



Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education

From the Editors: Major Challenges for Social Work Continuing Education in the New Century

Journal:	Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education
Article Title:	<i>From the Editors: Major Challenges for Social Work Continuing Education in the New Century</i>
Author(s):	<i>Michael Kelly, Michael Lauderdale, Noel Landuyt</i>
Volume and Issue Number:	<i>Vol. 10 No. 1</i>
Manuscript ID:	<i>111003</i>
Page Number:	<i>3</i>
Year:	<i>2008</i>

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.

Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education is published three times a year (Spring, Summer, and Winter) by the Center for Social Work Research at 1 University Station, D3500 Austin, TX 78712. Journal subscriptions are \$110. Our website at www.profdevjournal.org contains additional information regarding submission of publications and subscriptions.

Copyright © by The University of Texas at Austin's School of Social Work's Center for Social Work Research. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

ISSN: 1097-4911

URL: www.profdevjournal.org

Email: www.profdevjournal.org/contact

From the Editors: Major Challenges for Social Work Continuing Education in the New Century

Michael Lauderdale, PhD, Michael Kelly, PhD and Noel Landuyt, PhD

The Forces of the 20th Century

Social work as a profession came into being during the 20th Century. It was shaped by the great forces of that century that shaped America: Industrialization, Immigration and Urbanization. Now, in the 21st Century, this journal hopes to promote reviews and understanding on how these historical forces continue to shape social work and social work's need for continuous analysis, discovery, and invention along with a need for continuous learning.

Individual Identity

Perhaps the most important change of the 20th century was a growing focus on individual identity and the consequent waning of public concerns. Part of this cultural change was that individuals sought identity and work away from their home communities. Industrialization which demanded labor mobility, psychologically, transformed individuals from holding statuses ascribed to birthrights encouraging instead persons climbing ladders of personal achievement through high school, college and professional and graduate school. The most desirable work was found in careers where individuals were identified by the chosen profession. Even in factory work, which had been the defining social identification of the masses, individual identity came from being the shop steward, (or an employee with long tenure in the position, the 30-year man). Turner's "frontier thesis" (1921) became the ruling thought. Having conquered the American continent by taming the West, Americans could do anything. You were not what you were born to be but what you achieved during life.

Women, some years later like men, also participated in these psychological changes. Beginning in the late 19th Century, the precariousness of frontier life was assuaged by factory technology. The Colt revolver became a protective substitute for women and children and became the new 'village watch'. It made women closer to the physical equal of men and that new status was first reflected on not in those states most like Europe such as Massachusetts or Connecticut but

like Wyoming where women first achieved the voting franchise.

Life at work also had an industrial feature and that was life as an exhaustible entity. As tools wear out at the factory so do workers and retirement became a feature of industrial life as too did unemployment.

Families

Families were no longer entities of economic self-sufficiency and rather became consumers of housing, transportation, entertainment and fast food. In rural America the family was a unit of economic life often with three generations under the roof. Most family members had work responsibilities that made possible shelter, clothing and food for the. By the age of four and for all of life family members contributed to the economic enterprise. However with industrialization and urbanization family size became truncated and age bound. The momentous events of the Second World War accelerated the trends. A generation of young men and women who had postponed family formation entered a changed world following the war. Young families were a couple beginning the process of having children and securing careers. Housing and neighborhoods became more homogenous with some filled with families of thirty-somethings each with 2.3 kids, a mortgage, two cars, one a station wagon, then a van and most recently a SUV. Empty nesters, the grandparents of previous eras moved to retirement communities often hours from their children and multigenerational families only existed at certain holidays during the year.

Immigration

As America industrialized its need for all raw materials was immense. This was true for labor as well for fuel, minerals and timber. America was rich in raw materials except labor. Immigration became an important solution. Immigrants came to communities in America unlike their home villages and rural lands organized around ancient family traditions. Communities in America were becoming organized like its factories to serve a few key processes. One community process was

to provide economical housing near work sites. Another was to permit and encourage consumption. Another was to provide convenient education and education directed toward an immediate vocational purpose. Immigrants like other raw material in this exercise of building a society quickly shed through uniform public schooling the language and folkways of the village in the home country and adopted the language and cultural outlook of America.

Completion of Processes

By late in the 20th Century much of the organizational process of building a culture founded on industrialization, urbanization and consumption was completed. Social work had played key roles in this process. It had assisted in helping families make the transition from rural life with many hands to assist in child rearing to the risks of the single parent home. It had created programs to engage abandoned and sometimes criminally involved youth in socially productive enterprise. It had organized neighborhoods for civil rights, marched in campaigns to extend the vote and citizen prerogatives, provided mental health care and established facilities to provide for isolated individuals in their declining years.

Social work helped accomplish these tasks through volunteer education, then professional schools and for the last 50 years additionally through efforts of continuing education. And social work continuing education like industrialization, urbanization and immigration tended not remain restricted to North America. It is involved in its tasks in Europe, Japan, Korea, Australia, Singapore, Argentina, Brazil and emerging in India and China.

Globalization of 'free markets' and 'democracy' American style have transformed 'developing' countries into 'emerging markets.' And, as many nations newly industrialize they will experience many of the disjunctions and challenges to their social systems. Hopefully, social work and continuing education will be part of the solutions they seek. But, there are new challenges at home.

New Calls For Social Work

However the 21st Century ushers in realities that will change social work, its core tasks and the fundamental processes of industrialization, urbanization and immigration that shaped so much of the 20th Century. Part of the changed realities is the appearance of clear limits on the resources that built the 20th. Water, land and energy are three of the more compelling. For example 50 years ago America was a net exporter of oil, oil which could be pumped from the ground for less than a dollar a barrel. Today America must import 70 percent of its oil while the country uses one fourth of all oil produced. Potable water and arable land are less visibly but as inexorably in short supply.

Such constraints are beginning to cause systemic changes in American society that will create needs for social work in new areas and ways. Rising natural resource costs accompanied by globalization has led to deindustrialization in many parts of the nation including the northeast and the mid west. Western Pennsylvania and Ohio have lost steel making and the tool and die industries of metal working. Detroit has a shrunken base of automobile manufacturing and the big three of auto manufacturers, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler are shells of their former selves of three decades ago. The loss of the industrial base impacts tax supported services such as social services, police and fire protection, health care and education. Creation of new jobs and job retraining is a priority. In many areas the need requires a community organization response to develop new often self-care networks. These are skills familiar to many old hands in social work and ones urgently needed today.

Part of the systemic changes underway in America is the increased cost of fuel for transportation. This will reverse the century old movements of Americans from the farm to the city and then to the suburbs. First the suburbs will flow back into the cities that have viable employment entities. Automotive transportation will shift to rail because of the associated economics. Relocation and development of new housing in the urban

areas will be a social work need. So too will be dealing with the slums and squatter camps that will appear in abandoned suburban developments.

Rural and small towns are being reinvigorated with new and long term demands for agriculture. Booming export markets for food products will bring prosperity to these long neglected regions. Changed economic dynamics means more regional food production for cities and the need for markets and transportation structures from farms and villages near large urban areas in the Northeast and Chicago. This will cause population migrations and demand for social workers in these areas.

Substantial social dislocation and migration will call for community organization efforts for protection and for self care. This will be a complex challenge in the Sunbelt as illegal immigration will continue for another decade. While America will experience substantial economic problems, countries of Central America because of the relatively narrow and agricultural base of their economies will suffer continuing poverty causing immigration.

Conclusion

Social Work has been a child of the unique American experience. America was settled by persons freed by the Reformation and Protestantism as the ancient social order of European society of the Middle Ages began collapsing in the 18th Century. This collapse increased the power of nationalism, capitalism and intensified individualism. As family and community weakened social work arose to provide by local and state-supported efforts to address the frailties of life. The expansion of social work education and services appears to have crested in the late 20th Century. Social work and social work continuing education is beginning to shift from service expansion to service redefinition. Calls for educational assistance will appear in new forms of service (privatization, community organization), dealing with social conflict in communities experiencing high levels of migration and immigration, self-help, job development.

With growing focus on the individual and the

market economy, there has been a loss of the sense of public purpose and public responsibility. Much of America's infrastructure is in need of repair. In successive Volumes the editors will continue to address what appear to be important and often radical changes in social work and social work continuing education.

Volume 11 Number 1

This edition leads with an article by Eric Glass examining the keys to university-community partnerships. At the beginning of the 20th Century the University of Chicago led the way for such partnerships and through the efforts of social advocates both neighborhood organizing and an ecological sociology were born. Eric's work is especially timely given the structural changes underway in cities across America. Chris Flaherty, Crystal Collins-Camargo and Elizabeth Lee conclude the series of articles for Volume 10 Number 3 providing data on the experienced states that have conducted child welfare privatization programs. They report on forums held with fourteen states and find that the public-private interface is still evolving. Going beyond the simple exercise of writing contracts, these states have found that complex matters of reciprocity and trust must be part of the privatization effort. Susan Mason and Heidi LaPorte provide a qualitative examination of MSW education in a new and focused setting for experienced child welfare workers. Using an organizational theory lens the authors find the organizational culture that students bring to a learning setting along with the setting's culture has powerful significance in explain success and problems that develop. The edition ends with two sets of Notes From the Field, one (Jarolmen) describing a learning experience in the Netherlands and the second, (Richardson) a report of a collaboration between an undergraduate program and a state agency needing training for a designated project.

References

Turner, Frederick Jackson, 1921, "The Frontier in American History", New York: Henry Holt and Company.