OSOT Visiting Scholar Presentation with Dr. Patrice L. (Tamar) Weiss

The Department of OS&OT, with the support of the Peter Wall Institute’s International Visiting Scholar Program, is delighted to host Dr. Patrice L. (Tamar) Weiss, PhD, OT (Dept. of Occupational Therapy, Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Sciences, University of Haifa, Israel), who will be giving a series of scholarly presentations to targeted audiences. The third of the series is:

“Coping with Conflict: Technologies for Targeting Social Action and Rehabilitation Research”

Date: Tuesday, November 17th
Location: UBC Hospital, Detwiller Pavilion, Room 1C13 (Videoconferencing to VGH, DHCC 2263)
Time: 4:00 – 5:30 pm

This talk is open to anyone who has an interest in the use of technologies to aid in social action and rehabilitation research. Time will be set aside for discussion and questions.

Please RSVP to cynthia.hsieh@ubc.ca if you would like to attend.

Abstract: For the past several years, we have engaged in studying diverse populations in complex functional environments that aim to create “Living Labs” to promote social inclusion and social participation. As part of our work in the Israel Center for Research Excellence: Learning in a NetwOrKed Society (LINKS), we are now expanding the concept to physical and virtual classrooms that support “transparent” monitoring of designed and ambient learning. We identify the unique ways in which accessible technologies can be
customized and improved to meet a wide variety of social needs and clinical populations. That is, technology’s affordances are identified and interpreted in terms of specific social or clinical objectives. This work is built on our previous studies in which collaborative technologies (virtual environments and collocated table-top surfaces) are used to implement a novel co-located paradigm. Conflict escalation and de-escalation between Israeli-Jewish and Palestinian-Arab youth were achieved wherein face-to-face, tangible individual contributions were combined with “enforced” joint actions. The results of this combined qualitative and quantitative study showed significant shifts to a more positive attitude toward a peer from an adversarial culture due to enhanced perspectives of the conflict. Increased awareness appears to enable participants to deal with a dyadic cycle of conflict related actions and reactions. We used the same technology, but with an entirely different paradigm, to enhance social competence training strategies for adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Due to their impaired social interaction skills, these individuals suffer from peer isolation and bullying both of which lead to academic and social problems in later life. We have explored how an otherwise negative trait (person’s focus on a computer screen at the expense of social interactions) may be leveraged into a highly positive learning setting (in order to use the application, the user has to do it collaboratively with a peer). More recently, we have demonstrated that video modeling and video self-modeling technologies can be used for children and adolescents with ASD to deal more adaptively with social conflicts and job preparation skills.

**Biography:** Prof. Patrice L. (Tamar) Weiss, PhD, OT, directs the Laboratory for Innovations in Rehabilitation Technology (LIRT) in the Dept. of Occupational Therapy at the University of Haifa (Haifa, Israel) where she and her team develop and evaluate novel virtual environments, haptic interfaces, co-located and online technologies to explore the effect of individual and collaborative rehabilitation. Rehabilitation and special education populations of interest include stroke, spinal cord injury, stroke, cerebral palsy, developmental coordination disorder, autism and head trauma. She is funded by the EU and ISF and is a member of the Gertner tele-motion-rehabilitation project and of the newly formed Israeli Science Foundation ICORE – Learning in a NetworKed Society.