

Editorial

Learning and translation

Welcome to the current issue of the *Journal of Practice Teaching and Learning*! It is a great pleasure to bring readers a selection of important papers from around the world, although focusing on practice learning and teaching in the Global North – perhaps an issue attracting papers from the Global South is something to promote in the future and perhaps one of the books reviewed in this issue (Nikku and Hatta) offers perspectives to pursue! However, we have wide-ranging material from Australia, New Zealand, UK, United States and Canada. The papers concern social work and health professionals (mainly occupational therapists and nurses) but they apply equally across the professions.

Ines Zuchowski considers the important growing phenomenon of external and off-site field educators who may be providing aspects of the learning or support process. These educational adjuncts have not been well researched and she offers some fascinating insights into role clarity, hierarchies and the needs of contemporary professionals-in-training.

Moving across the ‘Ditch’ or Tasman Sea to New Zealand, Kathryn Hay, Neil Ballantyne, and Karin Brown add research rigour to the anecdotal evidence that there are not enough social work field placements available for the students attending courses. In a secondary analysis of social work placement data some of the reasons behind these anecdotes were suggested. Those students undertaking placements in government settings, in some places ‘statutory social work’, were likely to have a registered practitioner as a supervisor and one who was attached to the placement site. Most social work field placements, however, were found to be in non-governmental settings in which data quality problems may have had an impact on the statistics. The importance of records and statistics in these areas is shown by their paper; something important to all professions.

Back across the world to the UK, Clare Stone tackles an ‘old-chestnut’, competency assessment, in a new way. She looks at the adoption in English social work of holistic assessment models and asks professional practice educators to re-evaluate the underpinnings of their assessment, to question

and develop more appropriate forms.

And, across the 'Pond' in Canada, Ann Bossers, Shanon Phelan, Elizabeth Anne Kinsella, Karen Jenkins, Karen Ferguson, Taslim Moosa, Susan Schurr, and Sandra Hobson examine a preceptor and student scheme for health professionals that focused on the development of reflective practice as a precursor for effective field placements. The advantages of contemporary e-learning technologies are clear within this programme and permit deeper engagement across vast rural areas, something that would be most useful to explore trans-professionally and trans-culturally.

Moving south, but not across seas or oceans, Trevor G. Gates provides this issue's practice reflection. Using Kolb's learning cycle he integrates student learning with experiential and active community engagement for students. This reflexive and informative paper again allows the findings and thoughts to be developed and applied in other settings and across other professions.

I have been much impressed by the translational aspects of the papers in this issue. It leads me also to ask the readership if there are any ideas that may for a special guest-edited issue of the journal in the future. If you have ideas please contact myself or any member of the board and we would be pleased to discuss.

Prof Jonathan Parker