

In this issue

Lisa Morriss, Lancaster University, UK

Welcome to this issue of *Qualitative Social Work*. You will have been moved by Professor Robyn Munford's brilliant Editorial, *Moving on: Reflections on Time Well Spent*. It has been a dream to work alongside Robyn and we wish her a fabulous retirement.

The first two articles in this issue are based on arts-based methods. Shelby L Clark and Sarah Jen write about their experience of co-creating a poetic representation of social workers' experiences with compassion. The poem, *Conscious Compassion*, was 'found' in the narratives of the social workers who took part in a wider study on compassion in their professional practice. The social workers were able to choose the elements of their interviews which reflected their thoughts on compassion and these were weaved together to create the poem. The authors clearly set out the process of co-creation and as such, the article is valuable in guiding other researchers to use this approach. The next article develops the innovative approach of visual grounded theory as a secondary qualitative analysis of 26 participatory visual diagrams from two previous qualitative studies examining multiracial identity development. I found this particularly interesting as the first of these two studies (Jackson, 2013) was highlighted in my previous literature review – with Professor Andrew Clark - on the use of visual methodologies in social work research (Clark and Morriss, 2017). Kelly Faye Jackson and Sarah Yang Mumma explain how they 'co-constructed a visual theoretical model that more accurately represents the dynamism between complex developmental and ecological processes that interactively influence multiracial identity development over time'. Their findings reflect the complexities of lived multiracial experiences. This is an excellent methodological article and one that I will be using in my teaching.

We now turn to two articles with a focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first by Kate Phillippo, Robert Lucio, Emily Shayman and Michael Kelly examines how the practice of school social workers in the US was impacted by, and adapted to, the pandemic. Based on three focus groups at the start of the pandemic and informed by crisis theory, the authors found that 'work was disrupted in multiple ways, and those disruptions gave way to substantial practice shifts'. This included a greater emphasis on approaches that connect to traditional social work values such as system-level intervention. The following article also looks at social work practice in the first wave of the pandemic. Vera Fiorentino and colleagues focus on Finnish social workers' experiences of extending the use of digitally mediated social work, based on analysis of 33 social workers' diary entries. The authors use Henri Lefebvre's conceptual framework to conceive digitally mediated social work as a space. The findings show how *physical space*, *conceived space* and *spatiality* impacted on practice.

The next article in the issue is also focused on the digital. Using a case study approach, doctoral researcher Jenn M Lilly analyses field and process notes, analytic memos, and reflexivity journal entries as part of a digital narrative approach. The article examines the AltaVoces project in which 12 Latino young people aged 18–21 took part in a collaborative, participatory, digital narrative inquiry process guided by an anti-oppressive social work research framework. This article is valuable in enhancing our understanding as researchers of using digital narrative methods in an anti-oppressive social work research framework, through the first empirical example of this specific integrative framework in action. We continue with this theme of the digital in the next article by Jay Marlowe and Jemma Allen. The authors present six guiding principles based on Feminist and virtual–material positional perspectives to inform ‘ethically responsive, methodologically robust and pragmatically feasible approaches to conducting online interpersonal qualitative research’. These principles include addressing digital inequality, ensuring an ethics in practice, and developing and maintain rapport. The principles are a useful starting point for those of us who are considering digital research.

The next three articles focus on child welfare, using different methodological approaches. Pernille S Skotte conducted an ethnographic study of everyday child welfare work in two frontline child welfare agencies in Norway. She observed how in both agencies, ‘regular team meetings stood out as explicit arenas for aggregating and elucidating complex combinations of power, uncertainty and action orientation’. The article is based on field notes collected during 21 staff meetings and shows how the caseworkers ‘actively addressed the ambiguities and complexities of their work through talking’. The article includes fine grained analysis of the talk and we see how the talk serves to *turn complexity into manageable problems, make the work bearable by assigning responsibility and using humour, and mobilise common commitment to the task*. The analysis suggests that the collectivity is a crucial condition in bearing the demands of child welfare work. Authors Carlos Andrade-Guzman and Margaret Lombe have developed a theoretical model, drawing upon critical institutionalism. They interviewed six Chilean social workers involved in public-private child welfare to explore the meanings and expressions of co-responsibility. The authors show how these meanings and expressions are diverse and co-exist in intervention. The final article on child welfare is a longitudinal qualitative study looking at how transculturally placed young people in foster care in the Netherlands develop their ethnic identity and what fluctuations occur over time. Clementine J Degener, Hans WE Grietens and Diana D van Bergen used photo-elicitation to interview the young people twice over a 2 year period. They use their findings to develop a theoretical model to represent the complexity of the ethnic identity development of young people placed in foster care.

This article is followed by a critical autoethnography by Jeanette Schmid who shows how she came to adopt a contextualized social work stance over her 40 years as a social worker. She argues that contextualized social work 'creates the space for understanding how power is exercised at the local level and learning how to interrupt oppressive forms of governmentality' and 'thus a multi-level, nuanced and critical endeavor that aims to promote social justice through attention to the voice and ways of knowing, doing and being on the local level'. The penultimate article in the issue examines Afghan women's perceptions and experiences of gender roles and the process of change after settlement in Australia. Using feminist standpoint epistemology, Rojan Afrouz, Beth R Crisp and Ann Taket interviewed 21 Afghan women. The authors found four key themes: gender roles as fixed and distinct, family influence on gender roles, the impact of migration on gender roles, and barriers to change. Their analysis reflects the complexities of these women's lives. The final article in this issue is also concerned with women. Violeta Gevorgianiene, Egle Sumskien and Ciara Bradley interviewed 20 Lithuanian women with disabilities to understand the challenges involved in combining the roles of 'mother' and 'worker' and the strategies used to cope with these. The authors found that the women faced significant challenges in combining work and motherhood and identified four themes: ambition and resignation at work; fight and surrender in motherhood; a child at the intersection of mother's work and care; and the importance of social networks. The section on *Disability as a preconceived maternal 'disqualification'* resonated with my own work, with one out of two interviewees with psycho-social and four out of seven women with intellectual disability no longer having their children in their care. These women were the most silenced. This article is a must read.

The issue ends with a review of the new book by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, *Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide*, which was published in 2022. I was delighted when doctoral student Sally Nieman offered to review this book as sometimes we receive articles which match those on the 'Reflexive Thematic Analysis Bingo' card, such as only citing Braun and Clarke's 2006 work https://study.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/activity_1.5_reflexive_ta_bingo.pdf Sally's review is comprehensive and engaging and will inspire others to read this important guide.

References

Clark A and Morriss L (2017) The use of visual methodologies in social work research over the last decade: a narrative review and some questions for the future. *Qualitative Social Work* 16(1): 29–43.

Jackson KF (2013) Participatory diagramming in social work research: Utilizing visual timelines to interpret the complexities of the lived multiracial experience. *Qualitative Social Work* 12(4): 414–432.