

Editorial

Pedagogical inquiry in social work education and practice

Helen Hickson

Over the past year, I have worked as the Associate Editor alongside the amazing Mim Fox. It's been an incredible experience to learn about the process of journal article review, providing feedback to authors and reviewers and to understand what is needed to draw together an issue of the *Advances* journal. We know that times are changing and, although we have received a steady stream of excellent submissions, it is harder than ever to find reviewers. I would like to thank the dedicated community of journal reviewers who give their time, knowledge, and skills to help to improve our writing and the readability of each issue. In particular, I would like to thank the 24 article reviewers who have contributed to this issue. Thank you.

This general issue demonstrates a wide variety of different aspects of social work education and practice, including field education, First Nations representation in the child protection system and an innovative bereavement program in the hospital environment. We include articles with local, national, and trans-Tasman connections and Pearson's article about children's developmental diagnosis adds an international element from the Canadian province of British Columbia.

The Editor's Choice article for this issue is by **Ilsa Evans** from Chisholm Institute in Melbourne. Her paper is about the professionalisation of the family violence (FV) workforce and the requirements for workers to hold minimum education standards, which generally include university qualifications. Many FV victim survivors are motivated to join the FV workforce, often driven to make changes to the system or to help others. The implication for social work and welfare educators is how to incorporate lived experience and mental health strategies to better support students to undertake formal qualifications.

In this issue, there are five research articles that discuss the pedagogical influences on social work and welfare education, both in the classroom and in field education. **Martin et al.** (Federation University) and **Sanders et al.** (La Trobe University) explore the changing nature of social work field education, including the various roles and responsibilities for the placement supervision team and the increasing challenges of quality social work field education in non-traditional placement settings.

Martin et al. explore the crisis in social work field education due to placement shortages and competition from other universities or other disciplines for placements in human service organisations. Their study looks at social work field education roles and the contextual issues from the perspective of Australian social work field education providers.

The findings identify the significant reliance on sessional staff for external social work supervision and field education liaison roles and highlight the value that their practice knowledge and experience bring to the role.

Sanders et al. collected data from metropolitan and regional social workers in Victoria to understand the experiences of field education during the COVID 19 pandemic in late 2020. This article chronicles the challenges for social work students and supervisors during the first year of the COVID pandemic in Victoria, including a comparison of metropolitan and regional experiences.

Maddison et al. from the University of South Australia report on their research about the experiences and perspectives of social work and human service advocates in their efforts to raise the age of criminal responsibility. Participants in this study speak about the challenges of using different types of advocacy strategies and the challenges of working with complex political structures and systems. This article highlights the disparity between Australian states and territories in the age of criminal responsibility and the significant over-representation of First Nations children and young people in the youth justice systems.

Kathy Carpenter and **Gai Harrison** report on their pilot of a follow-up bereavement service for family members of patients who died suddenly or unexpectedly in the Emergency and Trauma Centre (ETC) at The Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. The authors report the findings from this evaluation and argue that social workers need to explore the complex family arrangements and health needs before initiating contact with bereaved family members.

Tammy Pearson, from the School of Social Work at the University of Northern British Columbia, describes the findings from her study about the factors that influence how parents use recommendations from child development diagnosis assessments. In this study, Pearson uses qualitative interviews with parents to understand how they use this information and their ideas about what is needed to implement the recommendations that were outlined in the report. While families report that it was useful to finally understand the clinical diagnosis, there needs to be more support to understand how to use the recommendations to improve outcomes for their children.

Teddy Nagaddya and **Brian Stout** from the School of Social Sciences at Western Sydney University provide a practice reflection about the importance of pedagogical partnerships with community organisations to support social work field education placements. In this article, they describe their experience of the development of a place-based community partnership, including the systematic process of building the relationship between the university and the community organisation and identifying the key learnings such as student engagement, meaningful learning activities and the development of transferable skills.

In this issue, we include two teaching notes, which provide deeper insight into the context of social work practice.

Jacynta Krakouer presents a thought-provoking analysis of Indigenous overrepresentation and systemic racism in the child protection and out-of-home-care systems in Australia. The article highlights the historical and current context of child welfare practices and demonstrates the systemic racism that drives overrepresentation of Indigenous children. Krakouer asks social workers and policy makers to examine their ethnocentrism and complicity in resisting change and calls for radical transformation and Indigenous ownership of solutions to disrupt the systems and structures that do not serve to improve the lives of Indigenous children.

Lisa Gant and **Letitia Meadows** describe the development of animal-inclusive content into the curriculum for social work students in Aotearoa New Zealand. This article explores the integration of animal-inclusive content into the social work program at Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT) and notes that animal-inclusive social work practice is gaining traction and social work educators need to consider how to embed content into curriculum and field education.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Advances* and appreciate the diversity of social work voices that are represented. There are many challenges for us in the future of social work and welfare education and we will need to speak loudly and coherently if we are to be heard amongst the crowd. We will need to be bold, innovative and lead with purpose if we are to establish a sustainable, affordable and pedagogically sound social work and welfare education and practice environment.

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