Students' views on the knowledge development in a social work Honours program.

Catherine Flynn and Kerry Brydon

Department of Social Work, Monash University

··

Address for Correspondence:

Catherine Flynn
Email: Catherine.Flynn@monash.edu

··

ABSTRACT

In the literature concerning higher degrees by research students there is relative silence concerning Honours programs. Using a sample of social work Honours students who completed their studies during the period 2005 – 2010, we sought to elicit students' views on the knowledge development aspect of the Honours program. The findings suggest that while students place some emphasis on the Honours dissertation as a pathway to PhD studies, they are more concerned with making an original contribution to the evidence base of their future profession. The findings also suggest that students move from a position of knowledge acquisition towards a position of knowledge creation during the course of the Honours program.

INTRODUCTION

Despite Honours programs being offered in six undergraduate social work courses across most states in Australia, there appear to be no published studies examining these programs: how they are offered, how they are facilitated, students' experiences, or outcomes. This is perhaps to be expected, given the lack of broader research into Honours programs. The need to understand more about the processes experienced specifically by social work Honours students is shaped by a number of key factors including Honours or Honours equivalence being the established benchmark and pathway to the PhD, as well as the clear expectation of knowledge generation for professional social work practitioners. Available evidence (e.g. Hawes 2000) indicates not only that recruiting and retaining Honours students is difficult, but that attention to the Honours experience within the discipline of social work, either specifically or as part of a broader study, is lacking. A critical consideration is the strategies utilised by Honours students to construct their dissertation projects and the ways in which they seek to contribute to the professional body of evidence.

Much of the discussion about 'Honours' has focused on attempting to describe, and to some degree standardise, what is meant by this term. In their mapping of such programs in Australia, Kiley, Boud, Cantwell and Manathunga (2009) found that there was considerable variation in how Honours was defined. Programs included add-on years, embedded curriculum, as well as degrees awarded "with merit". This variation is not uncommon, and is reflected in countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), where a final year undergraduate dissertation is atypical course component, but where the specific process depends on both the discipline and institution (Todd, Smith and Bannister 2006). Further, Kiley et al. (2011, p. 620) emphasise that Honours programs in Australia play a particular role, acting as a pathway for direct entry into doctoral study in the absence of a well-developed preparatory master's degree. Despite these variations, Kiley, Boud et al. (2009) report broad similarities in the Australian programs. Typically, Honours students follow an apprenticeship model, whereby they gain advanced disciplinary knowledge through working with a supervisor, to conceptualise, develop and implement a piece of research, and write a thesis.

Current, relevant information about Honours programs is lacking, despite these programs being widespread. In 2004, some 12,000 students were estimated to be enrolled in at least 400 Honours programs across Australia (DETYA 2004, cited in Shaw and Holbrook, 2006, p.15). Gathering further statistical data is challenging, however, largely because of the varied interpretations of what constitutes "Honours" (Kiley, Boud, et al. 2009), as noted above. There is a subsequent inability to compare across programs, including graduate outcomes and destinations. A more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of what occurs during an Honours year is also unsurprisingly absent, including what constitutes successful teaching strategies, student experiences of learning, of supervision, what is learned, how the process is conceptualised, motivations for participation and what students value through the process.

Despite Honours programs attracting relatively small numbers of students (less than 10% of the overall undergraduate cohort), the particular place that Honours holds in Australian academic culture is summed up by a participant cited by Kiley, et al. (2011, p. 628), who asked "Can you really call yourself a university department if you don't have Honours?".

HONOURS IN SOCIAL WORK: THE STUDY CONTEXT

The Department of Social Work, at our university, has been offering a degree in social work since 1974. It re-introduced an Honours program in 2005 after a lapse from the mid-1990s.

This program is embedded in the social work undergraduate course and seeks to support and further develop in chosen students the skills necessary for research in practice. Honours students engage in additional taught courses which cover the frameworks underpinning the social work research process: theory, methodology, professional values and ethics. They develop and complete a research project and dissertation, under the guidance of a supervisor.

Both authors have a clear interest in Honours teaching and supervision. The first author has been the coordinator of the social work Honours program at our university since 2008 and has supervised a number of Honours students. The second author is a staff member who has been actively involved in Honours supervision since 2005, with a particular interest in Distance Education and off- shore students. Both strive to contribute to and improve current understandings of Honours programs, as well as processes of teaching and learning in Honours, for students and staff.

For some years the social work degree has been offered in either the traditional mode, where students attend classes on campus, and from 1989 via a Distance Education or external mode, whereby students only attend the campus for core workshops twice per year. Also, during the period under review, we offered an offshore program; these students did not attend the campus at any time during their studies but attended workshops at our partner organisation.

From 2005 until the end of 2010 (the study period), 54 students completed the Honours degree; these have mostly been Bachelor of Social Work (Honours), but with a small number of double degree students (Bachelor of Arts/Social Work (Honours) or Bachelor of Health Sciences/Social Work (Honours). The gender breakdown of the cohort, 83% (n=45), female and 17% (n=9) male, reflects both the dominance of female students in the social work education program and the higher proportion of females in the field more generally.

In the first two years of the Honours program being offered all students were enrolled in a full time and on-campus mode of education. As time progressed, so did the complexity of the enrolments. Over the period of the study, seven students were in our offshore program; the remaining students were enrolled in the Australian-based program. No further data about the broader cultural background of the groups is available. Anecdotal evidence, gathered from supervisors and the nature of some of the projects undertaken, suggests that some students were first generation Australians and had a keen interest in cross-cultural issues.

Overall, during the study period, 37 students (68.5%) undertook their Honours study on a full-time basis and 17 students (31.5%) students studied part-time. While the overall cohort was quite evenly spread in terms of on-campus versus external enrolments, it is of some interest to note that all external students were part-time. While the current study did not specifically seek to establish why this may be the case, it is likely that the decision to study by external mode reflects other pressing commitments that preclude full-time study.

This record of student enrolment mode may not be fully accurate as a number of students enrolled through a mixture of on and off campus study programs to accommodate a range of personal, professional and study commitments.

The largest group in the Honours cohort were those in the 25 – 29 year old age group (37%), with the number of students in the older age groups becoming progressively smaller. This could suggest that younger students may be more attracted to the Honours program as they typically have fewer commitments in terms of work and family.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Drennan and Clarke (2009) assert that Universities have a dual function concerned with both the transmission of knowledge through teaching, and the extension of knowledge through research. At a broad level, post graduate research programs are the means through which the University can become directly involved in research training for industry and the professions (Chapman, 2008). This has been linked to the changing roles of the university and society in the production of knowledge; pressures for diversification and more professionally relevant programs; massification of higher education; demands from some professions and workplaces for higher skills (Chapman 2008).

Generally, research taught at the undergraduate level emphasises developing an understanding of the theory of research (Drennan and Clarke 2009). Kiley's (2011) findings indicate that preparation for post-graduate research, gaining an employment advantage and personal interest are key motivators for engaging in an Honours program. As suggested above, in some disciplines (e.g. Science and Economics), Honours is seen as the basic degree required by the field. Therefore for many students, the primary reason for completing Honours is to improve their chances of obtaining employment in their chosen field. Related research in the area of Accounting examined the perceived benefits of participating in an Honours program (Romano and Smyrnios 1996). Whilst these authors argue that such programs provide educational benefits, such as critical and independent thinking, as well as the preparation for career-long learning, interestingly in their findings, they found considerable variation in the outcomes noted by academics compared to students. The former focused on educational/learning outcomes, while students did indeed see the key benefit being in the competitive edge they got in the job market. This focus on the job market is somewhat reflected in the findings of Allen's (2011, p. 424) small qualitative study of Environmental Science students, who reported that "to do 'something' or to avoid unemployment" were key reasons for undertaking Honours. Kiley et al. (2011) also identified personal and intellectual achievement (or 'affective' reasons) as a motivation. Other, non-professional, disciplines highlighted more the intrinsic value of the study as being a prime motivator: Kiley et al. (2011, p. 630) cite a history academic participant:

Without being unkind to my own discipline I suppose students who have … studied History [are] already kind of unemployable. And so there are issues such as marketability and comparability which aren't foremost in their mind, they tend to study for intrinsic reasons.

These findings suggest that the motivation for students to engage in Honours is quite self-focused: generated by their own interest, or aimed at furthering their career, be that academic or professional. This seems to mirror the findings of Romano and Smyrnios (1996) in relation to student views on the perceived benefits of Honours.

While student constructions of the Honours program are important, these arise in a specific organisational and political context. Kiley, et al. (2009) assert that Honours does not easily fit into quality assurance processes, and the role of Honours supervisors, and Honours supervision, is viewed as research training rather than a form of teaching/pedagogy. Supervision remains conceptualised as a largely individualised exchange and this didactic relationship appears to be a relic from more personalised forms of pedagogy when there were lower workloads and lower intensity in the university (Lee and Green 2009).

The expectation that social work practitioners will be engaged in research is growing (McCrystal and Wilson, 2009), similar to the expectations in other professional disciplines such as nursing (McInerney and Robinson 2001). It is anticipated that graduating social workers will have the skills and knowledge to be able to both analyse the research evidence presented by others - to inform and better serve their clients, as well as conduct research into their own practice. Hence there is a focus on developing skills in both consuming and producing research: Honours programs are clearly placed to facilitate skills in knowledge production (Manathunga et al. 2012), with graduates being positioned to lead the field.

To more broadly posit the issues pertinent to the construction of Honours projects, it is important to briefly consider the broader context of social work research. The evolution of Australian social work research has a complex history. Some would argue that in the Australian context little research activity was generated prior to the 1950s, despite the origins of the profession dating from thirty years before that decade, and the focus rested mainly on community needs assessment and program development (Brown, 1988, cited in Fook, 2003, p. 49). Nevertheless, Tierney (1993, p. 9) argues that the utilisation rates of such research outcomes were negligible, presumably on the basis of distance between social work education and the so-called field.

Tierney (1993) commented on the limited nature of practice-relevant research. It was not until the 1990s that there was the rise of practice research, its implementation and collaborations between the universities and practitioners (Fook 2003). There have also been concerns that practitioners disregard research findings, valuing the therapeutic alliance (Arnd-Caddigan 2012) or personal experience, consultation and supervision as a greater source of practice knowledge than research (Scott 1990). A key issue within this context is that the kinds of knowledge drawn on by researchers and practitioners have been regarded as similar. When practitioners are called on to apply research-generated knowledge to their practice, any failure to do so is seen as a failure of practice rather than as a failure of research (Shaw and Lunt 2012, p. 198).

A helpful concept to understand the approach to research adopted by Honours students is that of practice or practitioner research, the two terms being used interchangeably in the literature (Mitchell, Lunt and Shaw 2010). Bawden and McDermott (2012, p. 136)

argue that practice research initiatives have been led by practice rather than theory and research. Describing a partnership between an organisation and a university, they contend that practice research in social work provides significant opportunities to fully understand the relationship between person and environment and to keep abreast of developments in the natural and biological sciences and some branches of sociology that are of increasing relevance to social work (Bawden and McDermott 2012, p. 137). Mitchell, Lunt and Shaw (2010, p. 7) assert that practitioner research is growing and includes emerging international interest in ensuring that social workers carry out research projects.

There remains, however, a continuing lack of consensus about how such activity should be defined (Shaw and Lunt 2012), and much of the research remains unpublished and largely invisible, including material such as student dissertations (Mitchell, Lunt and Shaw 2010). Additional concerns relate to methodological design and the extent to which consideration is paid to ethical considerations (Mitchell, Lunt and Shaw 2010).

While there is evidence of growing practitioner connection to research, there are also barriers to this. The general impression is that social work students are reluctant to learn research and there have been some research reports that social work students have higher anxiety and less interest in research than students studying psychology or business (Unrau and Grinnell 2005). There is also evidence to suggest that social work faculty perceive students entering research courses as anxious (Bogal and Singer 1981 cited in Unrau and Grinnell 2005, p. 640).

It has been argued that social work education has always been practice-based with the thrust of education being to enable students to engage with the practice context (Phillips, MacGiollaRi and Callaghan 2012). However, with increased calls for accountability from both consumers and regulatory bodies, there is an associated need to develop research and evidence as the basis for good practice (Phillips, MacGiollaRi and Callaghan 2012). Based on these concerns it is reasonable to assume that practitioners will be similarly anxious about engagement with research.

But perhaps the most telling aspect is that: "It is only in the doing of practitioner research that its critical identity takes shape" (Shaw and Lunt, 2012, p. 206). As will be discussed elsewhere, this position was supported in the current research. The implications are that only by engaging with the research process can students, and practitioners, reasonably be supported to overcome their anxieties about research.

METHODOLOGY

This study sought to investigate and describe the outcomes and perceived supervisory experiences of social work Honours graduates. This project had the oversight and approval of the University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Both authors were of the view that to develop knowledge in this area, a qualitative exploratory approach was ideal. We were very aware, however, that although all Honours graduates were likely to be in professional practice and able to form their own views

regarding the appropriateness of any involvement in research, some unequal relationships may remain. To ensure that no potential participants felt coerced to participate, the study adopted an anonymous online survey.

To be eligible for participation, individuals needed to be graduates who had completed all of their studies, and who had been involved in the Honours program between the years 2005 – 2010. The sample was obtained via convenience and snowballing techniques. The survey was advertised via flyers displayed on noticeboards in the social work department and in the off-shore teaching location; a tear-off slip contained the link to the survey. The flyer also asked all participants to pass the information on to other graduates with whom they were in contact.

Relying on participants who would see a flyer displayed within the teaching facility may have skewed the sample in two ways: reaching only those who had an ongoing, likely positive, relationship with the department; reaching only those who had graduated most recently. This was counteracted somewhat by also asking those participants to pass on the study information to peers who may not still be in contact with the department. This was approach may have limited the capacity to attract responses from external students who were not in a position to observe the flyer or may not have developed face-to-face relationships with others in the cohort. The survey instrument did not specifically ask participants to identify their mode of study.

The survey instrument relied on a combination of closed and open-ended questions. Given the structured nature of the survey tool and the study aim of seeking to identify recurring trends in participants' responses, the open ended questions were subject to an enumerative content analysis, where repetition of words/concepts signified importance (Bryman 2012). Given the exploratory nature of the study, coding was done flexibly (Grbich 2007), drawing both on core issues previously identified in research, as well as on ideas generated from the data. The survey was open from October 2011 – January 2012; a total of 14 participants took part in the survey; giving a response rate of 25%.

The strengths of this research highlight an emerging area of inquiry to social work educators and offer opportunities to construct a pedagogy that is both relevant and appropriate for Honours students. The limitations pertain to the fact that we have relied on a relatively small sample. Further, the sample only considered the views of Honours students and not those of their supervisors.

FINDINGS

The Sample

As can be seen by Table 1, below, the majority of participants were young women, aged in their 20s and of Anglo-Australian background, as would be expected from the broader undergraduate and Honours cohort.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants (n=14)

VARIABLES	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	PERCENTAGE
Genger		
Female	11	79
Male	3	21
Age		
25–29 years	7	50
30–34 years	1	7
35–39 years	1	7
40–45 years	2	14
45–49 years	0	0
50–54 years	1	7
55–59 years	1	7
60–64 years	1	7
Cultural background		
Ango/Australian	8	57
European	2	14
Chinese	2	14
Arabic	1	7
No response	1	7

MOTIVATIONS FOR DOING HONOURS

Participant reasons for completing Honours are summarised below in Figure 1. The majority of currently employed participants (10/13) agreed or strongly agreed that Honours had a considerable impact on the job they obtained. Despite this, less than one-half of the participants expressed a desire to work in the research field specifically, or indicated that they engaged in Honours to expand their professional opportunities (43% each). Although nine participants identified 'Pathway to PhD' as a reason for doing Honours, the most common response was that Honours provided students with an 'Enhanced learning opportunity' (71.4%, n = 10). The desire to engage in a piece of real world research was also commonly reported (n=8). These trends mirror, to some extent, the findings of previous research about the varied motivations for participating in an Honours program: for links to postgraduate research, career opportunities and to enhance learning.
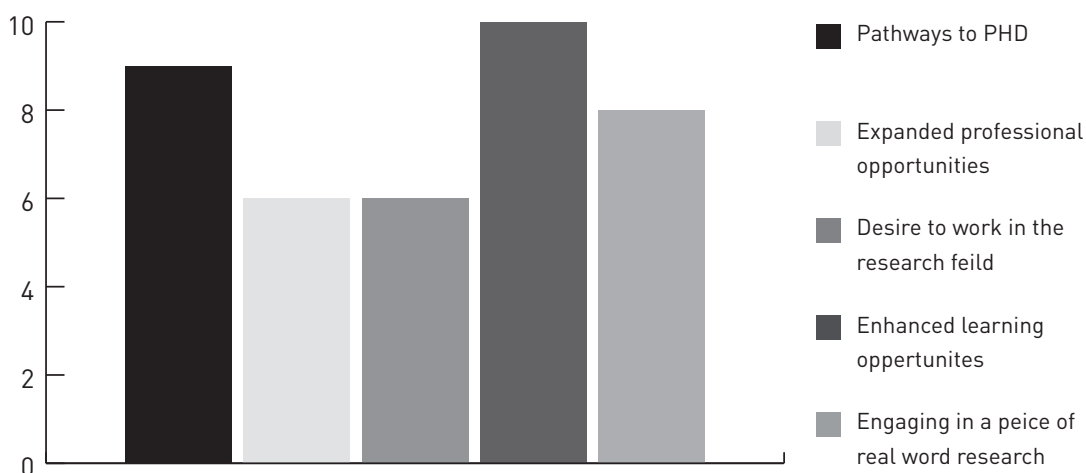
Figure 1: What participants wanted to achieve by completing the Honours program

Aims of the Honours project

Previous research has not focused on student projects specifically, tending to take a more generalist focus on motivation for doing Honours, or what the curriculum could look like, but we were interested in understanding student views on the knowledge development aspect of the Honours program.

For the majority of participants (n=9), building and contributing knowledge was a core aim of their Honours study. Whilst some articulated this as personal learning, others had a broader focus: to contribute to knowledge building for the profession. They commented:

To explore an area of social work that had previously not been well researched

To discover more information for myself about the topic of interest, which came from my work over a number of years in the same field

To highlight and explore an area that was not previously researched in Australia

To investigate a poorly known social issue

To contribute in some way to the social work profession and those who benefit from it

This often sat alongside the desire to develop specific skills themselves in research methodology (n=6):

To gain experience in completing a research project

Learn and develop research skills

To have an introduction to carrying out social work research in terms of doing a literature review, developing methodology, carrying out analysis, writing the thesis and having the overall experience of carrying out the project

To learn how to conduct a piece of research within a limited time frame

Participants were also asked about how their topic was developed; another related issue not previously considered in research in this area. The data shows a connection between the perceived aims of the study and the process of topic selection. Topics chosen were clearly linked in half of the cases (n= 7) to participants' professional observations and experiences, often from learning and reflections from their first fieldwork practicum:

My topic came out of my first fieldwork placement, where I noticed that a lot of the young people who were presenting to a youth drug and alcohol service came from out-of-home care backgrounds

It was an issue that was brought to my attention during my first placement

Discussing gaps of research and questions that arose through practical work in my area interest with colleagues

An episode with a client on placement generated my interest

With this sample of social work Honours students, the research-practice nexus is clear. Unlike some previous research (e.g. see Kiley, et al. 2011), which noted students' personal interest in a topic as a motivating factor, the participants in our study were more inclined to be outward looking and connected to their future profession. Participants were concerned with current social issues and with developing knowledge for contribution to practice.

Unexpected learning outcomes

Of interest are the 11 participants who identified unexpected outcomes/learning resulting from participating in the Honours program. These 'surprises' largely focused on the participants themselves and their individual achievement(s). Some were intrinsic:

The intense sense of discovery

Knowledge of how deep you can really dig within yourself

…a real sense of accomplishment

Increased confidence in myself and my capacities

For other participants, achievement was externally acknowledged, for example the receipt of university prizes (e.g. for the best thesis) or the acceptance of articles for publication.

These findings makes an interesting comparison with previous research trends, which note individual achievement as a motivating factor for students to complete Honours; whereas for this cohort, such individual achievement was not an aim but an indirect outcome.

What is not possible to discern from the current study is whether we would see similar outcomes if comparing the responses of social work Honours students with Honours students from other professional degrees such as occupational therapy or physiotherapy.

DISCUSSION

At the heart of social work are three foci: the relationship between the individual and society and the relationship between society and the individual; the nature of and possibilities for social change; and the situation of the poor and vulnerable in society (McDermott, 1996, p. 5). Consequently, social work research needs to explore the nexus between the individual and society, to be concerned with change, and focus on the situation of the poor and vulnerable (McDermott, 1996, p. 6). Our findings demonstrate that Honours students have the potential to be outward looking, concerned with current social issues and keen to make a contribution to practice knowledge.

Respondents in previous, and now somewhat dated, research (Armstrong and Shanker 1981, cited in Kiley, Boud et al. 2009; Hawes 2000; Parsloe 1993) outline varied motivations for participating in Honours, typically describing quite individually focused projects. In this study, the primary aim identified was a concern with knowledge building and a greater appreciation of the connectedness between research and practice. Whilst our study respondents engaged in a similar learning process – the apprenticeship model (Kiley, Boud et al. 2009), the motivation for that learning seems more outward looking and professionally driven. Responses seem more aligned with the previously reported views of academics as to the purpose of Honours (e.g. Kiley, Moyes and Clayton 2009; Romano and Smyrnios 1996). This perhaps reflects the professional nature of the degree; a similar issue was noted by McInerney and Robinson (2001). Their nursing student participants described their role as Honours students as being 'in between', where a key task was to work out their identity: in this case researcher – practitioner. These findings may also simply reflect the broader experience of social work students as being on a journey to being a professional practitioner. The findings generated from this small study reinforce the idea that Honours is the point at which students move beyond knowledge acquisition towards knowledge creation (Kiley, et al. 2011, p. 623). This suggests that Honours students are making some connections between their (future) practice and research.

The unanticipated findings from our research were perhaps the most telling as they demonstrated how the Honours students gained both knowledge about the research and growing connection to their projects through the actual implementation of their projects. This resonates with the claims made by Shaw and Lunt (2012) that it is in the doing of research that the critical identity takes shape. It was through the conduct of research that the respondents were able to immerse themselves in the research process. They demonstrated growing commitment to the research process both in terms of conducting the research and their own journeys as emerging researchers.

CONCLUSION

Of the limited research into Honours programs, much of it has focussed on questions concerned with 'what': what is Honours and what are the aims? In our current study we too considered the 'what' of student expectations but also the 'how' concerned with the ways in which Honours students construct their projects and how they experience Honours.

What was clear from our findings is that social work Honours students, at least in our sample, construct their research dissertations from a perspective of making a contribution to practice and social work knowledge and evidence, rather than for personal gain. This is not inconsistent with findings about job satisfaction and motivation, where the research indicates the positive impact of being challenged in the professional role, along with having a sense of accomplishment (Siefert 1991; Jessen 2010). Each position is connected to the broader perspective that social work, regardless of the specific methods of practice that are utilised, remains fundamentally concerned with making a difference.

The cohort under review also demonstrated increasing engagement with the research process as they journeyed through their dissertation projects. These findings have exciting implications for the development of further practitioner research projects, but the challenge remains as to how to make the findings of such research increasingly visible.

References

Allan, C. (2011) Exploring the experience of ten Australian honours students. *Higher Education Research and Development*, vol. 30 no. 4 pp.421 – 433.

Arnd-Caddigan, M. (2012) Clinical social workers' response to a state policy on the use of evidence-based practice: How attitudes, behaviors, and competing values affect actual practice. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, vol. 82 no. 1 pp.19 – 38.

Bawden, G. and McDermott, F. (2012) Project Discovery: Social work research @ Southern Health. *Australian Social Work*, vol. 65 no. 1 pp.136 – 144.

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social research methods*. (4thed.). South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Chapman, A. (2008) The professional doctorate in transnational education: Narrative inquiry into student experience. In L. Dunn and M. Wallace (Eds.), Teaching in transnational higher education: enhancing learning for offshore international students, (pp. 171 – 179). New York: Routledge.

Drennan, J.and Clarke, M. (2009) Coursework master's programmes: The student's experience of research and research supervision. *Studies in Higher Education*, vol 34 no.5 pp. 483 – 500.

Fook, J. (2003) Social work research in Australia. *Social Work Education*, vol. 22 no. 1 pp.45-57.

Grbich, C. (2007) *Qualitative data analysis*. An introduction. London: Sage.

Hawes, C. (2000) *Honours study at Flinders University: perspectives of students and coordinators*. HERDSA News, vol.22 no. 2 pp.28 – 29.

Jessen, J.T. (2010) Job satisfaction and social rewards in the social services. *Journal of Comparative Social Work*, vol.1, pp. 1 - 18. http://jcsw.no/local/media/jcsw/docs/jcsw_issue_2010_1_3_article.pdf.

Kiley, N., Boud, D., Manathunga, C.and Cantwell, R. (2011) *Honouring the incomparable: Honours in Australian universities. Higher Education*, vol. 62, 619 – 633.

Kiley, M., Boud, D., Cantwell, R.andManathunga, C. (2009) *The role of honours in contemporary Australian higher education*, Strawberry Hills NSW: Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. www.aushans.anu.edu/au/sites/default/files/part%201.pdf. Accessed 29 June 2012.

Kiley, M., Moyes, T., and Clayton, P. (2009) To develop research skills: Honours programmes for the changing research agenda in Australian universities. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, vol. 46 no.1 pp.15 – 25.

Lee, A. and Green, B. (2009) *Supervision as metaphor. Studies in Higher Education*, vol. 34 no. 6 pp. 615 - 630.

McCrystal, P. and Wilson, G. (2009) Research training and professional social work education: Developing research-minded practice. *Social Work Education*, vol. 28 no. 8) pp. 856 – 872.

McDermott, F. (1996) *Social work research: Debating the boundaries. Australian Social Work*, vol. 49 no. 1 pp. 5-10.

McInerney, F. and Robinson, A. (2001) Honours in nursing: the Struggle of students as clinicians/researchers in practice. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, vol 7 no. 3 pp.214 – 220.

Manathunga, C., Kiley, M., Boud, D.and Cantwell, R. (2012) From knowledge acquisition to knowledge production: Issues with Australian honours curricula. *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 17 no. 2 pp. 139 - 151.

Mitchell, F., Lunt, N. and Shaw, I. (2010) Practitioner research in social work: A knowledge review. *Evidence and Policy*, vol. 6 no. 1 pp.7-31.

Phillips, J., MacGiollaRi, D. and Callaghan, S. (2012) Encouraging research in social work: Narrative as the thread integrating education and research in social work. *Social Work Education*, vol. 31 no.6 pp. 785 – 793.

Romano, C.andSmyrnios, K. (1996) Accounting honours programmes: Perceived benefits. *Accounting Education*, vol. 5 no. 3 pp. 233 - 244.

Scott, D. (1990) Practice wisdom: the Neglected source of practice research. *Social Work*, vol. 35 no.6 pp. 564 – 568.

Shaw, I. and Lunt, N. (2012) Constructing practitioner research. *Social Work Research*, vol. 36 no. 3 pp.197 – 208.

Shaw, K. and Holbrook, A. (2006) An investigation of the nature and contribution of honours programs in Australia. In M. Kiley and G. Mullins (Eds), Quality postgraduate research: Knowledge creation in testing times, (pp. 15 -27), Adelaide: Refereed Conference Proceedings, April.

Siefert, K., Jayaratne, S. and Chess, W.A. (1991) Job satisfaction, burnout, and turnover in health social workers. *Health and Social Work*, vol. 16 no.3 pp 193-202.

Tierney, L. (1993) Practice research and social work education. *Australian Social Work*, vol. 46 no. 2 pp. 9-22.

Todd, M., Smith, K. and Bannister, P. (2006) Supervising a social science undergraduate dissertation: Staff experiences and perceptions'. *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 11 no. 2 pp. 161 - 173.

Unrau, Y. and Grinnell, R. (2005)The impact of social work research courses on research self-efficacy for social work students. *Social Work Education*, vol. 24 no.6 pp. 639-651.