



Journal:	Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education
Article Title:	<i>Introduction by our Special Editors</i>
Author(s):	<i>Borah and Dondanville</i>
Volume and Issue Number:	<i>Vol.25 No.1</i>
Manuscript ID:	<i>251003</i>
Page Number:	<i>3</i>
Year:	<i>2022</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 and Behavioral Research.

Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education is published two times a year (Spring and Winter) by the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at 1923 San Jacinto, D3500 Austin, TX 78712. 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 and Behavioral Research. All rights reserved. Printed in the U.S.A.

ISSN: 1097-4911

URL: www.profdevjournal.org

Email: www.profdevjournal.org/contact

Introduction by our Special Editors

Borah and Dondanville

The COVID-19 pandemic changed everything about our lives, including how we work, how we learn, and how we teach and train. We were all forced to rapidly alter our pedagogical approaches, adapting or making wholesale changes to teach in online and virtual formats. We created new spaces for classrooms overnight while learners also adjusted and learned how to learn in new ways. Although virtual education is not new and we have regularly benefited from webinars, online trainings, and telehealth, the pandemic made virtual learning and teaching the only viable, safe approach during 2020-21. This immediate, required shift forced us all to innovate and rise to the challenge, as we know necessity drives invention. Through this work we have learned so much and found new ways that we can apply, when beneficial, to a post-pandemic world. The authors in this two-part special issue have shared their experiences with us so that we do not forget the immense effort and reward that has come from this unique, shared challenge to our work.

The innovations shared in these two double issues are truly admirable. We were so impressed by the number and quality of submissions received to this special issue. We believe these examples will offer us all ongoing insights into how to reach so many more audiences, in thoughtful, inclusive ways. The breadth of the content shared in these issues is equally impressive. We hear from scholars on their efforts conducting trainings in evidence-based practices for mental health care for community providers, adapting tools to train professionals in clinical assessment methods, developing new ways of delivering peer support groups, creating new classroom experiences for our social work students, hosting large conferences online, and ensuring high quality field education for students.

With innovation in a time of crisis, though, not everything goes as planned, and new challenges arise that we must tackle in the moment. Despite our best preparation, technology is not fail-safe, and when things didn't always work we gave

each other the necessary grace required, recognizing that we were all doing our best in really difficult circumstances.

But now, with the pandemic improving, at least here in the United States, and hopefully soon in other parts of the world, we can continue to build upon and use these innovations to improve how we all teach, learn, train, and support each other. Online, virtual formats are very efficient for many and broaden our clients' and students' access and faculty and trainers' reach to learners and individuals who may not have previously been able to participate. Yet, reliance on internet-delivered teaching, training, and support also puts a spotlight on the unequal access present throughout our country for some without reliable Wi-Fi, software, hardware, and know-how. We can do better to ensure we all have access, and this should continue to be a renewed area of our work.

The challenge before us now is ensuring the best offerings for everyone who seeks them, giving serious consideration to equity and quality of access, while also supporting our teachers and trainers in their delivery and workload. We hope that the examples shared here will serve as best practices as we move forward in our efforts to ensure high quality professional development and continuing education.

Elisa V. Borah, MSW, PhD, is a Research Associate Professor at The University of Texas at Austin Steve Hicks School of Social Work, and the Director of the Institute for Military and Veteran Family Wellness Katherine Dondanville, PsyD, ABPP, is an Associate Professor and a Licensed Clinical Psychologist within the Division of Behavioral Medicine and the Department of Psychiatry at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio