



### Editor's Introduction

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Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education is a refereed journal concerned with publishing scholarly and relevant articles on continuing education, professional development, and training in the field of social welfare. The aims of the journal are to advance the science of professional development and continuing social work education, to foster understanding among educators, practitioners, and researchers, and to promote discussion that represents a broad spectrum of interests in the field. The opinions expressed in this journal are solely those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the policy positions of The University of Texas at Austin's School of Social Work or its Center for Social Work Research.

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*Seymour J. Rosenthal, MSSW*

It seemed like the only thing to do. The caller wanted to know if we would consider the task of publishing the *Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, which had become dormant for an extended period of time. There was an immediate attraction to the idea. This was a time of dramatic changes in our social work world. Decades of human service policy which drove practice were on the verge of radical upheaval. The social/political environment which once led to the inevitable progressive public policies of the New Deal and its numerous successors was to be no more. The changes proposed by emerging federal and state legislation were sure to impact the lives of those who are consumers of a vast array of human services, and in ways not fully imagined.

This was, and remains, the environment in which we agreed to take on the journal, with the anticipation that it could become a focal point for the stimulation of creative responses to the changing requirements for working in the new social welfare system. This is the time to call into question the concepts and methods of our profession. Shifting times have made class notes stale, information embarrassingly out-of-date, handouts useless, and even classic methodologies subject to scrutiny. The journal could provide a vehicle for keeping abreast of the changing role of continuing education as the social work profession enters a period of "revolutionary" turmoil, especially as concerns the governmental role in the provision of social services.

We envision this journal as one opportunity to help focus on the needs of those of us who fish in the tank of professional development by providing the opportunity to present scholarly and relevant research, engage in policy discussions which impact our profession, and share promising and effective methods of practice. Our goal is to bring light, and heat if necessary, to the practical, con-

ceptual, and methodological issues which currently underpin our practice. We intend to keep current with changes as they occur, since it is not reasonable to think that the welfare system has been "reformed" in perpetuity. In fact, changes are occurring as policy pronouncements are published. It is equally unreasonable to imagine that the "good old days" will return. They won't, and they really weren't all that good.

The format for the journal will include a "commissioned paper" which will highlight and analyze a specific area of concern, such as welfare reform, housing, health, child welfare, or one of the myriad of social concerns which will impact professional development activities. To the extent feasible, it is our intent to develop each volume with articles that expand upon the commissioned paper. We will pay particular attention to those articles submitted for publication which clearly indicate a collaboration between the professional development scholars and their community-based colleagues. We are eager to enhance this collaboration since we believe that the products will be of a more practical and utilitarian quality. What is clear is that we want this journal to stimulate excitement and interest in both the academic and practice communities.

Not surprisingly, the first of the commissioned articles is on welfare reform. We are particularly pleased that this issue is being addressed by Dean Richard Edwards and Professor Ronald Green, both of whom have long and established credentials as scholars and authors. In the early stages of development, Len Stern, an old friend and colleague helped to point the way to resolving both conceptual and practical start-up challenges facing the journal.

We have changed the name of the journal to indicate that we will be inviting and encouraging articles from international communities, from which there is much to learn and to whom we have insights to offer. Discussions on values, standards,

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