

## EDITORIAL

**Margaret E. Adamek**

As we launch this issue of *Advances in Social Work* with a relatively new editorial staff, it is with growing appreciation and respect for the tremendous work that goes into producing a quality social work journal. As I became immersed in the process of assigning manuscripts to reviewers, sending reviews to authors, reviewing revised manuscripts, and making publication decisions, I gained insight into both the HUGE job it is to be an editor as well as to the special privilege it is to have a hand in nurturing the communication of scholarly knowledge and facilitating its dissemination. I would also like to offer a heartfelt thanks to **Dr. Bill Barton** for his years of service as the Editor of *Advances in Social Work*. He did a tremendous job single-handedly and has continued to offer support behind the scenes. His steadfast commitment to excellence continues to guide and inspire us.

The fifteen papers in this issue present innovations in the areas of teaching (5), practice (4), policy (2), programming (3), and publishing (1). Our hope is that you find the articles in this issue to be transformative as well as informative, relevant, and important to the social work enterprise.

### *TEACHING INNOVATIONS:*

**Keefe, Brownstein-Evans, Lane, Carter, and Polmanteer** highlight the opportunity for social work educators to capitalize on provisions of the *Affordable Care Act* regarding postpartum depression to prepare social work students to proactively and effectively address the needs of new mothers, one-fourth of whom struggle with postpartum depression, too often without the help they need.

**Zubaroglu and Popescu** propose an alternative teaching model for international interdisciplinary education grounded in globalization theory, intersectionality, the capabilities approach, and experiential learning theory. They argue that an interdisciplinary approach to international development work is needed for social workers to address increasingly complex global social issues. Drawing on Bandura's self-efficacy theory, they assessed the impact of an immersion course in Peru on their students' self-rated self-efficacy.

Also applying Bandura's theory, **Deck, Platt, and McCord** examined the self-efficacy of 88 students who took an MSW research course that included a service learning component. Their analysis indicated that incorporating service learning into a research course enhances students' self-efficacy in relation to carrying out research tasks, which hopefully increases their likelihood of integrating evaluation into their future practice.

**McCleod** describes an innovative approach to teaching MSW students about clinical decision-making that interweaves verbal, visual, and spatial processing activities. The multimodal learning approach included journaling about client interactions and selecting

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a work of art during a museum tour that represented the themes that students identified in their journals. McCleod asserts that a multimodal approach is a useful and creative way to engage students and to enhance their sensitivity to client perspectives.

Expanding the view of learning as a lifelong endeavor, **Jivanjee, Pendell, Nissen, and Goodluck** share the perspectives of BSW and MSW students, social work practitioners, and field instructors about their motivations and benefits of pursuing lifelong learning as well as the factors that hinder such opportunities. Social work faculty members and field instructors are called upon to model lifelong learning to social work students.

#### *PRACTICE INNOVATIONS:*

Based on a survey of 192 school social workers in Illinois, **Avant and Lindsey** examine the emerging leadership roles of school social workers as they coordinate efforts to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). RTI/MTSS requires substantive and multifaceted system changes which may not be easily accepted by schools. Their respondents revealed not only the challenges of implementing systems changes, but the opportunity for school social workers to become change leaders and to more closely align social and emotional interventions with students' academic achievement.

In an effort to support a healthier sustainable social work workforce, **Bloomquist, Wood, Freidmeyer-Trainor, and Kim** conducted a national survey of MSW practitioners to examine the impact of self-care practices and perceptions on their professional quality of life. Various dimensions of self-care were analyzed in relation to different components of professional quality of life. Despite valuing self-care in principle, few practitioners engaged in self-care practices on a regular basis. Bloomquist and colleagues call for social workers to embrace self-care practices as a necessary tool to enhance professional quality of life.

In light of the high rates of depression and suicide among military personnel, **Hendricks Thomas and Taylor** propose a prevention approach involving mindfulness training that takes into account both the warrior culture among service personnel and the significance of peer interactions. Hendricks Thomas and Taylor suggest that mental health problems can be minimized by offering mindfulness-based programming to military personnel in a pre-deployment training environment rather than waiting for mental distress to develop into serious mental health challenges post-deployment. Such an approach may also overcome the resistance to traditional interventions that require service personnel to acknowledge their mental health problems and to initiate treatment.

Recognizing the success of the strengths-based approach to working with individuals with serious mental illness, **Hu, Leung, Ng, Yu, Lau, and Cheung** evaluated an intervention program that applied the strengths-based model with 45 individuals in Hong Kong. Using Skype, 23 social workers in Hong Kong received over 30 hours of training in strengths-based case management (SCM) and supervision from experienced SCM practitioners from the University of Kansas. Based on pre- and post-test ratings, some participants progressed from stages of being overwhelmed or struggling with disability to

stages of living with or beyond disability. Strengths-based practice helped participants develop a transformed self which sees hope and possibility despite the vulnerabilities caused by their illness.

*POLICY INNOVATIONS:*

**An, Yoo, and Nackerud** take a unique approach to policy analysis, applying the concepts and principles of game theory to analyze the use of good cause waivers by TANF workers. Good cause waivers are meant to assist TANF recipients who are victims of domestic violence by waiving some of the mandates for continuing benefits. The analysis illuminates the challenges with implementing universal screening of TANF recipients for domestic violence, and provides a model for analysis of other social welfare policies.

**Pitzer and Streeter** propose the use of a conceptual tool based on the Community Capitals Framework. The tool involves identifying assets in a particular community, mapping them out in diagram form, and determining how those assets can be leveraged to resolve community problems or to bring about community change. Pitzer and Streeter illustrate the mapping community capitals approach using two case examples—one involving work with a non-profit organization providing services to refugee populations and an international example involving community development in rural India.

*PROGRAMMATIC INNOVATIONS:*

As universities put more emphasis on civic engagement, more social justice-oriented majors and minors, often apart from social work, are being offered. **Richards-Schuster, Ruffolo, Nicoll, Distelrath, Mishkin, and Gulura** investigated the experiences of 92 new graduates of a social justice minor offered by a school of social work to better understand their transitions into social justice work. They describe the graduates' perspectives of the various challenges they face doing social justice work in the "real world," with implications for schools of social work and other program developers as well as for non-profit organizations that employ such graduates.

Acknowledging that "fit to the profession" and academic preparation are often difficult to judge in the admissions process, **Vliek, Fogarty, and Wertkin** examined the relationship between the criteria used in an admissions model of a medium-sized MSW program and student success in the program. Based on a sample of 522 accepted applicants over four academic years, Vliek and her colleagues found that undergraduate GPA was a strong predictor of success in the MSW program but the various fit to the profession criteria were not reliable predictors. The authors endorse the adoption of evidence-based admissions models that minimize arbitrary decision-making and uphold the principles of the profession.

In recognition of the evolving changes in the health care system, **Zipperstein, Ruth, Clement, Marshall, Wachman, and Valasquez** surveyed 41 administrators of MSW/MPH programs with the goal of better understanding the nature of dual-degree programs and their graduates. Interest in MSW/MPH programs is high and new programs

are under development. Findings suggest that graduates seem to be well- prepared for leadership and interdisciplinary practice in the new healthcare environment.

*PUBLISHING INNOVATIONS:*

**Woehle** conducted an intricate social network analysis to examine social work author networks and their connection to citations of published social work articles. His study illuminates the outcomes of aligning with co-authors to produce scholarly work. Drawing from complexity theory and similar analyses in other disciplines, Woehle demonstrates the potential value of co-author networks in contributing to the social work knowledge base.

With this issue, *Advances in Social Work*, is taking a new step by adding DOIs to each article and to the references of each article for which DOIs are available. The addition of DOIs was made possible with the able assistance of Ted Polley of the Indiana University Library. Thanks, Ted!

Production of the spring 2016 issue is underway with the guidance of Special Issue Editor, Dr. Andrew Quinn of the University of North Dakota and will present a cadre of papers originally presented at the *First Annual Social Work Distance Education Conference* held in Indianapolis in April 2015. We expect the special issue to be launched before the *Second Annual Social Work Distance Education Conference* to be held in April 2016.