

Educating students to become research-active practitioners: A transnational collaboration between the education and health sectors

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Background: Momentum for building a research base to inform social work practice is increasing. This is particularly pertinent in the health sector where evidence based practice dominates. Tertiary social work programs have an important role in ensuring that social work graduates have the skills and confidence to conduct research as practitioners. Research methods are a core component of qualifying programs internationally. However, there is a paucity of research which investigates pedagogical issues, practical realities, cultural biases and ethical dilemmas that surround the teaching and learning of research methodology. Student perspectives are important in understanding and addressing these issues. The aim of this study was to draw on the views of social work students, in a transnational context, to inform best teaching practice and thereby increase new practitioner readiness to undertake research.

Methodology: This was a cross sectional survey design which included closed and open questions. The survey instrument was designed by the researchers. Social work students at an Indian and an Australian university were invited to complete an online survey of their experiences of studying research methods as part of their degree, how prepared they were to be practitioner researchers and their views on how teaching and learning could be improved.

Findings: The findings will be presented as a 'within country' and 'between country' analysis. The transnational approach to the research provides the opportunity for an enriched data set which will be contextualized to each country. Implications will be drawn for teaching and learning and social work practice in India and Australia.

Conclusion: Collaborative research between the education and practice sectors provides an integrated approach to developing best practice in teaching research methods and for building the research capacity of social work practitioners.