



### From the Editor's Desk

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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 and Behavioral Research.

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## From the Editors

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This volume of the Journal provides a wide variety of important contributions that are illustrative of the Journal's mission and scope. Social work continuing education is often touted as a very important part of the individual social worker's professional career. The state authorities licensing social work practice along with the National Association of Social Workers have placed great emphasis on measuring clinical knowledge and practice competency. This is not to say that other areas of social work have been ignored; however, the vast majority of NASW members are clinical social workers. The emphasis on consumer protection via insuring that social workers are ethical, informed, and competent is valuable. The additional emphasis on continuing professional education to maintain knowledge and skills is also valuable. However, social workers practice in a social context including economic factors, a context that shapes practice.

The Journal has taken a large view of what social work continuing education is about and what it should be about. Thus, each volume deals with what is being done in CE, the value and evaluation of programs for professional advancement or program enhancement, new opportunities, and related topics such as technology mediated programs and reaching distance audiences. The volumes present research on needs, methods, and outcomes. The Journal also addresses the larger issues of emerging or extant individual, group, community, U.S., or world events that CE professionals must think about and prepare for. The human and social needs emerging along the US-Mexico border are an example. Volume 12 No. 2 and 3 were recently devoted to understanding what is happening in Mexico and along its U.S. border with a consideration of the implications for many communities in the U.S. We must also continue to be aware of the related social changes, such as the swirling political debate on immigration from Mexico or Mexican concerns that the American appetite for illegal drugs fuels more such drug use in Mexico as well as providing the funds and weapons that threaten the Mexi-

can state itself. The U.S. military role on the larger world stage means that women and men returning home from tours of duty in war zones where the battle lines are unclear will be dealing with adjustment issues. This international engagement will bring adjustment issues as large as this country faced after World War II or the Vietnam War, perhaps even larger since this current engagement is the longest war in the nation's history. At home, the "Great Recession" is changing individuals' employment conditions and prospects, and it affects business growth. Job loss and business downturns lower tax revenues, forcing states immediately and dramatically to cut back spending on public needs. Social services make easy targets for the politics of expense reduction and budget balancing. Many economists see little business opportunity in the near future while others predict an increasingly severe downturn. These social events require examination as the appended human consequences will influence what the social work practitioner faces in a solo practice or in a large agency environment. What will be CE's response? The Journal welcomes contributions that examine our role in connection with these and other social changes.

The editors are proud to announce the Journal's new web site. For some years, we have maintained a web presence making the Journal's table of contents available. Now to make the Journal easier to access, the managing editor and staff have created a web site which contains the contents of the Journal since its founding at SUNY Albany, through Temple University's efforts, and up to its current home at the University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Organizational Excellence. Full text versions of most of the earlier articles are available. Full text versions of more recent contents are available to current subscribers along with some articles, such as the Mexico-US articles, which were supported by funding from the Greater Austin Crime Commission. Please visit the site at [www.profdevjournal.org](http://www.profdevjournal.org)

The current volume (Volume 13 No. 2) contains several important articles and a book review

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that illustrate the Journal's mission. First, Held, Alawiyah, & Streeter examine the perceptions of service quality among providers in public human service agencies in Texas. Based on a large survey (>1800 participants), the authors present regression models testing the relationship of personal and organizational variables to service quality. Collins-Camargo, Sullivan, & Murphy study the use of focus groups, and survey to evaluate "360 degree" individualized feedback to supervisors and managers to promote practice change and systematic development of a learning organization environment in a state child welfare agency. Dlugosz & Koons present the results of a Meta analysis of the relevant literature concerning the efficacy of one-day training. Focusing their analysis on mental health, they present conclusions from the literature and point to future research directions. Mulder presents information from a qualitative study of the care-giving roles of grandmothers residing with adolescent children who are themselves parents.

This volume contains the first of what we hope will be a continuing series of introspective surveys. Cochran and Landuyt present the results of a survey concerned with "what is going on" in professional continuing education programs conducted by institutions of higher education. In future volumes we will present introspection of CE from professional groups and programs such as title IV-E programs. The volume ends with a review of Julia Wright's book, "Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security in an Era of Oil Scarcity."

*From: Columbia, Missouri, and Austin, Texas*