, and the hierarchy of propositions of SRV, to be entirely suitable for use in teaching SRV, especially in higher education settings. The overview covers the elements well. The discussion of theory in science could fit well into many university courses on research and/or 'evidence based practice,' whilst the propositions of chapter three, essentially a different way to explain the empirical elements of the various ratings in PASSING, could not only be used as pre-PASSING reading but also in courses on service evaluation in which PASSING figured as an element. The probability that this will not happen, again especially in the UK, is outlined by Wolfensberger himself in later chapters, as mentioned, and has to do with the changes in the way higher education has developed in most westernised countries. This would also apply to professional training outside of universities, where so much attention is now paid to risk aversion and the management of welfare, as opposed to direct work with individuals. In fact, again ironically, one of the most promising avenues for SRV now in the UK, though very much on a small localised scale and involving those who are not expecting to make a living from such work, is with parents and carers, as they are being put more and more into positions where they are having to make decisions

for their offspring, to use their ‘individual budgets’ by purchasing services. For them, elements of this book could be useful, especially the overview and chapter six on change agency.

In summary then, from the perspective of a (semi-retired) UK academic, who is still involved in small attempts at implementing SRV, this book has a lot to offer; and in wishing it had come out in the late 1980s, I realise the impossibility of that happening. Even though SRV in the UK remains small, the fundamental injustice of the devaluation of vulnerable people revealed by SRV, like the issue behind the General Synod’s verdict, will not go away. So even in this currently morally benighted country, people will still work to address societal devaluation. For them, this book will be a mixture of comfort, intellectual challenge and support.

#### REFERENCES

Race, D.G. (1999). *Social Role Valorization and the English experience*. London: Whiting & Birch.

Wolfensberger, W. (1998). *A brief introduction to Social Role Valorization: A high-order concept for addressing the plight of societally devalued people, and for structuring human services* (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

Wolfensberger, W. & Glenn, L. (1975, reprinted 1978). *PASS (Program Analysis of Service Systems): A method for the quantitative evaluation of human services: Vol. 1. Handbook: Vol. 2. Field manual* (3rd ed.). Toronto: National Institute on Mental Retardation.

Wolfensberger, W. & Thomas, S. (2007). *PASSING: A tool for analyzing service quality according to Social Role Valorization criteria. Ratings manual* (3rd rev. ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency.

---

DAVID RACE, PHD, is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Salford, the Chair of Values Education & Research Association in the UK & a corresponding member of the North American SRV Development, Training & Safeguarding Council.

---

#### THE CITATION FOR THIS REVIEW IS

Race, D. (2012). Review of the book *Advanced issues in Social Role Valorization theory* by W. Wolfensberger. *The SRV Journal*, 7(2), 49–51.

---



---

## Invitation to Write Book, Film & Article Reviews

### From the Editor

I ENCOURAGE OUR READERS to submit reviews to *The SRV Journal* of current films, books and articles. For people who are studying SRV, looking for everyday examples can help deepen one’s understanding. For people who are teaching SRV, learning from and using contemporary examples from the media in one’s teaching can be very instructive for audiences. For people who are implementing SRV, contemporary examples can provide fruitful ideas to learn from. Some books and articles mention SRV specifically; others do not but are still relevant to SRV. Both are good subjects for reviewing. We have written guidelines for writing book and film reviews. If you would like to get a copy of either set of guidelines, please let me know at:

Marc Tumeinski  
*The SRV Journal*, 74 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609 USA  
 508.752.3670; journal@srvip.org; www.srvip.org

Announcing  
**Advanced Issues in  
Social Role Valorization Theory**

PRESSES  
**VALOR**  
PRESS

**Author:** Wolf Wolfensberger, PhD, 1934-2011

**Hardcover:** 432 pages

**Publisher:** Valor Press (Plantagenet ON, Canada)

**Language:** English

**ISBN:** 978-0-9868040-5-2

**Copyright ©:** 2012, Valor Press

**Product Dimensions:** 22 x 15 x 3 cm

**Shipping Weight:** 0.75 Kg

**Price:** 80\$ cdn + shipping & handling



Social Role Valorization

**Advanced Issues in  
Social Role Valorization Theory**

**Wolf Wolfensberger**

**Valor Press**

200 du Comté Road

P.O. Box 110

Plantagenet, Ontario K0B 1L0 CANADA

1.613.673.3583

[www.instvalor.ca](http://www.instvalor.ca)

contact Sylvie Duchesne at [sduchesne@instvalor.ca](mailto:sduchesne@instvalor.ca)

**About Social Role Valorization (SRV)**

Social Role Valorization (SRV), a human service theory based on the principle of normalization, proposes that positively valued social roles are needed for people to attain what Wolfensberger has described as the good things of life (well-being). This is of particular importance for individuals with impairments or otherwise at risk of being socially devalued by others, and therefore of great importance for human services to them.

**About the book**

The first two chapters explain SRV, and give depth and background to SRV as an empirical theory that is applicable to human services of all kinds, to all sorts of people. The remaining chapters are all revised and expanded versions of presentations that Dr. Wolfensberger had given at previous international SRV conferences. The topics treated in the chapters move from the general (chapters 2, 3 and 4) to the more specific (chapters 5, 6 and 7).

The contents of the book are especially useful for people who do, or want to, teach SRV; for SRV researchers; and for those interested in implementing SRV in a systematic way, especially in service fields where SRV is new, not yet known, and not widely—if at all—embraced.

**About Wolf Wolfensberger, Ph.D. (1934-2011)**

World renowned human service reformer, Professor Wolfensberger (Syracuse University) was involved in the development and dissemination of the principle of normalization and the originator of the program evaluation tools PASS and PASSING, and of a number of service approaches that include SRV and Citizen Advocacy.

**Book Chapters**

- Foreword
- Preface
- Chapter 1: A brief overview of Social Role Valorization
- Chapter 2: The role of theory in science, and criteria for a definition of Social Role Valorization as an empirically-based theory
- Chapter 3: The hierarchy of propositions of Social Role Valorization, and their empiricity
- Chapter 4: The relationships of Social Role Valorization theory to worldviews and values
- Chapter 5: Values issues and other non-empirical issues that are brought into sharp focus by, or at, occasions where Social Role Valorization is taught or implemented
- Chapter 6: Issues of change agency in the teaching, dissemination and implementation of Social Role Valorization
- Chapter 7: The application of Social Role Valorization principles to criminal and other detentive settings
- Conclusion to the book

# LIST OF ITEMS TO BE REVIEWED

---

IN EACH ISSUE OF *The SRV Journal*, we publish reviews of items relevant to SRV theory, training, research or implementation. These include reviews of books, movies, articles, etc. We encourage our readers to look for and review such items for this journal. We will be happy to send you our guidelines for writing reviews, or they are available on our website ([http://www.srvip.org/journal\\_submissions.php](http://www.srvip.org/journal_submissions.php)). We are open to reviews of any items you think would be relevant for people interested in SRV. We also have specific items we are seeking reviews of. (We strive to include items which might have relevance to: SRV theory, one or more SRV themes, and/or social devaluation. If, however, a reviewer finds that a particular item is not so relevant, please let us know.) These items include:

SOCIAL INCLUSION AT WORK. (2008). By JANIS CHADSEY. Annapolis, MD: AAIDD, 49 pages.

INCLUSIVE LIVABLE COMMUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITIES. (2008). Washington, DC: NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY, 84 pages.

BODY & SOUL: DIANA & KATHY. (2006). By ALICE ELLIOTT (Director). 40 minutes.

ACHIEVING COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP THROUGH COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROVIDER SERVICES: ARE WE THERE YET? (2007). *Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, 45(3), 149–160.

EISENMAN, L. SOCIAL NETWORKS & CAREERS OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES. (2007). *Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, 45(3), 199-208.

KLEINERT, H., MIRACLE, S. & SHEPPARD-JONES, K. INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH MODERATE & SEVERE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR & COMMUNITY RECREATION ACTIVITIES. (2007). *Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, 45(1), 46-55.

HALL, A., BUTTERWORTH, J., WINSOR, J., GILMORE, D. & METZEL, D. PUSHING THE EMPLOYMENT AGENDA: CASE STUDY RESEARCH OF HIGH PERFORMING STATES IN INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT. (2007). *Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, 45(3), 182-198.

WOLFENSBERGER, W. HOW TO COMPORT OURSELVES IN AN ERA OF SHRINKING RESOURCES. (2010). *Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, 48(2), 148-162.

ABERNATHY, T. & TAYLOR, S. TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR OWN DISABILITY. (2009). *Teacher Education & Special Education*, 32(2), 121-136.

PATTERSON, I. & PEGG, S. SERIOUS LEISURE & PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: BENEFITS & OPPORTUNITIES. (2009). *Leisure Studies*, 28(4), 387–402.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

---

THIS FEATURE PROVIDES a way to continue learning from & engaging with a *Journal* article after reading it. We publish questions based on selected articles, inviting the reader to continue considering, reflecting, discussing & writing about what they read. Such questions can be useful in deepening a reader's level of understanding of the article content & its SRV implications, whether for teaching or application, & may even lead to a shift in mind-set. We hope these questions will be used by individual readers, as well as by university/college professors in their classes, by program managers during staff meetings & so on. Reflection on these questions might work best spread out over a period of time, & or shared with others.

## LEARNING ROLE THEORY FROM FICTION (PP. 8-9) ~ WOLFENSBERGER

- What specific films, plays, novels, short stories &/or television shows might be good examples to use to teach about social roles (valued & devalued), role communicators, etc.?
- What might be constructive assignments to use in a university course, for example, to teach about role fiction, e.g., asking students to write a short story, a play or a scene from a play, film script; or to make a brief video, which illustrates the reality & power of roles?

## ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ... SOME (PP. 10-14) ~ RISSINGER

- What can reading this article teach us about 'better getting in the way of best'? Consider this in light of the question raised at PASSING workshops (during a foundation discussion) around priority of needs, e.g., what needs of the people served might have to be addressed first before other needs can be addressed?
- As university professors, teachers or trainers, how can we help learners better understand & engage with the model coherency concept? This particular article was based on a university assignment (involving school visits) which incorporated the concept of model coherency; what other kinds of assignments or exercises are possible & practical to introduce the SRV concept of model coherency to learners?

## PARENTAL REPORTS (PP. 15-31) ~ MANN

- The article points out how parents may have to take into account the various types of available schools (public, private, etc.) in terms of what is best for their son or daughter. What SRV criteria might help parents to rank order the schools available (e.g., culturally valued analog, availability of valued roles, setting considerations, etc.)?
- What are some of the different forms of rejection to which impaired students are vulnerable? Take into account overt & subtle forms of rejection, the nature of life-defining rejection, possible mitigating factors, etc. What are some of the normative & genuine responses to rejection by children, by their parents, and so on?

# CALENDAR OF SRV & RELATED TRAININGS

THIS CALENDAR LISTS UPCOMING SRV & PASSING workshops we are aware of, as well as a number of other workshops relevant to SRV. Each event varies in terms of length & depth of coverage of material; contact the person listed to make sure the workshop fits what you are looking for. Additional training calendars may be accessed at [www.srvip.org](http://www.srvip.org) & [www.socialrolevalorization.com](http://www.socialrolevalorization.com). To notify us of SRV, PASSING & SRV-related workshops for upcoming issues, send information to: [journal@srvip.org](mailto:journal@srvip.org).

**How to Function Morally, Coherently and Adaptively in a World that is Disfunctional, Including its Human Services**

June 2-8, 2013  
Worcester, MA, US  
email [register@srvip.org](mailto:register@srvip.org)

**An Introduction to SRV: A High-Order Schema for Addressing the Plight of Devalued People (\*with an emphasis on developing leaders in SRV\*)**

April 16-19, 2013  
Fairhaven, MA, US  
email [register@srvip.org](mailto:register@srvip.org)

April 29-May 2, 2013  
Lafayette, IN, US  
email [register@srvip.org](mailto:register@srvip.org)

May 20-23, 2013  
Holyoke, MA, US  
email [register@srvip.org](mailto:register@srvip.org)

**Practicum With SRV Using the PASSING Tool**

*prerequisite: attendance at a leadership level SRV workshop*

January 27-February 1, 2013  
West Virginia, US  
email Linda Higgs - [Linda.S.Higgs@wv.gov](mailto:Linda.S.Higgs@wv.gov)

October 13-18, 2013  
Pennsylvania, US  
email [registerki@keystonehumanservices.org](mailto:registerki@keystonehumanservices.org)

**Towards a Better Life: A Two-Day Introduction to SRV**

March 12-13, 2013  
Canberra, ACT, AUS  
email Veronica Hadfield - [VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au](mailto:VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au)

April 8-9, 2013  
Perth, WA, AUS  
email Jo Vassallo - [Jo.Vassallo@inclusionwa.org.au](mailto:Jo.Vassallo@inclusionwa.org.au)

June 19-20, 2013  
Canberra, ACT, AUS  
email Veronica Hadfield - [VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au](mailto:VHadfield@koomarri.asn.au)

**An Introduction to Social Role Valorization**

March 12-14, 2013  
Macungie, Pennsylvania, US  
email [registerki@keystonehumanservices.org](mailto:registerki@keystonehumanservices.org)

May 6-9, 2013  
Halifax, Pennsylvania, US  
email [registerki@keystonehumanservices.org](mailto:registerki@keystonehumanservices.org)

September 10-12, 2013  
Halifax, Pennsylvania, US  
email [registerki@keystonehumanservices.org](mailto:registerki@keystonehumanservices.org)



# Social Role Valorization News & Reviews

**Susan Thomas**

THIS COLUMN WAS BEGUN BY Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger, who passed away on 27 February 2011. His long-term associate Susan Thomas will continue the column.

As always, the intent of the column is five-fold:

(a) Briefly annotate publications that have relevance to Social Role Valorization (SRV). Conceivably, some of these might be reviewed in greater depth in a later issue of this journal. Some of these items may serve as pointers to research relevant to SRV theory.

(b) Present brief sketches of media items that illustrate an SRV issue.

(c) Present vignettes from public life that illustrate or teach something about SRV.

(d) Document certain SRV-related events or publications for the historical record.

(e) By all the above, to illustrate and teach the art and craft of spotting, analyzing and interpreting phenomena that have SRV relevance.

Aside from being instructive to readers, persons who teach SRV will hopefully find many of the items in this column useful in their teaching.

## First, An Update

\*In the December 2011 column, under the section "Imagery of Illness & Death," we mentioned that Hadamar, an institution in Germany where over 10,000 mentally handicapped people were killed under the Nazis, was being used "at least into the 1990s" as a psychiatric service. We have

since learned that still to this very day it continues as a psychiatric service. Imagine what messages are being sent to the service recipients, being housed in a place where over 10,000 people were killed not all that long ago for being, or having a condition, the same as oneself is or has. Just as bad in terms of historical imagery, though perhaps less surprising, is the continued use of the Brandenburg prison as a prison. Brandenburg is where the Nazis put to death many of their political enemies. Visitors to the memorial site have to enter the prison itself to get there, and for this reason have to undergo all the security screening for prison visitors.

## Devaluation & Deviancy,

### Deviancy-Making & Responses to Deviancy

\*The 1884 book *Flatland*, by Edwin A. Abbott, is the story of two-dimensional creatures who live on a single plane. All the male inhabitants are multi-sided shapes, and the more edges one has and the greater one's angles, the higher one's status. The females, however, are all line segments and thus very low down on the social scale. A visit by a Sphere convinces one of the inhabitants (a Square) of the existence of other dimensions, which gets him in trouble with the authorities and eventually lands him in prison for life. The book was written as a satire on Victorian society, including its class system, its fashions, and its denial of rights to women. It is another of the

“what if ...” sort of books that can help one to understand deviancy and deviancy-making in one’s own society.

\*Schweik, S. (2009). *The ugly laws: Disability in public*. New York: New York University Press. In a presentation by the author based on her book, we learned the following.

In 1881, a law was introduced in Portland, Oregon, and quickly copied in other locales, to remove obstructions on the streets; however, despite its stated intent, the actual purpose of the Portland law was to remove one specific person who was seen as a nuisance, namely one Mother Hastings, who said she was told she was “too terrible a sight for children to see,” and who was given money if she would leave town. This she did, but unfortunately, she went to Los Angeles just as that city was enacting its own similar law. These laws came to be called “ugly laws,” and the first such law (the 1881 Portland law) read: “No person who is diseased, maimed, mutilated, or in any way deformed so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object or improper person to be allowed in or on the public ways or other public places in this city, or shall therein or thereon expose himself to public view.” Obviously, this law targeted poor handicapped people, mostly beggars, and also cast them into the object role. This happened during the era of social Darwinism, and was an expression of that ideology’s hatred for human impairment.

According to Schweik, the same purpose—getting rid of unsightly and unwanted beggars—is today pursued via privatization of space. For instance, private shopping malls may try to attract tenants with the argument that no beggars are allowed in this mall, and with the promise of private security personnel to keep such persons out. In 2010, in Portland, Oregon once again, a “sidewalk management plan” was introduced by the mayor to maintain a 6- to 8-foot “pedestrian use zone” on the sidewalk in which all pedestrians have to be moving. This would obviously put

beggars on the run, and would move them out to the curb and away from buildings against which they might sit, or even sleep. In this instance, the vaunted Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was invoked to justify the plan, because the ADA requires unobstructed public passages for handicapped people, such as those in wheelchairs. However, that this plan was directed against people (mostly beggars), not sidewalk obstructions, was shown by the fact that sidewalk cafes would still be allowed to have their tables and boards out on the sidewalks, thus obstructing easy pedestrian and wheelchair passage.

\*Peter, D. (2000). Dynamics of discourse: A case study illuminating power relations in mental retardation. *Mental Retardation*, 38, 354-362. An analysis of the case record of one 40-year-old blind retarded person who had spent much of his life in institutions for the blind and retarded showed that the most voluminous entries dealt with his body temperature, blood pressure, bowel movements and drug regimen. This fact is consistent with Foucault’s analysis (Foucault, M. (1979). *Discipline and punish*. New York: Random House) that deviant people are subjected to the surveillance of the power structures, via what Foucault called their “gaze,” which is accompanied by “turning real lives into writing” which “functions as a procedure of objectification and subjection” (p. 192).

\*The notorious Robben Island off the South African city of Cape Town gained its notoriety by serving for 30 years as a harsh prison for political prisoners such as Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu in the days of apartheid. The prison there has now been turned into a museum, in which some former inmates now have the valued role of prison tour guides. The island had long been used as a place to distance unwanted people, beginning in the mid-1600s when slaves, convicts, and native peoples were sent there by the Dutch colonizers, and in

the mid-1800s it was turned into a leper colony (*Smithsonian*, May 2012).

\*One way in which the wound of physical discontinuity can be inflicted is for people to be evicted from their apartments, even though they have been abiding by their lease. For instance, the owner of a building may not make mortgage payments, but may continue collecting rent payments from his tenants. When the bank finally comes to repossess the property, the sheriff is called upon to evict tenants, even though those tenants had been dutifully paying their rent, and knew nothing about their landlord's financial problems. They may leave in the morning for work, and come home to find their belongings on the curb (e.g., *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 9 October 2008). Of course, this type of thing is most likely to happen to poor and marginal people, not to those who enjoy valued status.

\*A fascinating article by the travel writer Paul Theroux on Hawaiian culture (*Smithsonian*, May 2012) reveals the universality of devaluation and deviancy-making. Theroux has lived in Hawaii for many years, but is still considered an "outsider" by native Hawaiians. The Samoan language refers to outsiders as *palangi*, which means they have dropped out of the sky, like aliens from another planet; and in the Hawaiian tongue they are called *haole*, which means "of another breath." What is ironic is that the Samoans and Hawaiians themselves were at one time "outsiders" to what are now their own islands, having arrived there by boat from across the Pacific. However, once they set foot on the islands, the islands became "theirs" and everyone else who arrived later became to them a *palangi* or *haole*. By the way, the people of the island of Martha's Vineyard (off the New England coast of the US) refer to non-islanders as "wash-ashores," as if they were flotsam and jetsam thrown up by the sea.

Further, those who are or consider themselves native Hawaiians are uncommunicative and reserved vis-à-vis those they consider "outsiders,"

even if these "outsiders" were themselves born in Hawaii (and thus native to it) or have lived there for many years.

\*Even in the exceedingly dangerous environment of mountain-climbing in the Himalayas, devaluation exists. For instance, the Sherpas, an ethnic group from Nepal whose members usually act as guides for climbers, and Pakistanis who often function as porters for climbing expeditions, devalue one another (Zuckerman, P. & Padoan, A. [2012]. *Buried in the sky: The extraordinary story of the Sherpa climbers on K2's deadliest day*).

\*Everyone rails against stereotyping, but—like so much of our mental processing—it serves an adaptive purpose: if our ancestors had not "stereotyped" all sorts of creatures on the basis of the behavior of only one or a few of that class, they would not have survived. Of course, the problem is that stereotypes may be unfair to the stereotyped party, and negative ones may interfere with opportunities for competency development, and may contribute to the devaluation of the stereotyped party. Unfortunately, most people almost automatically denigrate "stereotyping." However, the recent emergence of a Chinese-American star basketball player, Jeremy Lin, brought a more realistic recognition of the issue in at least some quarters. In the US, star basketball players are "stereotypically" African-American—83% of the National Basketball Association's all-stars are black. But one sportswriter (*Time*, 27 February 2012, p. 43) admitted that he had "committed racial profiling" by assuming Asian-Americans, such as Lin, would not be good players, and would certainly lose against African-American players. ("Racial profiling" is stereotyping based on race, and, though everyone does it, is decried.)

\*A new deviancy craze seems to have appeared on the scene, namely the child that is both "disabled" and "gifted." (One parent of an impaired boy described him at an SRV workshop as "pro-

foundly gifted.”) This combination can take many forms. Among them is the hyperactive gifted child, the idiot savant, the child with Asperger’s syndrome, or with William’s syndrome and musical talent, the otherwise disturbed bright child, the isolated nerd, and so on. The good news is that this notion prevents an observer from imposing a global negative judgment on a child; the bad news is that it places a larger proportion of children into a “disabled” role even when they are quite able.

### Competencies & Issues of Competency Enhancement

\*It is unfortunate that throughout at least recent history, wars have been the occasion of many medical advances that are developed to treat battle casualties, and then get expanded and applied to the civilian population. Many advances in surgery, such as blood transfusions, and the use of antibiotics to treat infection, are examples. For instance, the “cheetah legs” made famous by the South African Olympic contender Oscar Pistorius can now be seen on “dozens of amputees” at a military rehabilitation center. (More on Pistorius in a later section of this column.) Currently, the ongoing war in Afghanistan, and the war in Iraq before it, have led to dramatic improvements in the ability to save injured limbs (what is called “limb salvage”), rather than amputating them, and in both prostheses for lost limbs and orthotic devices to enable better use of damaged limbs. These are assisting many soldiers to retain or regain their role of active-duty military service member, as well as their roles of bread-winner for their family and competitive athlete even when they leave the military (*Time*, 28 May 2012). This is an example of how competency-enhancing devices can help preserve or restore valued roles.

\*Medical innovations are often very risky in their initial stages when experience with them is limited, and especially if they are introduced with much hype. This includes medical efforts to en-

able or increase competency development, especially if surgery or drugs are involved. In recent years, children with cerebral palsy have been given (apparently by injection) the anti-wrinkle drug Botox, a toxin produced by the botulinum bacteria, in order to paralyze certain nerves and thereby reduce spasticity in their legs. This use of Botox has not been approved in the US, but has been in some other countries. In some cases, the toxin has spread to other parts of the body, and weakened or paralyzed the breathing and swallowing muscles, sometimes resulting in death. The US Federal Drug Administration issued a warning on this in February 2008 (AP in *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 9 February 2008, p. A4).

\*Everyone knows of the spectacular competency-enhancement of the deaf-blind and mentally stunted Helen Keller (1880-1968) by her full-time live-in tutor, Anne Sullivan. One reason that we no longer hear of such Anne Sullivans these days is that no one wants to work around-the-clock, and on a live-in basis, with impaired persons. The closest thing is euphemistically called an “intervenor” who lives “out” and comes in to work a 40-hour week tutoring a deaf-blind child. There is one two-year long program in North America that develops “intervenor,” but most get a mere two days training!! (*Reader’s Digest*, February 2008). No wonder we are no longer getting Helen Keller-like competency breakthroughs!

\*Speaking of “intervenor,” a mere generation ago, who would have thought that the term “intervention specialist” would refer to a special education worker. People might have thought that it referred to a person who specialized in trying to defuse conflicts between hostile parties. According to a mother of an autistic boy, both his intervention specialist and his teacher spend “countless hours” doing paperwork that justifies his funding, meaning mostly their own salaries. So people get paid to do almost nothing but fill out forms and reports to get paid to fill out forms and reports

(Lindsley, S. [2009, March 9]. *Newsweek*, p. 18), rather than to enhance the competencies of those they serve.

\*That big competency gains can result from intensive teaching, especially if it employs effective pedagogies, is illustrated not only in the story of Helen Keller, but also today. For instance, a program of teaching the physically impaired to sit on and to ride horses instituted a 21-Day Challenge, consisting of 21 days of 30 minutes of riding each day. In these three weeks, children with spina bi-fida or severe cerebral palsy who had been unable to do so before learned to sit up by themselves, hold up their heads, develop greater torso control, use their arms to push themselves up, and even speak more and better. The before- and-after photos accompanying the article testified to the children's growth (*ARISE News*, Summer 2012, pp. 6-7). Unfortunately, the program calls the activity "therapeutic riding," rather than equestrianism, or just plain horseback-riding, but this image problem does not detract from the competency development.

\*A boy sucked his thumb until the age of 12, despite discouragement from the family. One day, someone offered him what today would amount to about a dollar if he quit—and he quit instantly forever (Maclay, D.T. [1970]. *Treatment for children: The work of a child guidance clinic*. New York: Science House). This illustrates a culturally normative way of dealing with problems that these days might precipitate a torrent of paid and culturally non-normative services.

\*William John Barrow was diagnosed as autistic at age two when he had not yet said a word. One doctor told his father that if he was lucky, he would be able to live in a group home instead of an institution. Six years later, in 1996, his mother abandoned the family, and soon after that, the father's business failed. However, that year, at age eight, William learned to play chess, entered tour-

naments and got a coach, and played in 150 tournaments in five years. By age 17, he had attained the rank of "expert," which puts him roughly in the 99th percentile of tournament players. "His chess prowess enabled him to overcome many of the social stigmas attached to autism. His ever-growing skills helped him gain self-confidence, and as a valued member of his school's team, he earned the respect and friendship of his peers. Meanwhile, William was also discovering his immense talent for the tactics of mathematics" (*US Chess Life*, December 2007, p. 8. The chess reporter wrote this as if he had had SRV training!). William began to make top grades. For 10+ years, he attended speech classes and learned to communicate naturally. In 2007, the Horatio Alger Society gave him a \$20,000 scholarship that enabled him to enroll at the Virginia Commonwealth University Honors College in Richmond, Virginia, aiming at biomedical engineering. This is almost a textbook illustration of how the acquisition of one competency can lead to valued roles, to more competencies, to improved images, and be a springboard to yet other skills and valued roles.

\*Hallelujah! Finally, other parties besides some lone SRV trainers are also beginning to say that not everyone needs to go to college, and that there are many valued work roles that young people can prepare for and learn without attending college. As reported in *Time* (14 May 2012, pp. 34-38), vocational education and vocational high schools—which for many decades had a poor reputation in American education as being the place "where you sent the dumb kids or the supposed misfits who weren't suited for classroom learning"—are now getting a second look. Forcing every student into college preparatory courses, and holding up college as the norm, has had "awful" results: at least in the US, high school drop-out rates continue very high, high school graduates do not come out of school prepared to work, only between 20%-40% of those who start college graduate from it, and there is now a shortage of skilled tradesmen

such as welders and auto mechanics who used to learn their job in vocational school. (By the way, many of the trades which students learn in vocational education also pay very well, and the range of such trades is expanding to include jobs in firefighting, medical services of many types, veterinary medicine, aeronautics, marketing, restaurants and other food services, and massage therapy.) In order to shed the negative image of vocational education, it is currently being called career and technical education (CTE).

The SRV relevances of this development are several. (a) It can contribute to competency-enhancement, and thereby to competency-contingent roles, such as those of iron worker, radiology technician, and mason, all depending on which skills are taught in vocational education. (b) It underlines the importance of model coherency, in that a college education is neither the right content nor the right process for everyone; and further, once provided with appropriate content, students who had been doing poorly in more abstract academic programs can thrive in well-delivered vocational training. (c) At the same time, it is important to take image issues into account, and not let vocational education become once again the seeming dead-end for students for whom little was expected.

\*One area of research relevant to issues of competency has gone under the names of “resilience” and “self-efficacy,” and now is called “hardiness.” Hardiness is said to be made up of commitment (which means engagement, rather than withdrawal and isolation), control (which means having influence rather than being passive and powerless), and challenge (which refers to learning from experience). The research overall claims that people who are resilient, or “have resilience,” who are self-efficacious, and who are “hardy” in the above sense, cope much better with the hardships of life than those who are not. (Source: Maddi, S.R. [2002]. The story of hardiness: Twenty years of theorizing, research, and practice. *Consulting Psy-*

*chology Journal: Practice and Research*, 54(3), pp. 175-185.) These findings are very consistent with SRV—except SRV points out that having valued roles can also help one to cope with life’s hardships even when one is not hardy, resilient or self-efficacious, and even when one has no competencies whatever, because at least many valued roles tend to bring with them resources and protections in the forms of friends, family, allies, etc.

\*Advocacy in human services for so-called “self-determination” (a relatively new word when applied to individuals, as opposed to nations) is rarely linked to issues of competency. In fact, the unnuanced self-determination rhetoric implies that even profoundly mentally impaired people should be given self-determination. For instance, a mentally disturbed woman living in a small apartment in New York City had been throwing feces out her window almost daily, but citizens complaining about this were told both by the police and the mental health department that they can do nothing about this (*Time*, 13 Sept. 1999). One would think that at least the public health department would have a purview here.

However, we now hear a new rhetoric about “self-determination skills,” which is a new term that refers mostly to what was once called “social maturity,” and thereby to all the competencies that were once subsumed under that construct, especially as once measured by the Vineland Social Maturity Scale. Not surprisingly, “self-determination skills” correlated .77 with social skills (Carter, E.W., Owens, L., Trainor, A.A., Sun, Y. & Swedeen, B. [2009]. Self-determination skills and opportunities of adolescents with severe intellectual and developmental disabilities. *American Journal on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, 114(3), pp. 179-192). The term “self-determination” can also now be used to mean possessing the skills of daily living.

\*For people with bodily and/or mental limitations, using some generic resources for travel can

be difficult to do, even with competent helpers. There is now help for them, in addition to help for vacations, which has been reported on in earlier *News & Reviews* columns. Hammer Travel LLC will help people with intellectual impairments to plan such trips: Hammer Travel, [www.HammerTravel.org](http://www.HammerTravel.org), or call 1-877/345-8579. Such assistance can increase the competency scope of such travelers.

### **Interpersonal Identification & Imitation**

The SRV themes of interpersonal identification and imitation are linked because people are more likely to imitate those with whom they identify, and the closer and deeper the identification, the yet more likely is it that imitation will take place. Both are also tied to competency, as covered in the previous section, since adaptive and maladaptive behaviors are often what people model to and imitate of each other. However, some items below deal with one more than the other.

\*Until recently, elected officials—such as members of Congress—lived in Washington, DC with their families for the duration of their term. This also meant that members' families became acquainted, ran into each other in stores and at school meetings, etc. However, now it is common for the families to remain behind in their home districts, with the elected member commuting from there to Washington and back. This makes lawmakers anxious to finish their work speedily, so that they can get home for breaks; it is also believed to be one of the contributors to the atmosphere of hostility between members of opposing political parties, and their unwillingness or inability to work together (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 1 April 2012, p. E4). In other words, because of their residential arrangements, lawmakers of opposing views are now less likely to encounter each other in ordinary activities of life, and are much less likely to identify with each other, thus making them less willing to work cooperatively with each other. This underlines the importance of commonalities among people—common spaces,

shared activities, etc.—to the development of interpersonal identification, and in turn to the development of positive attitudes and interactions among people.

\*Some years ago in this column, we wrote about the pro baseball pitcher Jim Abbott, who has only one hand and who for 10 years was a star pitcher for several major league baseball teams until he retired in 1999. He has written a book (*Imperfect: An improbable life*, 2012), in which he describes meeting numerous children with different physical impairments, who were mesmerized and inspired by seeing what he was able to do. In other words, he was seen as a model of someone in a highly valued role whom they could imitate.

\*A high school boy who uses a wheelchair because of a genetic impairment that makes it very difficult (though not impossible) for him to walk or stand for very long has participated in the “wheelchair division” of competitive running races. He took up “running” in imitation of his mother after she entered her first race. His middle-aged father, who has no impairment, also learned to use a wheelchair so that he could compete with his son; in fact, the father has competed in the wheelchair division even in races that his son has not entered (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 8 July 2012, pp. C1, C7). The father said he started doing this so that he could share activities with his son.

\*A high school in Colorado takes students on a trip each year where they live like the poor of other countries do in a “Global Village” that is part of an economic development organization. For one week, the students have to use the same food, utensils, energy sources (e.g., firewood), etc., as the poor of a particular country. As would be expected, this trip is deeply affecting for the students, even though they describe it as very difficult (*World Ark*, May 2012, pp. 50-51). This illustrates one strategy for increasing interpersonal identification, namely actually

assuming the life experiences and conditions of another party, as opposed to just hearing or reading about them.

\*A small town outside Rochester, NY, became the center of much media attention when more than a dozen teenagers at a local high school began twitching, first one, then another, then another. Families wanted to attribute this to environmental toxins, but there was not evidence to sustain that claim. Eventually it appeared that this was a case of mass hysteria (as some observers had posited from the first), a phenomenon that is not uncommon especially among adolescents. This explanation was resented by the affected teens and their families because it implied that the teens were “making it up,” and that they carried some unresolved, and unstated, anxieties, conflicts and resentments. It is estimated that in the US alone, “hundreds” of outbreaks of mass hysteria occur each year, though most pass quickly and few attract more than local attention. Half these instances occur in schools, and more among females than males (*New York Times*, 11 March 2012; *Newsweek*, 20 February 2012, pp. 26-27).

This phenomenon illustrates both (a) one expression of human unconsciousness, in that the teens were not consciously engaging in the odd physical manifestations that attracted attention and disrupted their lives; and (b) that imitation of maladaptive behaviors can occur, and without any conscious awareness that such imitation is taking place. The teens and their families believed (incorrectly) that they were not imitating each other, but had each independently developed their tics and twitches.

\**Time* magazine (14 May 2012) reported that National Basketball Association players are beginning to dress like nerds and geeks, which “is transforming the image of young, rich African-American athletes, “ and “defying the expectation that they wear an intimidating hood facade.” Defying that expectation can only help to improve

the image of such athletes in the wider society, and of the many young people who admire, identify with and imitate them.

\*The 2011 film “The Help,” based on a book of the same name, was nominated for numerous awards, as were the actors in it. The film tells the story of black domestic workers (maids, mostly) in the US south during the segregated 1960s. The National Domestic Workers Alliance, an advocacy body of and for nannies, house cleaners and day laborers (including immigrants), used the film and especially its association with the highly image-enhancing Oscar awards ceremony, “to build spirit and self-esteem,” as well as to promote its agenda via lobbying. An article described “the pinch-me feeling of seeing people like themselves sympathetically portrayed;” the article also noted that the visibility of the Oscars, along with the high prestige of celebrities in contemporary culture, has helped to improve the image and acceptability of numerous other conditions, states and roles that would otherwise be very devalued, such as homosexuality (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 3 March 2012, p. C8). This is an example of action on the fourth level of social organization (the level of an entire society), applied to an entire devalued class, in this instance one that facilitates interpersonal identification of valued parties with devalued ones, and affects the attitudes of the former to the latter.

\*Hall, R. & Moore, D. with Vincent, L. (2006). *Same kind of different as me*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

This is the story by and about two men who are as different from each other as one could imagine. The first author, Hall, was a well-educated, wealthy, white Texas art dealer with a wife and children, who traveled around the world in his business. The second author, Moore, was a black man who had absolutely no education, grew up as a desperately poor sharecropper in the US south, was homeless, had a criminal record, and



was reluctant to develop a relationship with anyone, especially not with white people since he had been oppressed and brutalized at their hands. The two met through the mediation of Hall's wife, who with her husband began to serve as volunteers at meals at a local "mission" to the homeless. Over time, the two men first became acquainted, and then made a conscious decision to become friends. Their relationship was a form of personal advocacy, though in this instance not mediated by a Citizen Advocacy office or other service. Also, as happens so often in these relationships, the person who started out at greatest disadvantage and in greatest need eventually became a benefactor of the more privileged man. In fact, Moore saw Hall through Hall's wife's illness and death, and eventually became first an informal and unpaid worker for Hall, and then a paid employee.

The mission to the homeless and the people it serves (where Hall and Moore met) are described in the worst ways one can imagine: as filthy, smelly, with very bad appearance. The service apparently operated on the lowest common denominator principle, with rules for virtually everything because of only some of the people served. Repeatedly, Hall states that these features would put people off from coming to serve at the mission, or remaining long to serve, and from becoming close with any of the recipients.

The book also tells of the great hardships and deprivations in the US south into the middle of the 20th century, and of multiple wounds being struck to Moore, some by nature but most by the actions and inactions of others, such as the landowners where his family were tenant farmers. The story also testifies to how a personal relationship with a valued party is often the avenue to valued roles and participation in valued society for a devalued and deeply wounded party. For instance, Hall takes Moore for his first time ever into coffee shops and restaurants, and to a church retreat, even though Moore was more than 50 years old by then. The Halls also help Moore to obtain a driver's license, and send him on his first road

trip. Eventually the widowed Hall invites Moore to share his living quarters on an expensive estate where he is living while selling the art collection for the estate.

The story is told in short chapters, each by one of the two men who alternate in speaking about the same time or incident in their lives and relationship. The alternation of one author's words and perspectives with the other's also shows how the same thing can look very different, depending on whether one enjoys valued status in society or not.

The story is equally about the changes that occurred in Hall, though these have little to do with the valued roles he occupies, and much more with the way he views the world, the way he views lowly people, and what he sees as fruitful address of their problems, e.g., via formal structures such as government vs. by personal engagement with them.

The book would be useful for an SRV-related book study group, for a class assignment in certain human service-related courses, and for people in Citizen Advocacy.

\*Moore, T. (1991). *Cry of the damaged man: A personal journey of recovery*. Sydney, Australia: PanMacmillan. This is the account by a physician of an automobile wreck which left him with many serious injuries, and of his subsequent long stay in hospital and eventual rehabilitation. He had to put up with only a few incidents of bad treatment in hospital, probably because his role as a physician made him a valued patient to staff. However, even he experienced the loss of dignity, deindividualization and lack of autonomy that so often go with being a hospital patient. Unfortunately, while the author explains that this time of suffering brought him to confront important issues in life, he is also very particularistic in tone. For instance, he details (p. 89) all the ways in which he thinks his own suffering differs from that of other people who are injured in traffic accidents.

He cites (p. 129) one mother of a brain-damaged son as saying “lost head, lost human,” which certainly casts brain-damaged people into the no-longer-human role.

### **Roles—Both Valued & Devalued—& Their Effects**

We will begin this section with a number of items related to sport, as a tribute to the recently completed Olympics and Paralympics games, and then continue with other roles-related items.

\*Oscar Pistorius, the South African runner who had both lower legs amputated and uses metal spring blades (called “cheetahs”) on which to run, won his appeal to be able to compete in the “ordinary” Olympics as well as in the Paralympics. At first, he was not permitted to compete in the “ordinary” Olympics because it was believed his running blades gave him an advantage over runners who had “only” their own natural legs to run on (*Time*, 30 April 2012, p. 161). However, the ruling allowing him to compete raises interesting questions of the conservatism corollary of SRV, and just what does “bending over backwards to compensate for disadvantage” mean? How far should it be taken? For instance, if Pistorius’ running blades do make him faster than runners on legs, ought he to have to start later or further back on the course, rather than at the starting gun or the starting line? In any case, he has certainly achieved the role of professional athlete, and Olympic-level runner.

The first athlete who applied to compete (in 2010) in both the Olympics and Paralympics was the Canadian Brian McKeever, a cross-country skier who is legally blind.

\*Sarah Robles is a woman who is 5 feet 10 inches tall (about 180 centimeters) and weighs 275 pounds; she would be considered obese, and very likely cast in devalued roles as a result. However, she is an Olympic-level weight-lifter, one of the world’s strongest women (*Time*, 11 June 2012,

pp. 62-63). On the one hand, having and/or developing physical competencies can gain access to certain valued roles, and Olympic athlete is certainly a valued role. It was only in high school that she was invited to join the track team and learn to throw the discus, which led to an athletic scholarship to university. On the other hand, for much of the time, the Olympic athlete role does not have great visibility, especially if it is not in one of the Olympic glamour sports such as skiing, swimming or gymnastics, and the benefits of this valued role may not be easy to translate into every situation. For instance, she says that when she walks down the street, she knows passersby see her only as fat, lazy and gluttonous, and she hates clothes-shopping and therefore tends to dress in loose-fitting men’s clothes. (On this very same issue, see also the item in the June 2012 *News & Reviews* column, pp. 66-67, on the painter, film maker and professor in a wheelchair.)

\*In connection with the Olympic games, numerous sponsors ran Olympics-related video and print ads. British Petroleum—actually, now called only BP, for image-related reasons—ran ads that featured obviously impaired athletes competing in the Paralympics in positive juxtaposition with presumably unimpaired Olympic athletes. All the athletes were identified as “champions.”

\*An example of the recovery of a valued role is a man who had been a downhill skier until he was paralyzed in an accident. Through an adapted skiing program (once again a competency-targeted program), he was able to resume his downhill skier role “at the same speeds I used to before my accident” (*ARISE News*, Spring 2012). The article was accompanied by numerous pictures of people with severe impairments in ski togs and with skiing equipment, but none showing them actually going down the slopes.

\*Baseball pitcher Jason Grilli started in the minor leagues and has become a relief pitcher for

a major league team. He did not do very well as a starting pitcher—as one sportswriter put it, he was “booed out of the city” after failing to carve out a niche for himself. But as a relief pitcher, he has racked up an impressive record of striking out batters. As Grilli himself put it, “we’re all looking for roles,” and it appears that he has found one (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 2 June 2012, pp. B1, B5). Note that neither the role of “baseball team member” nor even “professional baseball team member” was enough to satisfy Grilli’s role hunger, but that he needed a specific role niche. This could have human service parallels; for instance, the role of “employee” or of “classroom student” may not be sufficient to satisfy the role hunger of an impaired adult or child, but a much more specific role may be needed, such as “secretary to ...,” “assistant to ...,” “section 5 courier,” “math whiz,” “ball-boy for the junior varsity team,” etc.

\*Hughes, C. & McDonald, M.L. (2008). The Special Olympics: Sporting or social event? *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 33(3), 143-145. This article compared the Special Olympics and the Paralympics games, exemplifying many of the dynamics of devalued people devaluing each other, and not wanting to be image-tainted by each other. First, the “worse-off” athletes in the Paralympics would like to kick out the “less disabled” ones, such as those with single amputations. Then they want to be separated from those with “intellectual disabilities,” lest the Paralympics get confused with the Special Olympics, and Paralympics competitors get viewed as stupid.

\*Storey, K. (2008). The more things change, the more they are the same: Continuing concerns with the Special Olympics. *Research & Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 33(3), 134-142. This article critiques the Special Olympics program from multiple perspectives, including the age-degrading imagery that so commonly suffuses it. It also cites research that people’s attitudes

toward Special Olympics participants actually worsened as a result of contact with them. Some of the critiques are ideological in nature, such as that the handicapped people themselves are not in charge of Special Olympics, and that the workers at it are not impaired themselves; if these critiques were satisfied, that could degrade even further the images associated with Special Olympics, and would certainly raise questions about how competently the events would be run. (See the item earlier in this column about some of the insanities associated with “self-determination.”) It is therefore particularly ironic that the Special Olympics is said to have “lack of empirically verifiable lifestyle outcomes.”

Actually, the stated mission of the Special Olympics since 1968 had been a very good one: “To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community” (*Special Olympics* [2009]. Special Olympics, the global movement fact sheet. Retrieved June 5, 2009, from the Internet). If only someone paid attention to this mission, and if only the actual Special Olympics activities lived up to this aspiration! However, this is an instance of the latent functions of a system dominating over the manifest ones.

\* A seven-year old girl born with no hands and only vestigial arms won a penmanship award, along with \$1,000, from a publisher of textbooks on reading and language. While this is not a life-defining role, and may have little long-term impact on her life, it does attest to the competency she had attained despite her impairment; one might have thought that especially these days, people would simply have had her “write” via computer, rather than have her learn actual

penmanship. Unfortunately, the award is named for another youngster without hands or lower arms who entered the company's annual penmanship contest the previous year, and whose work prompted judges to create "a new category for students with disabilities" (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 21 April 2012, p. A-11). Knowing what we do of these things, this makes us wonder if a lower standard is set for the category for "students with disabilities" than is set for unimpaired contestants.

\*One offshoot of the Occupy Wall Street movement of 2011 is that empty houses have been taken over by community groups and individuals, who have set up individuals and even entire families in these houses, some of them being empty because of the mortgage and foreclosure crisis that left many owners unable to make their mortgage payments. This development is called Occupy Our Homes, and an article on it (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 25 March 2012, p. H4) illustrates the importance of role interpretation in how a party and its actions will be perceived. The people who thusly move into properties that are not their own, and for which they are not paying, are de facto squatters, and they are usually poor—but they and the groups that back them use the terms "tenants without a lease" or "live-ins." Some such squatters refer to their abodes as "my house," even though the property is owned by someone else who may have vacated it only due to being in financial trouble and unable to make payments. Sometimes the owners have had to move to much smaller and humbler quarters while continuing to make payments on a property that is now occupied by someone who is paying nothing for it, and who sometimes even destroys the property.

On the one hand, this strategy may work towards the creation of the valued role of tenant, or even home-owner, for such squatters (numerous variables determine if, how and when such squatters can be evicted), which may enable them to have more of the good things of life. On the other hand, this is a seizure of a role that is done at

the expense not of the banks and big money firms that masterminded the crisis, but at the expense of specific individual home-owners who got overtaken by these developments, and they for sure are not likely to develop better attitudes towards such squatters, live-ins, and/or tenants-without-a-lease who take their properties from them.

\*A project named the 100,000 Homes Campaign aims to get, by the year 2014, permanent homes for the approximately 110,000 or so chronically homeless people in the US. A tall order, to say the least. There are actually over 600,000 homeless people in the US, but some are only homeless for short periods of time. The approach taken by this campaign is known as "housing first," meaning that the first order of business is to get a person a place to live, and only once that is accomplished to address their mental problems, drug and alcohol addictions, etc. Reportedly, 85% of people placed by this program into permanent residences stay there, and do not return to the homeless street life. From an SRV perspective, one could say that the program is attempting to get these people out of the roles of "homeless street person," "beggar" or "panhandler," "drug addict," etc., and into the role of at least tenant and possibly even homeowner. However, one project of this campaign was the renovation of a 146-unit building in New York City to provide short-term housing. In other words, this setting congregates together large numbers of people with many problems, and is also a temporary measure (short-term), rather than providing or obtaining longer-term residences (*Smithsonian*, June 2012). This does not bode well for the long-term success of the campaign.

\*The cover story of the 7 May 2012 issue of *Newsweek* was devoted to the challenge to families of caring for a child with impairments. The articles showed great sympathy for the plight of parents of such children, especially when they are single parents as so many today are. However, they

also showed that some devalued roles are still alive and well. For instance, the editor-in-chief's introductory column to the issue was headlined "The Forever Child" (p. 6), even though a young man pictured for one of the articles looked very typical for his age, and another little girl was shown—and reported—as achieving in school. Another brief article by a father of a brain-damaged son had the subtitle, "The author comes to terms with a son who can never grow up" (p. 43). This article was excerpted from the book *Father's Day: A journey into the mind and heart of my extraordinary son* (Bissinger, 2012; Houghton Mifflin Harcourt).

The editor-in-chief also said that she has an adult son who "has Asperger's" and attended a private school for the handicapped in the northeast. Now he is being served by an agency in New York City that the author commended for "badgering" employers to hire such persons. "Badgering" is not an adaptive strategy for improving attitudes.

\*The subhuman roles are also still alive and well. In 2010, a Tennessee state representative said that pregnant illegal immigrants "go out there like rats and multiply," and in 2011 a Kansas state representative compared illegal immigrants to feral hogs (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 2 June 2012). Of course, illegal immigrants are among the currently very devalued classes in at least certain sectors of US society.

\*The Sunday *New York Times* of 26 February 2012 carried a lengthy story about the rise in numbers of very debilitated older prisoners in state prison systems, and the difficulty of caring for them in such settings (see also the chapter on "SRV and Detentive Settings," in Wolfenberger's (2012) book *Advanced Issues in SRV Theory*, mentioned elsewhere in this and the previous issue of the *Journal*). Out of desperation, the state of California has assigned other inmates, including some in prison for serious crimes of violence, to be their caretakers, helping them even with the most intimate bodily

tasks. While this is an obvious example of "deviant staff juxtaposition"—i.e., having devalued people serve upon other devalued people—it nonetheless has given the caretaking prisoners a chance at a role other than that of "lifer," and in this instance a role that is valued at least within the prison. The article had the very unfortunate and deviancy-imaging headline "Life, With Dementia: Using Killers to Care for Other Killers," thus giving major emphasis to the most devalued roles of all the involved parties. But it noted how many of the caretakers found their new role very satisfying, and that it had had a gentling effect on many of them.

\*In Advanced SRV teaching, we note that people can get locked into social roles, positive ones as well as negative ones, and being cast in a role that one does not want can cause all sorts of intra- and inter-personal troubles. One commentator (*New York Times*, March 11, 2012) noted that fans do this to actors they see on TV series. Once the series ends, or if for other reasons the actors leave the program and go on to other roles in film or another TV series, this can be disconcerting to their fans who still see them in the role persona they played earlier. Of course, actors have long complained that fans may confuse them with the roles they play. Cary Grant once famously said, "I wish I were Cary Grant," meaning the role image he had from his films.

\*Here is someone who understands the power of social roles, and how people can get locked into them: John Hinckley—the man who attempted to assassinate Ronald Reagan in 1981, and who has been incarcerated in a mental hospital outside Washington, DC, ever since—said he would like to be known as something other than a would-be assassin (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 26 February 2012, p. A6). As SRV teaches, some roles can be life-defining, both for better and for worse, and would-be assassin of a sitting president is certainly one of them.

### Miscellaneous “Current Events” Items

\*Whatever else the shooting of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman in March 2012 illustrates, the case shows the power of imagery, and of first impressions. The youth who was killed was 17 years old, 6 feet tall, and approximately 140 pounds—but the photo of him that was in all the news stories immediately after the shooting had been taken years earlier, and showed a smiling, round-cheeked boy in a T-shirt. At the same time, the photo of the shooter that accompanied all the news stories was also from some years ago, and showed him overweight, unshaven, with “an imposing stare,” and in the orange jumpsuit that is the uniform of prisoners in US jails. It had been taken after he was arrested on a charge that was later dropped. Neither picture represented how they looked at the time of the shooting, but obviously one picture showed its subject in a positive light, and the other showed its subject in a negative light. One professor of visual judgment (who knew there was such a role?) says this is exactly the kind of visual interpretation that leads to a “rush to judgment” (*Syracuse Post-Standard*, 31 March 2012, p. A11).

\*One can call it almost scandalous (and certainly a historical anachronism) to state, as *Newsweek* did (10 Nov. 2008, p. 40), that Obama’s win in the 2008 election was part of the process of “inclusion” that began with President Andrew Jackson in the 1840s.

### A Few Items About the Elderly

\*A man writing about the deaths of his elderly parents said that even a “first rate” nursing home “with a wonderful staff” was nonetheless “a death factory. People went in and didn’t come out” (Klein, in *Time*, 11 June 2012, p. 22). This illustrates both the dead/dying roles, and possibly the practice of many forms of at least indirect death-making in even “good” nursing homes.

\*The Jewish philosopher and writer Abraham Heschel noted that “At every home for the aged

there is a director of recreation in charge of physical activities; there ought to be also a director of learning in charge of intellectual activities ... What the nation needs is senior universities ... for the advanced in years where wise men should teach the potentially wise ...” (p. 64, in Heschel, A.J. [1992]. *I asked for wonder: A spiritual anthology*. (S.H. Dresner, Ed.) New York: Crossroad). This illustrates both high expectations even for those aged persons confined to nursing homes, as well as the possibility of continued teaching and learning roles for the very old.

\*Some rather avant-garde designers in Italy (Lanzavecchia+Wai) have been making “wheeled canes for the elderly, designed so that they double as stylish baskets, tea trays, and iPad cradles. The goal, Wai says, is ‘to reconcile the gap between the medical and the domestic’ ” (*Newsweek*, 18 June 2012, p. 54). In SRV terms, they are trying to reduce or eliminate much medical imagery by replacing or at least combining it with more positive imagery. ☺

---

SUSAN THOMAS is the Training Coordinator for the Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency, Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY (US). She is the co-author of *PASSING*.

---

#### THE CITATION FOR THIS COLUMN IS

Thomas, S. (2012). Social Role Valorization news & reviews. *The SRV Journal*, 7(2), 57–70.

# The SRV JOURNAL

ISSN 1932 - 6963

www.srvip.org

*A journal for those interested in applying Social Role Valorization  
with the goal of making positive change for societally devalued people*

\* **The purposes of publishing this journal include:** 1) disseminating information about SRV; 2) informing readers of the relevance of SRV in addressing devaluation in society & in human services; 3) fostering, extending & deepening dialogue about & understanding of SRV; & 4) encouraging the application of SRV as well as SRV-related research.

\* **Two year subscription rates in USD ~ two issues per year:**

|                |                      | NORTH AMERICA | INTERNATIONAL |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| FAMILY/STUDENT |                      |               |               |
|                | PRINT                | 65            | 85            |
|                | PDF                  | 50            | 50            |
| INDIVIDUAL     |                      |               |               |
|                | PRINT                | 85            | 105           |
|                | PDF                  | 65            | 65            |
|                | PRINT & PDF          | 105           | 125           |
| ORGANIZATION   |                      |               |               |
|                | PRINT                | 150           | 170           |
|                | PDF                  | 125           | 125           |
|                | PRINT & PDF          | 180           | 200           |
| LIBRARY        |                      |               |               |
|                | PRINT & PDF          | 275           | 295           |
|                | & BACK ISSUES IN PDF | 400           | 420           |

\* **To subscribe online, with a credit card, please access:**

[http://www.srvip.org/journal\\_pay\\_online\\_choose.php](http://www.srvip.org/journal_pay_online_choose.php)

\* **To pay by check, please send your name, street address, phone number & email address, plus a check or money order in USD made payable to *The SRV Journal*, to:**

The SRV Journal, Subscription Manager  
74 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609 USA

\* **For more information, please contact:**

Marc Tumeinski, Editor  
Phone: 508.752.3670 ~ journal@srvip.org ~ <http://www.srvip.org>