



Editor's Introduction

Journal:	Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education
Article Title:	<i>Editor's Introduction</i>
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Volume and Issue Number:	<i>Vol. 5 No. 2</i>
Manuscript ID:	<i>52003</i>
Page Number:	<i>3</i>
Year:	<i>2002</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.

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ISSN: 1097-4911

URL: www.profdevjournal.org

Email: www.profdevjournal.org/contact

Editor's Introduction

Seymour J. Rosenthal, MSSW

Times...they are a changin'. Yes, it's been said before, and will be said again; it has become the theme of continuing education. As you are well aware, the shift in presidential administrations has revived national interest in, and financial support of, increased religious presence in the delivery of social services. The resurgence of faith-based programming and organizing within the field has been both lauded and lamented. Controversy notwithstanding, it is both a fact of life and history that religious organizations have long been active and productive in the field for which social workers have been professionally trained. There has been a long tradition of the religious community's participation in the delivery of social services in this country.

To date, the role of faith-based organizing service delivery funded by the federal government has received little attention in the continuing education literature. In light of the field's ever-evolving climate, practitioners and researchers alike deserve to be informed of both the positive and negative implications of religion's growing presence in the social services profession. More importantly, how do we shape this reemerging approach to encompass the values and ethics of the social work profession? What role can continuing social work education play in enhancing the delivery of faith-based services? How can faith-based organizing and experiences from the frontlines be used to enhance the profession?

It is with these questions and concerns in mind that we introduce the lead article for this issue, "Observations from the field of faith-based organizing: Revitalizing social work skills in policy and social action." Dr. Janice M. Staral's article, brimming with practical insight, is intended to introduce from her work in the field, some of the issues surrounding faith-based organizing. It is our intention to devote additional space in the future to discussing the role and implications of faith-based organizing and delivery of services. In fact, we both challenge and invite the wider community to submit a variety of articles on the topic in anticipation of a future special issue (much like the well-received issue on Fatherhood Initiatives).

In other news, we are pleased to formally announce the induction of a new Editorial Board member, Dr. Jane Middleton from California State University Fresno. Dr. Middleton has a wide range of interests and practice experiences, including multigenerational grief, trauma, culture, ethnicity, social welfare policy, disabilities, and case management. I am sure that she will help us to push the issues of continuing education forward. Additionally, we will highlight the issue of globalization and continuing education in the upcoming issue of the journal. I encourage our international colleagues to contact me with any ideas they may have on this and other topics at srosenth@temple.edu.

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