McCreary's major concern is the lack of a truly New Zealand approach, that US and UK material dominate our curriculum and thus may dominate our minimum standards. Linked to this he questions the ability of tools and strategies of teaching derived from this material to address specific indigenous and settler society tensions in New Zealand. His third concern is with the uneasy transition students experience between course and agency and his fourth the dearth of post-qualification study.

It seems to me that we have made great strides in answering this latter set of challenges. While each of them remains a focus for our programmes there are areas of real progress and achievement, particularly the development of an Aotearoa New Zealand social work body of knowledge, and associated skills and methods which are recognised and extolled nationally and internationally. The growth of postgraduate qualifications is also considerable.

The position is not so encouraging on McCreary's list of achievements however; many of these are no longer secure, are under threat and are linked to McCreary's recognition of both the ongoing uneasy transition between education and workplace and the tension between the demands of the academy and requirements of an applied discipline. Indeed these two concerns are at the centre of current debate on workforce requirements and funding problems. We are again debating the location of programmes, whether we are educating in or training for social work, course length and curricula. Who should provide quality assurance? What mix of educationalists, professional associations and employers should be involved? How should field placements be funded?

Jennie Pilalis's paper presents five models of education and discusses their potential implications for directing social work education including a potted history of their influences on NZ social work education in order to ask where to next. She lists six mechanisms for changing educational programmes (Walker, 1973, in Pilalis 1982, p.28), five of which are vested interest or stakeholder drivers, while the sixth, Rational Debate, is promoted as the way forward in 1982. Twenty-six years later her question, how will the next period of social work education proceed, will 'Rational Debate or Vested Interests?' dominate, seems just as relevant.

Re-reading these two contributions reminds us that the social work education since 1982 has seen great gains, but significant threats if not losses still exist on concerns two and half decades on. As Pilalis asked then, we need to ask now, which model, which mix, can best take us forward in 2009?

Guest editorial

John McCreary

Being asked to write a guest editorial nearly 34 years after the first professor was appointed to the Chair in the School of Social Science inevitably turns my thoughts to examining these years. My own approaching retirement date, January 31st, 1983, puts even greater pressure on me to make this a potpourri of reminiscences. Although I will try to avoid this temptation it is, perhaps worth pausing to ask where social work education is at present.

Firstly, we now have professional social work courses established in three universities and one teachers' college. We also have to record one failure: The Auckland University masters degree that died prematurely after a sickly infancy. The reasons for its failure are various and would repay careful examination for they are not unrelated to the dilemma facing all university-based social work courses, how to combine the demands of academe and the requirements of an applied discipline. There is no doubt that the head of a social work unit faces particular difficulties in explaining the requirements for the social work courses to faculties, professorial boards, etc., and has to re-explain his discipline to each new dean, each new academic pro-vice-chancellor, and as is currently the case at Victoria, each new vice-chancellor.
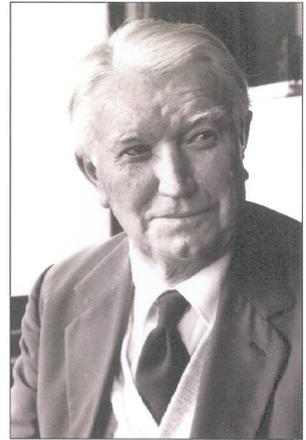
Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the whole process of student placement and supervision has improved immeasurably. This reflects the increased number of qualified workers in the field available to supply student supervision and, particularly the development of student units with supervisors whose fulltime commitment is to work with students. In comparison with, say, 10 years ago, the field has assumed a much greater responsibility in social work training. Each tertiary institution has worked out its own method of establishing a working relationship with supervisors and it is time some systematic assessments of the varying methods are attempted and for publications to emerge on this topic.

Thirdly, we now have the New Zealand Social Work Training Council. I have no doubt that council initiative greatly assisted the spread of social work education to universities other than Victoria. The council's role in the establishment of the course for Social and Community Workers in Auckland was central and, indeed, the battle for such a course was begun shortly after the council was formed and culminated in council representatives meeting a Cabinet committee shortly before the course was approved. Much of the work of the council is, unfortunately, buried in the activities of standing committees whose excellent work surfaces only after months of effort. There are times I wonder if our resources are sufficient to maintain the council and the other activities of the social work educators. Many papers prepared for standing committees would, if slightly altered, make stimulating thought provoking publications and one cannot help wondering if the comparative slimness of our journal over recent years reflects the considerable investment of energy some of our educators have put into the council.

Fourthly, the question of the council inevitably raises the question of accreditation. The fact we have to present and defend our courses to a panel of social work administrators, practitioners and educators every five years or so seems like a real advance towards an increased professionalism. It is true the fact our courses are vetted in this way is an advance, a broader recognition of the value of social work education as an important resource in society, but I believe questions can be asked about the appropriateness of the vetting instrument. Certainly the submissions made to the investigating panel during the moratorium on accreditation did not press for any fundamental changes but I believe that the minimum standards, upon which accreditation is based, could prove restrictive and reduce, if not prevent, experimentation.

Fifthly, we now have community work practitioners teaching in each of the tertiary based social work courses. This is a comparatively recent development but, in the present climate, necessary and important. This, one would hope, will begin to promote better understanding between community workers in the field and the universities. It is not a matter to enlarge on in a brief editorial but the dispute between community workers and caseworkers (usually called 'social workers' when battle is joined) not only makes new developments difficult (e.g. the course at Auckland Teachers College almost foundered on this issue) but questions the whole assumption that a 'generic' course is viable. Educators do, I believe, have to re-examine the basis of the generic assumptions and build in some degree of specialisation within their courses or between universities. Options and electives provide some such opportunity now but how far can one go without offending against the minimum standard requiring a generic course? Is such a requirement necessary or even desirable?

Sixthly, we now have an undergraduate course leading to a bachelors degree which allows young people to choose social work as a profession and obtain pre-entry training for it.

Seventhly we have a variety of financial arrangements which assist students. These are not large or over generous, but certainly now much of the financial hardship in fieldwork placements has been removed.

Having listed a few achievements perhaps I should turn briefly to what we have not, in my view, achieved.

Firstly, our material and curriculum are still largely derived. We do not seem to have developed a truly New Zealand approach to social work education. It may be, of course, that social work philosophies and methods of intervention cross cultural boundaries comfortably, but I doubt it. Our society, culture and values are not those of the US or UK. It follows if our courses are derivative, our minimum standards are derivative and we are in a bind from which it is difficult to escape.

Secondly, and related to the first point, we have not developed methods or material to teach social work adequately within a multicultural society. The important problem is that overseas journals and texts are concerned with migrant tribeless people – Pakistanis, West Indians, American blacks. Our plurality rests predominately on about nine percent of our population, whose ancestors owned the land we are living on, and who have a structured, traditional social organisation quite at variance with the middle class pakeha social worker. Just how we restructure our programmes to meet this need is not clear to me but I do not believe this is done only by courses designed to examine cross-cultural communication whose students take part in marae visits etc.

Thirdly, we have not bridged the transition from course to agency, once a qualification is obtained, satisfactorily. We have not educated the field on how to induct a newly qualified worker. The change is abrupt and threatening with a tendency for those who received in-post training to revert to their previous practices and those entering paid social work employment for the first time to look for security in established agency routines. There seems to me to be two ways of approaching this problem: one, is to make an effort to work over, with agencies, the most desirable form of induction for the newly qualified; the other, is to require something like an internship in which those teaching the courses have a continuing

involvement with the graduate after he or she enters the agency.

Fourthly, we have not yet established a tradition of post-qualification study. The first steps have been taken in each university with varying but not widespread results. Until we have developed postgraduate study and research the vitality of social work education in New Zealand must fall below its real potential.

In spite of these last few comments, or perhaps because of them, I feel social work education in New Zealand is alive and well. Tihe mauri ora!

I would like to thank the Editor for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this issue as a kind of poroporoaki on the eve of my retirement.

Social work education in New Zealand: Ideological bases of current debates

Jennie Pilalis

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'The Question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean so many different things.'
'The Question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'which is to be master. That is all.'

Social work education in New Zealand has come under review (University Grants Committee, 1981, p.21) and debates are emerging in some circles as to the most desirable direction for social work education to follow, now and in the future (SWTC discussion papers, 1981, 1982, p.20). The debates have exposed the conflicting views regarding the goals and methods of social work education. Furthermore, they have raised questions as to who finally decides the goals and methods to be pursued.

Different educational and social work theories are based on different visions of the ideal, and lead to different systems of operation. In order to understand the rationale for any educational or social work system, we need to be clearer about its ideological base and its link to different groups of people – their way of thinking, their way of viewing the world.

Alternative education ideologies in social work education

Table one[1] distinguishes five 'ideal type' ideologies evident in current educational perspectives. These positions rationalise different emphases regarding the goals of educational policies and the desired structures for implementing these policies. Each ideological position is favoured by a particular social position or class (Young, 1971, p.25). This paper will briefly examine the nature of each position and its implications for models of social work education, models of the organisation of the social work community, views regarding the nature

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[1]   No table provided.