

Editorial

One of the most enjoyable aspects of attending last years Sixth International Conference on Practice Teaching and Field Education in York was being able to meet colleagues from over twelve different countries. During the conference a meeting was held to explore the possibility of developing an international organisation for practice learning and teaching. The proposed objectives of the organisation are:

1. To disseminate good practice in field education/practice learning on a global basis.
2. To build and maintain an international network of appropriate knowledge and expertise.
3. To create an international community of learning in all aspects of field/practice learning in social work and health.

If you would like to participate in the proposed organisation please contact me, my contact details are on page 2 of this issue.

The Seventh Conference will take place from Monday 7th to Wednesday 9th July 2008, again in York. The theme will be; Having Faith in Practice Learning: exploring the importance of faith, spirituality and religion in practice learning / field education.

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This issue starts with a creative article by Debbie Amas who has developed the therapeutic technique of Sand Play Therapy with social work students as a learning tool. Her paper describes a process of learning by facilitating a group seminar with BA in Social Work students who undertook a sand tray exercise. The students were able to explore practice issues and enhance the important skills of critical reflection and linking 'taught' theory-to-practice.

Bassima Schbley and Mark Kaufman, both social work educators from the United States contend that social work learning should not be

insulated from the influences of religious beliefs and practices. Their article discusses the results of a small-scale survey of Arab Muslim women living in the USA and offers suggestions on how practice teachers can use their findings (and that of others) to enhance the cultural competence of social work students.

Mike Shapton's paper addresses the difficulties encountered when students are 'failing'. From his personal perspective he argues that on occasions professionals will 'fail to fail' due to the complexity of the issues and tasks involved. He suggests strategies that concentrate on systems and organisational responses rather than solely focussing on those professionals who assess competence to practice.

Human geography and its relevance to the core social work value of social responsibility is the subject of Pat Wilkinson and Gavin Bissell's innovative paper. They argue that since the demise of community social work (in the 1980s) the profession has perhaps ignored the importance of the physical environment and its relationship to effective practice. They also suggest that the student's campus experience can be used to foster social responsibility.

Steve Ambler

**The 7th International Conference
for
Practice Learning and Field Education
in Health and Social Work**

**Having faith in practice learning:
exploring the importance of faith, spirituality
and religion in practice learning
and field education**

**Monday 7th - Wednesday 9th July 2008
St John's University College, York**

This year, the conference will examine the complexities of teaching and learning in increasingly multi-faith communities, while identifying and maintaining our professional values, tasks and boundaries.

The conference will be of interest to people working in practice and education within social work, nursing, counselling, mental health, public health, local and regional government, social care, and community regeneration.

**More details of the programme will be
posted as they become available at:
<http://www.whitingbirch.net/ip005.shtml>.**