



EDITORIAL

Reflecting on the IPDC practice development schools

Jan Dewing

As the academic editor of a journal that focuses primarily on practice development, for this editorial I want to focus on the IPDC practice development schools. I thought I'd do this as I've been fortunate enough in the last six months, to be involved in foundation schools in England with the Foundation of Nursing Studies, in Australia through the University of Wollongong and Wollongong Hospital, the Basel, Bern and Zurich Practice Development Network school in Switzerland and a school in Stord-Haugesund, Norway with the university college there. I'm also looking forward to working with colleagues on a school in Scotland to be delivered by Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh with a local health provider organisation in Tayside. So much exposure got me thinking about the purpose of the schools and their contribution to practice development internationally.

Practice development schools can be introductory, foundation or advanced and are owned by IPDC. They are delivered by IPDC members as part of a suite of practice development activities and interventions they are engaged with; therefore some members offer more or less schools than others. Further, these schools are not simply a product to be delivered but rather they are an intervention to be used as part of building and sustaining capacity and capability for the transformation needed to achieve person-centred cultures and their associated outcomes. There is a curriculum framework, a standard school programme and a governance system in place. Some schools can also offer academic accreditation. The schools have been around for forever (the early 1990s actually) and in their time they have gone through what seems like constant evolution. The programme is based on core practice development themes that are now well evidenced in the practice development and related literature. They also enable IPDC members to introduce, test and share leading edge practice development ideas to people participating in the schools and of course IPDC members are actively involved in facilitating the schools. This poem, written by Danielle Laggen in Wollongong, NSW, Australia, describes nicely the intent of the foundation practice development school:

*We stopped off for PD school with Bekk, Jan and the crew,
Opened our minds to the possibilities of what we really needed to do!
Facilitate, evaluate, plans, purposes, directions, none were ignored.
Who would have known such creative flare could come sweeping through the door!*

*Putting learning into practice, the ground rules and the beliefs,
What makes an effective team they asked?
Crikey, oh good grief we cried.
When it was mentioned we could use PARIHS, it wasn't the one in France,
The implementation of our research is what its about, at a glance.*

*The positive culture, leadership reflective practice and more,
We've all got this down pat as we walk out the door.
We can do this, reach for the stars, that's what its all about,
This culture change is our future,
And we thank you for giving us the chance.*

It 'feels' as if the schools make a valuable contribution, however a growing challenge for us in the IPDC is to evidence how effective the schools really are at translating learning into significant action and indeed what outcomes can be associated to the schools. We need to know that the practice development schools as an intervention is effective and worth the effort it takes to organise and deliver as I'm sure do the commissioners and funders.

Moving on now to set the scene for this issue. We have a special gift for our readers; a paper from Angie Titchen. Angie has gifted us a paper summing up some of her vast understanding and expertise in participatory action research. Some time soon, Angie is retiring from practice development work to focus on other activities she feels equally passionate about. We're extremely grateful, beyond words, to Angie for preparing her paper for the IPDJ and in return we have a gift for her; a small tribute from one of her closet colleagues that we hope will in some small way, show how much we appreciate her contribution to practice development research and scholarship. Go well Angie - with love and light of course!

Also, in this issue we have as usual, a diverse range of papers for you to engage with, enjoy and critique. A big thank you to everyone involved in getting the papers written and into publication. I'd like to bring to your attention the new feature on the journal web site that enables you to leave a comment about a paper. Each of the papers has this feature enabled, so I'd encourage you to let the authors or the IPDJ team have some commentary or feedback, especially if the paper or even just small part of it made a difference in some way. And of course, please support us in promoting the journal as widely as possible.

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