

**SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION
IN NEW ZEALAND**

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research dissertation is social work field education in New Zealand. The purpose of conducting the study was to ascertain how both students and field educators experienced teaching and learning in the field. Results indicate that while teaching and learning thinking and theory have evolved in recent years to include a critical reflective dimension, the practice of field education is still largely based on an apprenticeship model. Practice experience and theoretical input relating to areas of societal inequality as well as the political context in which field education is delivered explain the continued use of the apprenticeship model.

Students and field educators do, however, share a vision for how field education should be delivered. They agree on the attributes of an effective field educator, and on the methods needed to enhance practice teaching and learning. The research has, nevertheless, identified a discrepancy between this shared vision for field education and the reality that students experience in the field.

Field educators are clearly marginalised in their role. Their work as educators is not sanctioned or recognised by employing agencies, and workload pressure frequently militates against social workers being able to accommodate students on placement. In this climate a minimalist approach to field education is adopted, resulting in unqualified social work staff and people who are not social workers acting as field educators. Without radical shifts in the recognition, resourcing and organisation of field education, student learning in the field will continue to be compromised.

The theoretical framework used in this research was derived from existing learning theory, which was then reconceptualised and developed in light of the research outcomes to formulate a contemporary theory for practicum learning.

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

In the year 2000, formal social work education has been available in New Zealand for a full fifty years. In order to further develop practicum teaching, learning and policy in the twenty-first century, it is timely, and indeed necessary, to closely examine current field education practice. This research was designed to facilitate this inquiry with the view to making a contribution to social work field education in New Zealand.

The teaching and learning exchange in field education is characterised by several unique features. It is an exchange founded on the primary relationship between student and supervisor and it has the aim of preparing the student for professional practice in a specific vocational field. The learning occurs not in the classroom but in the agency workplace, where what is 'taught' may not be what is learned. The agency context in which the practicum is situated has its own set of messages and lessons that cannot be found in social work textbooks. For these reasons field education is an exciting, often unpredictable and complex enterprise, where both students and educators are challenged in their construction of knowledge, development of skills and demonstration of values.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Every year an estimated 820 placements are organised for students of social work in New Zealand. Despite the burgeoning of placement situations, little, if anything has been reported in the professional literature about how educators teach or students learn. In this context, the strengths and weaknesses of practicum teaching and learning have remained hidden, and the critical debates about field education "best practice" have not yet

occurred in this country. This suggests a serious gap in local knowledge about what factors enhance and inhibit student learning in the field.

Practicum learning has long been regarded as an integral component of social work education, yet seeking to understand the complex dynamics of field learning is a relatively new endeavour in New Zealand social work. The practicum is characterised by highly contextualised, unpredictable learning experiences. Therefore attempts to analyse field learning need to include an appreciation for the experiential pedagogy of 'learning by doing' within a contextual framework.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of this research was to identify factors that impact on student learning and educator teaching practice in New Zealand social work field education. To this end I used three objectives to plan and conduct the research. The first was to find out how New Zealand schools of social work regulate and deliver field education. This first step was necessary as no comprehensive research data on the delivery of field education in New Zealand exist. The second objective was to discover how teaching and learning methods, placement context, and relationships enhance and inhibit student learning in the field. This objective has provided the substance for theoretical and pedagogical development in the thesis, but it could not have been tackled without first having the base-line information about how field education was delivered. The third objective was to identify policy initiatives that might be used to strengthen New Zealand social work practicum education.

RESEARCH APPROACH

My interest in this research topic grew out of having students on placement when I worked in mental health. Through supervising students, I became curious to find out how

learning in the field could be enhanced in order that students might get the most out of their placements. Thus, the research approach I have taken in this project has been grounded in practice experience. From this position, I have grappled with learning theory to find paradigms that help explain field education. Existing theory was used and adapted to guide the research. This process has had an iterative flavour, where theoretical reconceptualisation has formed a major part in the design and analysis for this inquiry.

PARAMETERS OF THE RESEARCH

During the beginning stages of the inquiry it was evident that a vast amount of research and informed literature had been published on field education abroad. Much of this material focuses on the question of assessment ^{and learning} of students on placement. It would not have been possible within the scope of this investigation to adequately address both learning and assessment in the field. Therefore I elected to focus on the process of student learning, rather than the question of assessment of performance in the field. The question of assessment in the practicum therefore merits its own investigation at a later date. It should be noted that the research for this thesis is current up until December 1999. Any publications or events after this date were not included.

A second early decision affecting the parameters of this research was to concentrate the inquiry on how field education was experienced by students and educators. Other key participants in the placement process include the faculty liaison and placement agency manager, but I had to weigh up the advantages of covering the breadth of experience across all the key participants against the advantages of examining in more depth the experiences of students and educators only. Bearing in mind the practical logistics of coordinating the research across three schools, as well as my own desire to understand the learning exchange that occurs specifically between educator and student, I decided to narrow the focus of the research to these two types of participants.

In order to establish a framework that could be used for the research, I began by examining the literature on field education, and then moved on to adult education and experiential learning theory. Out of this reading I developed the model 'Learning from Practice Experience' (See Chapter Three). Next, I returned to the literature and reviewed the material that was directly relevant to testing the three constructs used in this model. The three constructs together form the basis for my examination of the raw data collected in my research. They are, Context, Teaching and Learning Transactions, and Relationships. A full discussion of how these constructs were arrived at is given in Chapter Three. However, it is worth noting at the outset of this thesis that they were distilled from existing learning theory, and form the major organising framework according to which this research has been designed, analysed and reported. Congruent with these constructs, three research propositions informed this inquiry.

RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

1. The context of the teaching and learning encounter is determined by both macro socio-economic considerations, and micro organisational and personal concerns.
2. The methods used to facilitate learning, and the pedagogy that informs the teaching and learning transaction, deeply influence student and educator experiences of practicum education.
3. Social work field education is shaped and influenced by the complex nature of relationships that exist between the student, field educator, agency, school, and wider community.

ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter Two, a review of the literature, and Chapter Three, an analysis of the theoretical frameworks used to inform the research, examine the central elements of the three propositions above. Specific research questions relating to each proposition appear in Chapter Four, where the research design and method are set out. Chapter Five reports the research findings on contextual influences that impact on field education. Chapter Six includes the findings on student and educator experiences of teaching and learning. In Chapter Seven, data related to the notion of relationships in the practicum are reported. Finally, Chapter Eight pulls together all the themes and findings, and connects these with the original research aim and the central propositions. The significance of the research is posited in terms of making an original contribution to theory, practice and policy in field education.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Although little has been published in New Zealand on field education, a great deal of attention has been given to this subject in North America, the United Kingdom and Australia. As a result, field education has been referred to in multiple ways, including 'practicum education', 'fieldwork', 'workplace learning' and 'practice teaching'. For the purposes of this research, agency based learning is referred to as 'field education', or the 'practicum'. In the same vein, the individual responsible for guiding student work on placement will be referred to in the thesis as the 'field educator' or 'student supervisor'. Owing to the diversity of nomenclature in labelling tasks, roles and personnel in social work field education, a glossary appears in Appendix A.

A NOTE ON PROCESS

As with any narrative about research endeavours, this thesis may give the impression of a mechanistic, linear progression from idea to outcome. In my case, nothing could be further from the truth. Behind this account lie five years of reflective thinking, alongside practice in the field, where I have returned to the literature and theories of learning many times in order to refine how field education may be enhanced, conceptualised, and better understood.

CHAPTER TWO

INSIGHTS INTO FIELD EDUCATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout Britain, North America, and Australia a wealth of research-based and informed writing has been published about differing approaches to practicum learning. However, despite the multiplicity of studies that focus on the practicum, there is still a basic lack of information about what field educators actually do and how students learn in the field (James et al., 1990). This is particularly the case in New Zealand where just two recent examples of research on field education exist in the work of Ellis (1998) and Napan (1999).

This chapter reviews the literature on field education, and is comprised of four sections. The first looks at publications dealing with the purpose of field education while the remaining three sections focus on examining works from which the three constructs that guided the project have been drawn, namely *contextual influences*, *teaching and learning transactions*, and *relationships*. Each of these constructs was originally derived from a synthesis of learning theory and the principles of adult education, the process for which is discussed fully in Chapter Three. However, to show the scope of the issues, this review also provides coverage of the controversial aspects, research findings and practice applications related to these constructs.

The constructs essentially draw from the seminal work of Kolb (1984) and Gould & Taylor (1996) on experiential and reflective learning, and Walker & Boud's model of 'Learning in Context' (1994). The nexus between the context in which the practicum is situated, the personalities and motivations of the parties involved, along with student and

field educator experiences in the practicum, create the dynamic medium in which field education occurs. The purpose of this review is to document all the factors that have been found to impact on the student learning and educator teaching practice. To set the scene, the purpose of field education is first defined, and I make a position statement about the approach I intend to use in examining the literature.

THE PURPOSE OF FIELD EDUCATION

An early formative text provided a succinct definition of the purpose of the practicum in social work education.

Field instruction is an experiential form of teaching and learning in which the social work student is helped to: (1) consciously bring selected knowledge to the practice situation; (2) develop competence in performing practice skills; (3) learn to practice within a framework of social work values and ethics; (4) develop a professional commitment to social work practice; (5) evolve a practice style consistent with personal strengths and capacities; and (6) develop the ability to work effectively within a social agency (Sheafor & Jenkins, 1982:3).

Although 18 years have passed since the above purpose statement was written, little would be changed today except perhaps greater emphasis might be placed on the need for the practicum to prepare students to be accountable, competent and transparent in their practice. This definition, however, gives no clue to the still hotly contested debate in social work about the relationship between theory and practice. One school of thought argues that the practicum provides students with an opportunity to apply theory to practice, while an alternative view is that the purpose of the practicum is to facilitate reflective learning resulting in reconceptualisations of theory (Ryan et al., 1996). Ryan et al., note that this distinction is critically important, as the primary purpose of the former paradigm is to apply and test theoretical doctrine, while the latter situates the practicum at the core of social work curriculum, from which theory is subsequently evolved and

modified. For the purposes of this research I used the latter paradigm within which the notion of praxis is considered central to student development of social work skills, knowledge and value base. How this process actually occurs for students during the practicum is the subject of this research.

The rest of this review is in three sections, with each of the research propositions introduced in Chapter One being discussed with reference to the relevant literature. The first research proposition focuses on the notion of 'context'. Although context is defined and deconstructed in Chapter Three, this chapter reviews the socio-political, historical and cultural concerns that influence field teaching and learning, and documents the micro considerations that impact on field education.

Proposition One: That the context in which the teaching and learning encounter takes place is influenced by both the macro socio-economic considerations, and micro organisational and personal concerns.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFLUENCES ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

The global effects of the widespread adoption of economic rationalism have impacted greatly on the delivery of health, welfare and education services. The emphasis on market economics has influenced the way social work services are now delivered (Bryson, 1994), heralding a return to a residual model of welfare with the State once again being the agency of last resort for assistance (McDonald, 1998). Thus social work practitioners currently operate within a context that is informed by neo-liberal and New Right ideals, where welfare provision is no longer seen as a function of the State except as a modest safety net. 'Welfarism' is considered a burden on the productive sectors of society (Parton, 1994), and welfare work and workers are subjected to increasing public scrutiny, criticism, and cost containment (Beddoe & Randal, 1994). Inevitably, as Lishman (1998)

notes, the climate of uncertainty and rapid pace of change have had a marked effect on professional development initiatives. In light of these current socio-economic trends, it is hardly surprising that social workers, according to Hancock (1998), struggle to maintain the ethos and values of the social work profession, leading to claims that as a profession social work is suffering a sense of occupational insecurity (Lewis, 1998).

Even prior to the impact of recent macro economic policies on the delivery of welfare services, social work field education typically occurred within a marginalised context. The only exception to this situation was during the 1960s when exponential growth in welfare service delivery and welfare education sectors occurred (Schneck, 1991b). It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the literature on practicum teaching and learning is characterised by accounts of efforts to maintain quality and standards in the face of little recognition and scarce resources.

This socio-political climate in which welfare provision is defined and delivered is central to an understanding of the context of social work education. Other aspects also contribute to an understanding of this context, including knowledge of the historical development of the social work practicum in New Zealand, and an appreciation of the impact that agency culture and placement structure have on practicum learning. Together these factors make up the context in which field education occurs.

HISTORICAL INFLUENCES ON SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND:

Compared with North America and the United Kingdom, New Zealand has a relatively short history of social work education. The first Diploma of Social Science¹ was established at Victoria University, Wellington, in 1950 and the *New Zealand Social*

Worker journal was established in 1965. The first substantive account of field education appeared in the journal when Elizabeth Macdonald (1973) wrote about the establishment of a hospital-based student unit. The emphasis in her article was on how the process of group placements enhances and supports student field learning. Its content very much reflects the benefits of peer learning mentioned in current literature, with one obvious difference. In 1972, student unit supervisors had a substantive role in planning and facilitating the learning with students. Due to rationalization in welfare and education expenditure, and organisational downsizing and restructuring, student unit supervisor positions no longer exist in New Zealand. However, group placements in agencies are still used by some schools and occur under the guise of providing peer learning opportunities (Cooper, 1996). Macdonald's article provides a clear picture of halcyon days of field education, where practicum teaching and learning was fully resourced, leading one to question the extent to which current theoretical paradigms for practicum education have been driven more by economic pragmatism than educational best practice.

Two significant events for social work education occurred in New Zealand during 1972. Firstly, expected standards for the delivery of social work education and training were set down by the Education and Training subcommittee of the New Zealand Association of Social Workers. This statement (NZASW, 1972a:57) included standards for field educator training and experience. Notably, field educators:

- i. must hold a social work qualification from a recognised tertiary educational institute;
- ii. must have completed at least two years full-time social work following qualifications;

¹ This was a training course for social workers, but given the label 'social science' to pacify the socialist government of the day.

- iii. must be acceptable to and approved by the local Regional Education and Training Committee of NZASW and the Interim Board of Studies; and
- iv. must be members of the NZASW.

Nearly three decades on, several of these standards remain on the 'wish list' for education providers, and are a salutary reminder of the slow progress made in this area of social work education. The question of standards for field education will be revisited in the latter part of this historical account.

The second event of note was a commissioned publication on supervision in social work from a New Zealand perspective (NZASW 1972b), Part III of which was devoted to field supervision. Apart from the occasional article appearing since then in *Social Work Review* (the NZASW journal), the 1972 publication remains the only comprehensive recording of material related to social work student supervision in New Zealand. Many of the themes canvassed in this work reflect still current concerns in field education, such as: understanding the relationship between theory and practice; strategies to accommodate different student learning styles; and assessment of progress in the practicum. Naturally, the terms used therein to describe social work and the supervision process reflect the paradigms prevalent in New Zealand during the 1970s, including a strong psychoanalytic influence encountered earlier in the century in American and British models of social work. For example, in 1972 Mason wrote, "Social work deals with troubled people; people whose dependency needs are to the fore, with all the ambivalence this implies; people in conflict of varying kinds; people disturbed and often feeling strongly and intensely at some level" (Mason, 1972:105).

In addition to psychoanalytic theory, behaviour theory, mainstream psychology and psychiatric concepts were used as primary sources to inform social work. The role of the social worker was often described in medical-oriented terms such as making a "social

diagnosis” and formulating “treatment plans” (Manchester, 1972:134-136). Social work was thus depicted in much the same way as Mary Richmond (1944) described early British social work.

The ready access to supervision training opportunities for new supervisors from all welfare sectors at ‘Tiromoana’² (an inservice training institution founded in 1963 by the State Services Commission and taken over in 1973 by the Department of Social Welfare) is in striking contrast to the current lack of resources for social worker professional development in New Zealand. However, field supervision in those days was described by one student writer as an authoritarian process, with an emphasis on hierarchy and educator power:

Implicit in the supervisory relationship is the authority of the supervisor, not only authority of knowledge and expertise but also authority to pass or fail the student. This helps to engender a dependant relationship which is felt as supportive at first. However, this dependence becomes frustrating when it slows down work with clients and hinders the student in her desire to cope for herself (Griffen, 1972:121).

Daniels (1972) argued that the NZASW had failed in its responsibility to students by not instigating a process of accreditation for agencies and field supervisors. This situation has not changed, and students are still being placed in agencies that do not necessarily offer high quality learning experiences, with ‘educators’ who are not necessarily equipped to supervise students (Beddoe & Worrell, 1997). Students in New Zealand schools of social work may still have field supervision provided by an unqualified worker, and sometimes by people who are not at all aligned with social work as a discipline. Although the recognised Industry Training Organisation for social services, Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, has recently published recommended guidelines for field education, these do not include

² ‘Tiromoana’ (‘view of the sea’) was located in a former patient villa in Porirua Psychiatric Hospital.

any requirement for educators to hold a social work qualification. The guidelines do, however, indicate that educators should have a sound knowledge in the field, be competent as educators, have knowledge of agency programmes, and be aware of the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) and assessment requirements (Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, 1997).

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

In 1973, the first call to address issues specific to Maori workers and clients was published in *The New Zealand Social Worker*. In her article, Te Uira argued for the cultural dimensions of social work to be acknowledged, and she advocated for alternative approaches to casework intervention to be used in work with families:

[T]he most glaring problem in this topic of in-service training and supervision of field workers is that of inflexibility. Inflexibility in attitudes in this pluralistic multi-racial but culturally rich social system we have in New Zealand. Our attitudes towards other ethnic groups and towards other methods of social work is simply too restricted and too refined (Te Uira, 1973:39).

The challenge to methods of practice taught in Pakeha-dominated training institutions and used in social service agency organisations has gathered momentum rapidly since 1973, culminating in the publication, by the Ministerial Advisory Committee, of *Puao-te-Atu-Tu* in 1986. This milestone document grew out of an examination, from a Maori perspective, of welfare practice within the New Zealand Department of Social Welfare. It traces the development of Pakeha-dominated paradigms of welfare that left Maori disproportionately over-represented in welfare-recipient statistics and denied the rights implied within the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. *Puao-te-Atu-Tu* impacted directly on social work practice and education by providing a confronting account of racist assumptions underlying the way welfare in New Zealand was planned and delivered. The document signalled a 'wake-up call' to schools of social work, not only to acknowledge, but also to

incorporate the Articles and principles of the Treaty of Waitangi into their education programmes. This challenge has direct relevance for field education also, with the insistence that the design and provision of placements demonstrate the scope of the Treaty of Waitangi, specifically in terms of providing culturally appropriate supervision and practical learning opportunities to work with Maori (Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, 1997).

It is too early yet to measure the extent to which education programmes adhere to these recent guidelines. Even so, their existence does provide a clear message in terms of expectations for field education in New Zealand. However, if, over time, the New Zealand experience of accreditation reflects the British practice (See Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996), the guidelines may simply be viewed as a 'paper tiger'.

FIELD EDUCATION RESEARCH IN NEW ZEALAND

There is just one recent research account that focuses on field education in New Zealand. This is Gwen Ellis's investigation of field educator experiences (Ellis, 1998). She examined questions related to training and resourcing of field education and found that educators struggled with the teaching and assessment roles, and felt a lack of clarity about a range of functions associated with being a field educator. Lack of knowledge about teaching and learning processes; difficulties defining boundaries and roles, articulating theory and models informing practice; and a lack of knowledge about different models of supervision were also problem areas cited by educators (Ellis, 1998:215). Ellis (1998:223) succinctly summarises the context in which the practicum operates in New Zealand:

Over all (agency) restructuring is impacting on the agencies' willingness to involve themselves in professional training because student placements are not part of agency outputs, nor are they part of workers' job descriptions. Because fieldwork is time consuming for agency staff and does not bring any funding into the agency, it is seen as expendable when organisations are being forced to cut

costs and reduce staffing levels.

Although much of the discussion thus far has focused on the impacts of broad socio-economic policy on practicum delivery, other factors contribute to the overall context of field education. These include the agency workplace culture and the placement structure. These factors, which we might call micro contextual influences, are addressed next.

THE IMPACT OF AGENCY CULTURE

The 'culture' of human service organisations is described by Jones & May (1998:231) as being comprised of the "shared meanings, which may be values, beliefs, ideology and norms. These are given expression through shared symbols, notably myths, stories, rites, language and artefacts. These cultural elements may be overt or covert, official or operative". Not surprisingly, aspects of the placement agency culture may enhance or detract from student learning endeavours in the field. The way agency culture may shape student experiences of field education is canvassed in the following discussion.

That student field learning is influenced by the degree of support that is forthcoming from the placement agency (Selig, 1982) seems self-evident. The point at issue is how one can categorise and measure this concept. A *supportive climate* was defined by students in one British study as having a supportive field educator, being part of a team that supported student learning, and being placed in an agency with other students (Walker et al., 1995). These observations reflect the findings of earlier British authors who found four factors played a key role in creating an optimum learning environment in an agency. These included: the contributions to student learning made by staff members other than the field educator; the existing degree of work pressure in the agency; the procedures and protocols used in the agency; and the availability of role models in the agency (Secker, 1993).

Where the workload is such that staff have little time to spend in explaining and sharing aspects of their work with students, it follows that this impacts on the students' perception of the quality field education. In addition, Wilson (1981) notes that, where workload pressure is great, the student is at risk of being regarded as an extra pair of hands to do agency work, a situation that compromises the student's status as a learner. Similarly, agencies that have morale problems, high staff turnover and excessive workloads do not generate a climate conducive to focused student learning. Wilson also notes that students may be invited to participate in conflictual relationships in an agency, often challenging the agency authority figures, creating tension for the student, and seriously compromising learning in the field.

Despite the pressure of work in social service agencies being widely known, it is often naïvely asserted in the academic literature on field education that providing field education should be in the worker's job description, and that qualified staff should be rewarded for doing this task well (Selig, 1982; James et al., 1990). These sentiments are, of course, laudable and ideal for workers and the enterprise of field education, but they appear to be incompatible with the current economic climate in which social service agencies operate. Gursansky & Ruys (1995) are probably quite realistic in stating that economic restraint is paramount, and any activity not considered the core business of the agency will not be rewarded. Absent from some commentaries on the responsibilities of the agency, is how to operationalise a reward system for field educators in the current economic context. While it is acknowledged that agencies taking students on placement are making a contribution to the renewal of the profession of social work, there is a lack of specific information from agencies about the costs of providing student placements. This results in the a dilemma for advancing field education policy and practice:

[F]igures (for costs) do not rest upon any firm empirical foundation and are often 'best guesses' made with a degree of arbitrariness in the context of difficult

debates about resources. Such a model can hardly be held up as a model for enlightened policy making either locally or nationally and yet to date, there seems to be little substantive research evidence to lean on, surely a reflection of the low priority given to practice teaching for many years (James et al., 1990:94).

Nevertheless, both students and field educators claim that students doing work perceived as 'useful' will enhance the engagement of the student with the agency team, as well as make the student feel more at ease on placement (Nixon et al., 1995). Quite apart from assisting the engagement process, there is evidence that students can, and often do, make significant contributions to the work of the agencies in which they are placed (James et al., 1990). Not surprisingly, the nature and type of work available for the student has a bearing on student satisfaction with field education.

Furthermore, it is clear that satisfaction for students is increased when the agency is able to provide learning opportunities relevant to their specific learning goals (Selig, 1982; Fortune et al., 1989), and, naturally, relevance of learning opportunities also impact upon student enjoyment and motivation in the field (Fortune & Abramson, 1993). Similarly, students are more likely to report dissatisfaction with their placement learning overall if they have indicated dissatisfaction with allocation at the beginning of the placement (Walker et al., 1995).

These observations imply that although the personal relationship between student and field educator is central to the learning encounter, wider contextual relationships also impact on student learning. In particular, the type of work available on placement, and the initial impressions a student has about an agency at the point of allocation influence outcomes. Even so, the extent to which student ratings of satisfaction can be considered a valid method for gauging the success of a placement is problematic. It is possible that student ratings of placement experiences are idiosyncratic, rather than reflecting the

quality of the teaching and learning that occur in the field (Sinicrope & Cournoyer, 1990).

Given the many allusions in the literature to student productivity, it is surprising how little research attention has been given to the ways in which student work has been perceived by the parties involved. At the least, it is acknowledged that students contribute to an agency by bringing a “fresh outside viewpoint”; “providing stimulation for the individual field instructors”; and providing “quality service” (Selig, 1982:140). Just how “stimulation” and “quality service” were defined in Selig’s research is unclear.

Nevertheless it seems generally accepted that accommodating a student on placement constitutes a major contribution by the agency to social work training (Rohrer et al., 1992). Selig (1982) makes the very practical observation that agencies taking on a student in an office-based environment need to ensure that they have sufficient resources to accommodate the student, namely space for a desk and chair, access to a telephone, and room for the student to carry out interviews. Furthermore, he notes that having a student on placement may give rise to tensions in the agency related to: matters of confidentiality; the presentation of agency work in the classroom setting; the degree of participation the student will have in the life of the agency; student attempts to create change in agency policy or direction; and differing interpretations of student and agency personnel about the role of social work.

Given all of these considerations, it is to be expected that students’ learning in the agency setting is often reported as being far from problem free. In fact, the tradition of workplace learning in applied disciplines has recently been subject to a serious challenge. Hughes (1998) asserts that, on the one hand, it is acknowledged that workplace learning provides students with authentic work experience, yet, on the other hand, the environment in which students and field educators operate frequently falls far short of an ideal learning milieu.

Following that line of enquiry, I was keen in my research to gauge the impact of the current working climate on student and field educator experiences.

PLACEMENT STRUCTURE

Although a central consideration, I could find little in the literature that discussed the impacts of different placement structures on the teaching and learning. In structure, the two main ways of delivering field education have been through either 'concurrent' or 'block' placements. Concurrent placements involve the student working in placement and attending classroom lectures over the same period. The block placement involves the student attending placement learning on a full time basis. Little attention has been given to assessing the efficacy of either of these models, but one early writer on social work field education (Wilson, 1981) discussed the benefits and shortcomings of each method. Wilson noted that students and field educators tend to prefer block placements as they provide an opportunity for the student to become immersed in the daily practice of the agency. This structure also allows students to undertake placements in localities that are some distance from the school of social work. This trend is increasingly popular in New Zealand with those schools offering distance education programmes using modular teaching throughout the curriculum. Wilson argues, however, that block placement compromises the integration of theory and practice, with students having little or no classroom contact. This contention does somewhat date Wilson's claims, in that field educators in the new century would be expected to facilitate integration during the placement in a role that is no longer considered the sole responsibility of the school. The strongest arguments supporting the use of concurrent placement, in Wilson's view, are pedagogical. Concurrent placements: allow students the opportunity to link classroom learning with agency practice on a week-by-week basis; provide work in the field that can be used in the classroom situation with more immediacy; and usually go on longer than

the block placement, allowing the field educator and student greater opportunity to get to know each other and giving the student more time to assimilate knowledge. The major stated disadvantage of concurrent placements is for clients who have the student as a primary worker, and who may need attention on days other than when the student is present in the agency. When this happens, the field educator usually picks up the work, and the student may miss out on being involved in the complete process of working with the client system (Wilson, 1981).

No recent research which compared the efficacy of field learning on the basis of using concurrent or block placement structures was discovered. However, two recent studies on field education reported students' beliefs that the structure of the placements did not affect their learning outcomes (Walker et al., 1995; Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996). The findings concur with earlier research that showed neither block nor concurrent structures for placement were educationally preferable (Syson & Baginsky, 1981).

Having documented the contextual influences that impact on the delivery of social work field education, the discussion now turns to factors that influence teaching and learning experiences, with special reference to the second research proposition.

Proposition Two: That the methods used to facilitate learning, and the pedagogy that informs the *teaching and learning* deeply influence student and educator experiences of practicum education.

TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

This section begins by outlining the debates on relating theory and practice. Next, it discusses a range of supervision models demonstrating differing approaches to student supervision, along with identifying current teaching and learning methods and techniques used in experiential education. These factors will be further discussed in Chapter Eight

with the view to comparing practice research findings with the prevailing social work discourse. It is proposed that social work has teaching and learning issues in common with other disciplines, and the prospect of future cross-disciplinary practicum learning is raised. The section concludes by examining how well-prepared contemporary social workers are to fulfil the field educator role, and outlines training initiatives trialed to this end.

Relating Theory to Practice

The 'integration of theory and practice' has traditionally been used as a major organising concept in social work education (Pilalis, 1986), and a great deal of the social work literature focuses on this aspect of education. The common assumption, however, that integration will occur on placement is not supported by research (Waterhouse, 1987). Although most students agree that one of the major objectives in social work education is to achieve integration (Barbour, 1984), it has been said that the reality, for many, is that this is poorly done in their training (Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996). One study reported the observation that "the practice teacher displayed no interest in the academic 'world' of the student, thereby contributing to the college/field divide" (Brodie, 1993:84). Thus, the extent to which integration or praxis occurs during field education appears at best haphazard, and at worst, nonexistent (Waterhouse, 1987; Walker et al., 1995).

This discussion now focuses on understanding why the process of integration has been fraught with difficulties, examining what strategies have been used to facilitate such integration, and introducing the notion of 'theory through experience'.

Why has the integration of theory and practice presented both conceptual and application difficulties? It has been strongly argued that the division between 'classroom theorising' and 'agency practice' hinders efforts to facilitate integration in the field (Carew, 1979; Rungay, 1988; Payne, 1990). Multiple reasons for poor integration outcomes have been

suggested including: ongoing scepticism about the relevance and application of the theory taught (Wayne et al., 1989); a lack of a common understanding and meaning associated with the term 'theory' (Timms & Timms, 1977; Payne, 1990; Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996); a lack of time for discussion where theory and practice are related (Walker et al., 1995); a lack of a tidy 'fit' between the work the student is carrying out on placement and current educational knowledge and principles being taught in the classroom (Walden & Brown, 1985); and ambivalence on the part of practitioner/ field educators about the importance of theory for informing practice (Barbour, 1984; Waterhouse, 1987; Brodie, 1993).

The division and debate about relevance of theory is indicative of a tension which exists between educational institutions and the agencies that host students on placement (Rumgay, 1988; Papell, 1996). Barbour (1984) found that students themselves may become ensnared in this tension, to the point of equating anti-theoretical field educators with those providing quality field education. In addition, students regarded placements where there was little integration of theory with practice as evidence of the irrelevance of the theory, rather than a shortcoming in the agency's social work practice. Another study identified students feeling "trapped, between tutors who were out of touch with current practice and supervisors who were out of touch with theory" (Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996:61)³. Tensions of this sort, between the orientation of educational institutions and that of service providers, are not isolated to social work, and patently exist in other disciplines, such as nursing (Wong & Wong, 1987).

³This retreat from mainstream professional principles is probably attributable to two main categories of behaviour: i) Anti-intellectualism, or the retreat to intuition; or ii) Supra-intellectualism, ideologues of various persuasions, who reject the technologies of professional social work as misguided or oppressive.

One of the major contributing factors in this debate, it is claimed, is that social work does not have its own discrete body of knowledge and theory, rather what is used in practice can originate from a range of other sources (Sheldon, 1978; Pilalis, 1986). This diversity can be confusing for the student who is seeking to identify a single conceptual framework that can be used to inform the discipline of social work. The weakness of drawing on theory from diverse sources was illustrated in a British study of 714 newly qualified social workers. In response to questions regarding the relationship of theory used in practice the authors of the study note: "There is such a range of theory and 'approaches' being valued by students that it is difficult to get a clear sense of any intellectual 'coherence'" (Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996:53).

It has been further argued that optimum integration of theory and practice in social work is hindered by lecturers' and field educators' weaknesses both in articulating what theories they subscribe to and in articulating how theory may be operationalised in practice (Carew, 1979; Berman-Rossi, 1988). If such claims are correct, it is likely that students are exposed to role models in education who do not consciously draw from a strong theoretical base to guide their practice interventions.

Evidence of haphazard integration is provided by a British qualitative study, drawing on accounts of student experiences on placement (Secker, 1993). Three approaches to practice were identified, based on the types of knowledge students used to inform their practice. These are: the 'everyday social approach', where students informed their practice entirely from knowledge derived from their personal experiences; the 'fragmented approach' characterised by students experiencing conflict between knowledge used in their everyday lives and theoretical knowledge, resulting in practice dilemmas; and the 'fluent approach', where students were able to draw on several sources of knowledge to inform practice. Of nineteen students who completed their training, one

used an 'everyday social approach', twelve employed a 'fragmented' approach and just six used a 'fluent' approach. The educational background of students appeared to have no bearing on whether they were able to achieve the more productive 'fluent' approach by the end of their social work training.

Carew asserts that collegial advice, along with trial and error in practice, informs social workers' decision-making more than adherence to any theoretical model of intervention (Carew, 1979). The apparent widespread lack of knowledge about or adherence to any set of theoretical applications amongst practising social workers implies that field educators are weak on integrating theory with practice. This weakness was addressed by CCETSW in *Requirements and Regulations for the Diploma of Social Work* (CCETSW, Paper 30, 1989a), and by *AASW Accreditation Guidelines* (AASW, 1998) both of which stress the importance of assessing student knowledge of theory that informs practice.

Those who have written in the social work literature about the theory and practice dichotomy have made some strong assertions regarding field educators' lack of knowledge about, and willingness to grapple with, integration. I was compelled, therefore, to explore the extent to which New Zealand educators used theory to inform their work in practice and with students. In my view, the purpose of using theory in social work is twofold. It is used to provide a means for predicting behaviour in differing situations, and it is used to provide a framework on which to base informed decisions in client interventions. In the absence of any systematised approach to address client concerns, field educators must model habits of practising social work that are based purely on so-called 'gut reaction' and occupational folklore. Owing to their lack of rigour, neither of these approaches ensures that students are equipped to make informed decisions in order to minimise errors of judgement in their work with clients.

I have covered most of the reasons why integration of theory and practice have proved

problematic. Nevertheless, over the years a range of strategies have been developed to facilitate these linkages. Most schools commonly timetable specific integration seminars at different junctures throughout the field placement (Walden & Brown, 1985; Mok, 1993). Such seminars usually include an analysis of the client populations being served by the students in the field, and then move on to consider the various theoretical constructs and models that might be used in different agency settings. A considerable portion of the integration seminar will usually focus on how to use theoretical principles or models for planning and implementing interventions with the clients. Although integration seminars seem to be a well-established part of social work curricula, I have been unable to locate any studies on their efficacy in terms of teaching and learning.

A second strategy used to close the problematic gap between schools and the field with the view to facilitating integration is the provision of service delivery through agency and school partnerships. Several models of partnership have been reported in different parts of the world with mixed success (Rabin et al., 1994; Gantt et al., 1991; Goldstein, 1980). While these attempts to provide service delivery with an intentional focus on theory, models, and ideology of practice appear to have served students well in facilitating quality placements, the issue of agency and school staff workload, and tensions between academics' and practitioners' points of view were also evident.

Partnerships between schools and agencies for the purposes of providing direct client services are not a widely used model in New Zealand social work. Administrative and resourcing concerns from the outset have meant that these types of initiatives do not get off the ground. Instead, a number of articles, chapters in books and whole publications have been written identifying ways to help educators and students link theory with practice (Lishman, 1991; AASWWE, 1991; Berg-Weger, 2000). The extent to which these guides and manuals are actually used by field educators and students is unknown.

BEYOND INTEGRATION: THEORY THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Over the last decade, the process of teaching students to use theory to inform their practice has been challenged (Papell, 1996), with a new emphasis being placed on the notion of praxis (Brookfield, 1991). Greater credit and recognition is being accorded to the role of experiential practice as a means of developing knowledge and theory about social work practice (Fook, 1999). Through applying the notion of 'theory through experience', the current divide that exists between theory and practice can be addressed, where a reconstructed and more useable form of theory to inform social work can be developed (Harris, 1996). The supervision process has traditionally been used by educators and students to unravel and examine the complexities of practice and the way it reflects or challenges contemporary theoretical paradigms. A plethora of different models of supervision can be found in human service work. The next section of this review summarises four of the most commonly used in social work.

MODELS OF STUDENT SUPERVISION

Ongoing clinical supervision throughout the placement, the strategy universally used in fieldwork education, inevitably influences the formal relationship between field educator and student. (Ford & Jones, 1987; Gardiner, 1989; Brodie, 1993; Bogo & Vayda, 1998). In Gardiner's formative research on social work student supervision, traditional approaches to supervision were analysed and found to have limitations especially where "learning is equated with the emotional growth of the student, and learning problems are the fault of the student's assumed emotional difficulties" (1989:11). The type of supervision described in Gardiner's critique has, in other studies, been identified as a 'therapeutic' approach. Findings suggest that students do not appreciate this approach to supervision (Rosenblatt & Mayer, 1975:186; Secker, 1993:118).

Alfred Kadushin, a scholar who has had an enduring influence on how social work supervision is defined and practised since his early publications in the late 1950s, proposed a model and definition of social work supervision that incorporates administrative, educative and supportive functions, where the ultimate objective is to deliver to agency clients the best possible practice (1992:23). This framework has provided the foundation from which a number of subsequent approaches to supervision have evolved. These have included incorporating a reflective approach to supervision (Bogo & Vayda, 1998; Harris, 1996), using competency-based objectives in supervision (Kwok, 1995; Shardlow & Doel, 1996), an interactional interpretation of supervision (Shulman, 1993), as well as understanding the supervision process and relationship using an anti-oppressive paradigm (Brown & Bourne, 1996). A short summary of each of these approaches appears below.

A Reflective Model of Supervision

The formative work of Bogo and Vayda (1987) provides a comprehensive model of supervision for field educators to use with students. Guided by principles derived from adult learning theory, the 'Integration of Theory and Practice Loop' (I.T.P. Loop) was developed. The process, illustrated with a loop diagram, first shows the student involved in the *retrieval* of factual elements of a practice situation. Next the student *reflects* on the practice intervention in terms of how effective the interaction may have been, and what personal values and attitudes may have served to influence the retrieval of facts. From this point, the field educator and student make *linkages* with professional knowledge, models and theories that inform intervention strategies. Finally, the student and educator formulate together a *professional response*, which the student implements with the client system. After carrying out the *professional response* the student is then invited to *retrieve* and *reflect* once again, thus beginning the next I.T.P. loop (Bogo & Vayda, 1987).

Competency-based Supervision

When using this approach, the emphasis for supervision is on meeting learning objectives which are jointly defined by the field educator and student and which are reviewed and assessed (Kwok, 1995:89). The learning process is structured (Shardlow & Doel, 1996), and students receive concrete feedback on a regular basis in order to assist them to attain the learning goals set at the beginning of the placement. Planning how objectives can be met in the placement is integral to the first phase of the learning encounter. Learning objectives may be met by using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies where students demonstrate their level of competency in a number of different ways.

An Interactional Model of Supervision

Understanding the systemic relationship between the worker (or student), the agency, community and client group is a second model that has been used to guide the supervision process (Shulman, 1993). This approach incorporates the notion of relationship, where the development of the student's understanding of the work context and relevant issues is seen as largely dependent upon and influenced by interactions with different systems or parts of the same system. This interaction is considered to be of a reciprocal nature, where the student's actions will be influenced by other systems and these systems will in turn be influenced by the student in some way. In using this approach, the educator's emphasis is on enhancing student skills and strategies for communicating and intervening within and across systems, and working with the student towards understanding how different systems within and outside the agency relate to each other (Shulman, 1993).

The Anti-Oppressive Paradigm of Supervision

Open acknowledgement of the issues relating to structural and interpersonal power and authority lie at the heart of this approach. Power is acknowledged on two levels: "the formal power that derives from the role and position of the supervisor vis-a-vis supervisee, and the informal power of both supervisor and supervisee that derives from

personal characteristics and structurally determined identities and roles based on key characteristics like race, gender, class, sexual orientation and (dis)ability” (Brown & Bourne, 1996:39). The development of an anti-oppressive relationship between student and educator is central to this approach, where the notion of empowerment underscores the supervision process as well as the direct service work that the student does with clients.

Clearly there is a range of models that can be used to inform supervision. I became interested in my research to find out which, if any, of these models were used by field educators and what supervision approach best helped students learn. Earlier surveys of student satisfaction with various teaching and learning methods have provided clear indication of what students like and dislike in field supervision, and the next segment of this review documents what are regarded as helpful and unhelpful teaching and learning strategies from the student perspective.

HELPFUL TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

The following features have been identified by students as enhancing learning in the field: establishing learning goals at the beginning of the placement; receiving ongoing feedback about work performance (Kissman & Van Tran, 1990); being empowered as adult learners to work in the field with a degree of autonomy (Rosenblatt & Mayer, 1975; Walker et al., 1995; Kissman & Van Tran, 1990); having opportunities to observe and use as role models a number of agency workers (Secker, 1993); having regular, uninterrupted supervision, joint agenda setting and having access to field educators when needed (Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996); being actively involved in the client work (Fortune & Abramson, 1993); and having integration of theory and practice articulated (Fortune & Abramson, 1993). Although these teaching and learning principles appear quite straightforward, carrying them out in practice is more problematic, as with the earlier discussion

on integrating theory and practice.

UNHELPFUL TEACHING AND LEARNING ENCOUNTERS

A number of factors that constitute 'unhelpful' experiences for students in field education have also been identified and reported. These include: field educators imposing a rigid ideology, style or theoretical approach; lack of clarity and focus in the practice teaching; use of a therapeutic mode of supervision alone; and unsupportive supervision (Rosenblatt & Mayer, 1975; Secker, 1993); field educators not assisting students to make the links between theory and practice; educators failing to listen to the student's point of view; having a non-qualified social worker or person from another discipline providing supervision (Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996); and field educators primarily using a caseload management approach to student supervision (Secker, 1993).

This last approach, where the discourse of caseload management dominates supervision, was identified in another study which labelled this type of student supervision 'minimalist' (Brodie, 1993). In this research, it was found that 63% of all student supervision time was devoted to case- or work-related discussion. Likewise, an earlier investigation into the content of student supervision sessions found that the majority of supervision time was spent focusing on client related issues (Basso, 1987). Results from both studies suggest that while social work educators promote an educational focus in student supervision (Shulman, 1993; Shardlow & Doel, 1996), this was not necessarily happening in the field. Of even more concern are those cases where it appears that students on placement are practising with minimal supervision of any sort, as was discovered in a recent North American study (Knight, 1996).

This poses the question whether the reportedly unhelpful experiences of students may have been avoided if schools were more selective about whom they recruited to carry out

field instruction. Pragmatically viewed, in the current climate, accessing enough placements to cover the student numbers is difficult, so being highly selective about who can be field educators has not been a priority (James et al., 1990; Beddoe & Worrell, 1997; CCETSW, 1992; CCETSW in Scotland, 1992). This creates a tension for schools of social work which, while endeavouring to meet accreditation requirements, are aware that the quality of some supervision is problematic. Wilson asserts that social workers with marginal job performance, those with a history of absenteeism, those who do not get on with colleagues, or do not want to supervise students, should not be field educators (Wilson, 1981). It follows that, in order for schools to judge whether potential supervisors have such characteristics, the agencies have to assume some role in the selection of employees as field educators. Neither the school nor the agency is in a position to act alone in selecting field educators. One suggestion is that the school should set the criteria for standards in field education and that the agency should evaluate the more individual subjective factors mentioned above (Wilson, 1981).

Given that supervised practical experience is a feature of many vocations, I judged that other health- and welfare-related occupations, such as nursing, medicine, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and teaching may yield similar results in terms of student opinions about what constitutes sound clinical education. Indeed, I found that social work was not alone in struggling with these issues in professional education, and in the literature I discovered clear similarities between the results of student satisfaction studies from social work and other disciplines.

UNRECOGNISED ALLIES: EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION IN APPLIED DISCIPLINES

Research outside the discipline of social work into student satisfaction with clinical teaching strongly supports the findings of studies conducted within social work (Christie et al., 1985; Bergman & Gaitskill, 1990; Onuoha, 1994; Goertzen et al., 1995; Davies et

al., 1996). Students in nursing identified the need to have clinical instructors who: are articulate and knowledgeable about practice, and provide fair assessment (Zimmerman & Waltman, 1986; Bergman & Gaitskill, 1990); give frequent feedback (Neville & French, 1991); integrate theory and practice and use adult learning strategies (Davies et al., 1996). Similarly, occupational therapy students report satisfaction with an experiential approach to field learning that demonstrates the integration of theory with practice. Personal qualities such as enthusiasm for teaching and being supportive of students also contributed to student satisfaction with clinical teaching (Christie et al., 1985). A small study conducted with medical students placed in rural practices identified effective teaching behaviours as: actively involving the student in clinical practice and providing adequate supervision; demonstrating clinical competence; being organised in the teaching process; and providing feedback (Goertzen et al., 1995). The number of years of experience an educator had had in supervising students did not appear to influence how students rated the quality of field education they received.

In all these studies, factors associated with student satisfaction across a range of disciplines were similar to those expressed by students of social work. This finding suggested to me two principles. Firstly, there may be a body of knowledge and practices associated with clinical teaching that could be applied universally to training in clinical practice. Secondly, clinical learning may be experienced by students as a distinct developmental process towards becoming a fully-fledged professional in a particular discipline. These suppositions lend weight to the notion of developing a model for professional training across occupations (Ladyshevsky, 1995).

The focus of this review of the literature now shifts from the student experience in field education to field educators and how they are prepared for the supervision of students.

FIELD EDUCATOR TRAINING

Whilst clinicians are trained in the craft of their profession, this training does not normally include the very specific body of knowledge on teaching adults in the clinical setting (Dunlevy & Wolf, 1992). As a result, one of the most common concerns expressed by educators from social work and other disciplines is that they do not feel adequately prepared to undertake the clinical teaching role (Bogo & Vayda, 1987; Cohn & Frum, 1988; Bell & Webb, 1992; Fortune & Abramson, 1993; Davies et al., 1996). An underlying assumption throughout social work and other human service related disciplines appears to be that once a person has qualified as a practitioner, they are qualified to teach. When asked about how they learned to be field educators, responses are invariably similar; "learned on the job" (Lacerte et al., 1989:106); "relied heavily on personal experiences of receiving supervision" (Strom, 1991:92).

Despite social work and adult education each having their own constellations of theory, and their own foundations of knowledge and skill, a set of transferable skills used in social work practice has been identified as being used in student supervision. These skills include encouraging exploration, clarifying and summarising, and information giving (Brodie, 1993). While these particular skills are needed in student supervision, used alone they do not provide a sufficient foundation for facilitating practicum teaching and learning (Brodie, 1993).

In Britain, the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) programme for accreditation of field educators addressed these training concerns. Introduced in 1989, the programme required participants to demonstrate their ability to carry out 14 competencies in the area of field education (CCETSW, 1991a). Accreditation of this type for field educators in social work has not been introduced in other countries so far as is known. In principle, having trained field educators implies that

there will be a better standard of supervision available to students. However, this has not yet proven to be the case in Britain, where recent research demonstrated inconsistency in terms of the quality of field supervision being provided to students (Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996). Two out of every five student respondents in that study still reported one or two unsatisfactory field education experiences. Nevertheless, it is now accepted wisdom that any programme offering clinical education needs to utilise methods that reflect adult teaching and learning strategies (Wilson, 1981; Shardlow & Doel, 1996).

While it is acknowledged that specific training is needed for clinicians to make the transition from the role of practitioner to that of educator, the degree to which this training occurs in schools or agencies is haphazard (Larsen & Hepworth, 1982; Lacerte et al., 1989). No New Zealand data existed to indicate the degree to which social work field educators are trained or supported in this role, and this highlighted for me the need to collect some information on field educator training in my research.

It has been argued that the competence of the social worker to act as an educator is critical to making the placement an educational process for the student (Abramson & Fortune, 1990) and that, without training, the transition from clinician to educator is likely to be characterised by a lack of preparation. North American research on the training of field educators found that those social workers who were trained for the role were more conceptual in their teaching methods, utilised process recordings more frequently, gave feedback more often, and linked client work with models of practice more often than untrained counterparts (Abramson & Fortune, 1990). Clearly then, training field educators will impact on the student experience on placement. These findings concurred with those of a Canadian study evaluating the impact of training field educators to use a critically reflective approach with students on placement. Field educators who had access to training increased their overall ability to think critically in

their role, compared with the control group (Rogers & McDonald, 1992).

Rogers, writing about Canada, claimed that making training for field educators both compulsory and accessible resulted in field educators feeling less marginalised in their role (Rogers, 1996b). Being involved in the process of training provided a means for educators to develop a comparative reference group with their peers, where problem solving, professional support and comparisons of student assessments can emerge (Humphreys & Morton, 1991). It has been found too, that undergoing training increases field educator satisfaction in carrying out student supervision, as well as having a significant influence on enhancing the quality of field education (Rosenfeld, 1989).

One of the major issues associated with providing resources for training and ongoing support of field educators is the high turnover rate within this population. Considerable efforts and resources can be directed towards providing training for field educators, some of whom may end up having just one student in their entire career (Raynor, 1992). This dilemma is examined in the next section of the review.

FIELD EDUCATOR TURNOVER AND MOTIVATION

Several commentators from various parts of the world have noted the problem of high turnover amongst field educators (Bell & Webb, 1992; Bogo & Power, 1992; Rohrer et al., 1992; Shardlow & Doel, 1992; Cooper & Crisp, 1998). Coupled with this problem is the current so-called 'crisis' in placement provision (Brodie, 1993; Beddoe & Worrell, 1997), the under-resourcing of field educators in terms of agency workload adjustment, and meagre agency support for the role of field educator (James et al., 1990; Brodie, 1993).

Reasons given for a high turnover of field educators include: lack of recognition and preparation for the role (Bell & Webb, 1992; Strom, 1991); extra workload and low

satisfaction levels associated with supervising a mediocre student (Rosenfeld, 1989); lack of clarity in the guidelines and expected standards for field education (Knight, 1996). The high level of attrition of field educators means the ongoing development of related knowledge and experience over a period of time is compromised, resulting in a lack of field education practice wisdom amongst supervisors. Research in this area has found that field educator retention is influenced by: the degree of agency support for the role; good communication from the school of social work; field educator job satisfaction; and the calibre of the students being supervised (Rosenfeld, 1989). Although little is known about what motivates field educators to undertake this role (Rohrer et al., 1992), two studies shed some light on this topic. One Canadian study asked 122 field educators to rank in importance the factors contributing to their decision to supervise students. There were four main motivational factors cited. Firstly, educators felt a sense of “professional responsibility” to assist with student learning. Secondly, for most, providing field education was seen as enhancing personal professional development. Thirdly, being a field educator presented “an intellectual challenge” and, fourthly, acting in this role enabled social workers to remain up to date with current practice and research literature (Freeman & Hanson, 1995).

A second study conducted in North America asked 66 field educators to cite their reasons for undertaking this role. Reasons given for initially becoming a field educator were “professional duty” along with “a desire to teach, a new challenge and extra help for the agency” (Lacerte et al., 1989). Clearly then, motivation to be involved in field education is strongly linked with a desire to make a contribution to the social work profession, as well as bolster opportunities for personal professional development. Given that turnover was identified as a significant issue in the literature, I decided to include in my questionnaires a question about the number of students supervised in the field, and I

followed up the issue of motivation in the interviews.

The second section of the review has addressed factors that impact on the teaching and learning exchange of student and educator. The final section will address the third research proposition outlined in Chapter One.

Proposition Three: Social work field education is shaped and influenced by the complex nature of relationships that exist between the student, field educator, agency, school, and wider community.

RELATIONSHIPS IN FIELD EDUCATION

As I explain in Chapter Three, the notion of ‘relationships’ in field education emerged early on as one of the central constructs for analysis. Here, I examine the literature on relationships in field education from three different angles. To begin, the complexity of formal and informal relationships between educators, students, schools and agencies is discussed. The literature on the formative relationship between student and educator is then explored with particular reference to studies of student satisfaction with practicum learning. This final section of the review concludes with a discussion on the process of matching students with educators.

Relationships Between the Schools of Social Work, Social Service Agencies and Individual Field Educators

The nature of the relationships that exist between the schools of social work, local social service agencies, and individual field educators, have a marked impact on the health and well-being of the field education component in any social work training programme. In fact, a case has been made that these relationships are critical to the maintenance of the social work profession (Frumkin, 1980). A variety of factors impact on the interrelationship of these entities, including: the amount of collaboration that exists

between the school and field, and the resource constraints operating for each party (Homonoff & Maltz, 1995); the degree of commitment a school has for carrying out liaison functions (Fellin, 1982; Hanna, 1992); and the extent to which individual field educators feel they are rewarded, either personally or professionally, for their role in educating students (Rosenfeld, 1989).

Three key features for establishing and maintaining good working relationships between schools and agencies were identified in the early field education literature. According to Fellin (1982), communication, co-operation and co-ordination initiatives from the school towards the agency need to be both timely and politic. Moreover, attention needs to be paid to engaging differing levels of administration within the agency (Homonoff & Maltz, 1995).

In describing the process of communicating between the school and the field, much of the literature refers to the 'liaison role', which describes the personal contact that the school makes with the field agencies to monitor student progress on placement (Raphael & Rosenblum, 1987; Faria et al., 1988; Fortune et al., 1995). Liaison persons are assigned in various ways by schools. A student's tutor may liaise with the agency in which that student completes placement. Alternatively, some schools assign a liaison person to a group of agencies in order to facilitate ongoing working relationships between that member of the school staff and the agencies.

The main function of the liaison person is, supposedly, the facilitation of communication and support for both the field educator and student. However, it appears that conceptualisations of the liaison role may be out of step with what happens in reality, with both field educators and students being reluctant to turn to the liaison person when problems occur on the placement (Rosenblatt & Mayer, 1975; Fortune et al., 1995). It seems that students and field educators may place different value on this process of

liaison, as it is reported that some students considered the liaison visits from their respective schools to be irrelevant (Fortune et al., 1989). At the same time, field educators value these visits as opportunities to provide linkage, to mediate and monitor the placement process (Brownstein et al., 1995), and to provide “concrete immediate assistance when needed” (Fortune et al., 1995).

Evidence suggests that building working relationships between the school and agencies lies at the heart of successful field education. In the absence of adequate support and liaison, field educators and their employing agencies can feel isolated in their endeavours to provide field education (Nixon et al., 1995). This, in turn, leads to feelings of dissatisfaction and disenchantment with the education enterprise. While monitoring students’ progress in the field and supporting field educators are the main functions of the liaison, this person can also actively promote the bond that exists between agencies and the field, that is, their shared goal of educating future social work professionals (Raphael & Rosenblum, 1987).

There is evidence of great inconsistency in terms of how different schools of social work define and resource the liaison role (Brownstein et al., 1995). Inconsistencies also exist in terms of the degree to which agencies and field educators receive tangible benefits from schools for contributing to the field education programme (Rohrer et al., 1992). A further complicating factor is that field education is not the sole priority for the field educator who has practice responsibilities, and neither is it the sole priority for the university lecturer with teaching and research responsibilities (Fellin, 1982).

Thus, it can be argued that the enterprise of field education occurs within a ‘marginalised’ context. Training social work students is not the core business of social service agencies, even though educationalists are apt to make bold assertions that employers must recognise the importance of and support continuing professional development (Taylor,

1997). At the same time, applied clinical education is not the core business of a university, where academic teaching and research are most valued (Dedmon, 1989). Committing resources to field education could lead to reduced legitimacy of the school of social work within the wider university setting (Frumkin, 1980; Hanna, 1992). It has been suggested that for teachers of social work to survive within the university setting they must compromise their professional identification, with the result that they become distanced from practice realities (Hanna, 1992). At the same time, continuing to be engaged in social work practice may compromise the tenure and promotion possibilities of university teaching staff, where such activity is viewed as less-valued “public or community service” (Dedmon, 1989:134).

The relationships between the co-operating parties need also to be considered within the socio-economic context discussed earlier in this chapter. The notion of reciprocity is of relevance in these relationships. Although individual field educators have identified that they undertake this role in order to give something back to the profession (Selig, 1982; Lacerte et al., 1989; Freeman & Hansen, 1995), schools of social work have been warned about taking this commitment for granted (Frumkin, 1980; Homonoff & Maltz, 1995). Having ‘understandings’ between the school of social work and the host agency recorded in a formal contract provides some degree of legal protection for each party in the event of problems arising (Wilson, 1981).

Universally it is acknowledged that the field education component of social work training is, in general, inadequately resourced (Brodie, 1993). In the current restrictive economic climate, schools have been urged to consider using organisational analysis and exchange theory to work out how agencies and individual field educators can benefit in a concrete way from having students on placement (Frumkin, 1980). The literature on this subject raised questions about the degree of support field educators felt in their role, which I

followed up in the questionnaire (See Appendix D).

The Student and Field Educator Encounter

During the course of a placement, an intimate learning relationship can develop between the student and field educator. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that personal attributes, along with the teaching and learning preferences of the supervisor, are integral to achieving effective learning outcomes for the student. Drawing from his own experience and the work of others, Galbraith provides a comprehensive inventory of desirable qualities, skills and roles needed to be an effective adult educator (1991b). In particular, he notes that educators need to be knowledgeable about their subject area, and at the same time promote caring, trust and challenge within the educational encounter.

A number of substantive studies have focused on the relationship between the attributes of the field educator and student satisfaction with their social work placements (Raskin, 1989; Kissman & Van Tran, 1990; Fortune & Abramson, 1993; Walker et al., 1995; Knight, 1996; Fernandez, 1998). From this research, it is possible to categorise into two separate areas the qualities and behaviours identified by students as impacting on their learning in the field. These are the personal attributes of the field educator, and the educational methods used.

In one British study, personal attributes such as the educational background and marital status of the field educator correlated with student satisfaction. Students expressed greater satisfaction with educators who held a degree, and appeared to prefer educators who were single or divorced rather than married or separated (Walker et al., 1995). However, another study, in North America, noted that students' evaluations of field educator performance were largely dependent on the skill of the educator and the quality of the learning experience, and were not greatly influenced by personal characteristics (Knight, 1996). Other qualities that impact on the relationship between field educator and student

are: the field educator's commitment to students, enthusiasm, knowledge, and willingness to examine feelings related to work issues (Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996); the extent to which the field educator was accessible to students (Urbanowski cited in Knight, 1996); and the degree to which the students felt both supported and trusted by the educator to work with clients (Secker, 1993; Walker et al., 1995).

It was unclear in the British study cited above (Walker et al., 1995) what the criteria for a 'supportive' field educator were. However, the North American study defines the field educator as an 'enabler', that is, "someone who promotes the growth of the student through direct instruction, modelling, and exploration of relevant personal issues" (Knight, 1996:401).

In recognition of the importance of the relationship between the student and field educator, attempts have been made to 'match' students with field educators. This final section of the review will document the rationale for using a matching process, and examine the reported efficacy of matching students with educators on the basis of gender and learning styles.

Matching Students on the Basis of Gender and Learning Styles

A substantive body of literature has focused on the notion of matching students of social work with educators (Raskin, 1989; Thyer et al., 1989; Behling et al., 1989; Fortune & Abramson, 1993; Vonk et al., 1996). However, within the current socio-economic climate I have to question the utility of matching. The process implies that social work programmes have a pool of placements and educators available from which the best student-supervisor match can be made. This is generally the case neither here in New Zealand (Beddoe & Worrell, 1997) nor overseas (Moss, 1997). Nevertheless, in recognition of the importance of the relationship between field educator and students,

endeavours to match them have prevailed (Fortune & Abramson, 1993).

Several studies conducted to measure the importance of gender in relation to student satisfaction with the teaching and learning on placement have recorded equivocal results (Raskin, 1989; Thyer et al., 1989; Behling et al., 1989; Fortune & Abramson, 1993; Vonk et al., 1996). Two of these studies found that same-gender supervision arrangements were rated as preferable by students, but that gender combination had little impact on the overall satisfaction with the placement (Behling et al., 1989; Thyer et al., 1989). One study found that opposite-gendered supervision relationships were preferable but, once again, the level of statistical significance for this finding was minimal (Vonk et al., 1996). Two further studies found that there was no basis on which to claim the gender characteristics of student and field educator were at all significant in determining a satisfactory outcome (Raskin, 1989; Fortune & Abramson, 1993).

Thus, although it had been proposed that matches on the basis of compatible personal characteristics help create good teaching and learning relationships between educators and students (Silvester cited in Freeman & Hansen, 1995), this proposition was contested in more recent North American research (Knight, 1996), findings of which suggest that the respondents' ratings of the placement teaching and learning experiences do not correlate with field educators' age, race, gender or previous experience in social work (Knight, 1996).

Learning and teaching styles make up the second set of criteria that has been used to pair students with field educators. The term 'learning styles' refers to the ways in which students: perceive and gain knowledge; process knowledge; value, judge and react to information and ideas; and behave (Fox & Guild, 1987). Individuals differ from each other "in what they do with the knowledge they gain, how they process information and how they think" (Fox & Guild, 1987:75). Learning style has also been described as "an

individual's pattern of behaviour when confronted with a problem" (Rosenberg, 1968:36).

A good deal of attention in the literature has been given to the practice of identifying students' preferred styles of learning. It has been recommended that this identification should occur in a systematic fashion during the field placement (Webb, 1988; Coulshed, 1993). Commonly, this is done by asking students' to complete a 'learning styles inventory' (Renzulli & Smith, 1978; Kolb, 1985). Kolb's experiential learning model includes a classification of learning into four different styles, including active experimentation, concrete experience, reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation (Kolb, 1984). This model, and its relationship to experiential learning is taken up again in Chapter Three.

It has been claimed that two immediate benefits arise from having the student and field educator complete a learning styles inventory early in the placement. Firstly, completing the inventory enables the student to identify and appreciate the potential of his/her individual style, and identify processes that may pose difficulties in work with clients or in field instruction itself (Webb, 1988). At this point, it is possible for the student and field educator to identify individual similarities and differences in how each learns new information and skills (Webb, 1988; Lewis, 1991). Secondly, identifying the student's preferred learning style will serve to inform the process of drawing up the learning contract for the placement, as well as raise awareness of the wide array of teaching and learning approaches available to both the student and field educator (Renzulli & Smith, 1978).

The results of recent research, however, are not unanimous with regard to the application of Kolb's learning theory in social work field education. By identifying students' learning styles, educators are able to adapt the way early learning opportunities are presented to

the student on placement so that they fit with the student's preferred mode of learning. It is reported that these efforts facilitate good working relationships between students and educators (Rashick et al., 1998). However, a second study concluded there was no relationship between student and educator learning styles and learning outcomes in the field (Van Soest & Kruzich, 1994). Thus, while paying attention to modes of individual learning may facilitate the relationship between student and educator, the evidence that using Kolb's learning cycle in field education will lead to improved learning outcomes remains equivocal.

Even so, through the early identification of a 'mismatch' of student and field educator teaching and learning styles, it seems possible for both parties to reach agreement on how these differences can be accommodated in the placement (Bogo & Vayda, 1987). Awareness of differences in style may assist students and educators in the negotiation and processing of learning experiences throughout the placement. It is also possible to identify early on in the placement aspects that may be barriers to the student learning in the field, and to plan strategies to overcome these barriers. Responsibility rests with the field educator to adapt his/her teaching styles to suit the learning style of the student, in the same way that it is the student's responsibility to adapt in style in order to meet the needs of differing clients (Webb, 1988).

Mapping the extent to which learning style inventories are used in New Zealand field education, which is currently unknown, could provide an insight into the how educators facilitate the learning process with students. With this in mind I included a question on their usage in the student post-placement questionnaire (See Appendix C).

SUMMARY

This chapter has documented research findings and theories on factors that appear to

impact on practicum teaching and learning. In relation to context, the practicum enterprise has struggled to establish legitimacy within both academic and agency cultures, resulting in field education operating on the fringes of both domains. A significant discovery in the literature was the NZASW 1972 standards for field education. As we begin the twenty-first century these standards have yet to be realised, signalling the very slow progress in the development of social work practicum education in New Zealand.

The teaching and learning transaction has been examined from a range of different perspectives. However, three areas are of particular note. Firstly, it appears that the role of theory in relation to practice remains ambiguous for both students and educators. More latterly there seems to have been a paradigm shift towards the notion of theory development through practice. Secondly, studies of social work student's satisfaction with supervision yield remarkably similar results to studies from a range of other disciplines in terms of preferred modes of teaching and learning. These similarities suggest congruence of opinion across disciplines on what features constitute helpful and unhelpful clinical instruction techniques. Thirdly, research results indicate that training educators to specifically work with students on placement affects the subsequent teaching and learning outcome. This finding points to the need to assess educators' current access to appropriate training opportunities.

The final section of this review focused on the notion of relationship in field education. The nature of the relationships in field education need to be considered in light of the context in which the practicum operates, where resourcing and mutual gain through reciprocity are important considerations. The field liaison role has been seen as the key to establishing and maintaining relationships between schools and agencies, yet students reportedly gain little from liaison staff agency visits, raising questions about the legitimate role and function of these staff. A variety of formulae have been used to match

students with educators. Although the primary relationship between the student and educator has been the focus of much research attention, the definitive 'recipe' for engendering the best supervisory relationship, if found, has yet to be reported.

Although it was unclear to what extent it reflected the New Zealand social work practicum, the extensive body of international literature on field education provided me with signposts, themes, and hints about a way forward in constructing a local approach to this complex practice. The three propositions outlined in this chapter are carried through into the next, where I site them within a theoretical framework which I developed in order to understand the nature of practicum teaching and learning from a pedagogical perspective. Chapter Three documents how *contextual influences, teaching and learning transactions* and *relationships* were developed as the constructs used to guide my investigation.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES ON PRACTICUM LEARNING

In this chapter, I trace the development of the theoretical design of the research. In order to establish a theoretical framework to guide this research, existing learning paradigms were examined and reconceptualised. In this way an iterative process was used to formulate the theoretical foundations for this project. This process also informed the subsequent theory building that occurred throughout the research.

The foundation paradigm for this research has been derived from learning theory. This chapter therefore begins with a brief overview of the major perspectives that have been used to explain learning. Next, a rationale is presented for adopting in this research a blend of experiential learning theory with a model of learning in context (Boud & Walker, 1990). The three propositions cited in Chapter Two are now cast as constructs arising from this dual approach and are further elaborated. These include consideration of *contextual influences*, *teaching and learning transactions*, and the impact of *relationships* on practicum teaching and learning.

THE PROCESS OF LEARNING

In order to discover what theoretical approaches had been used in field education I began by investigating the different models of teaching and learning that had apparently been used in the placement setting. It became clear that no single learning paradigm has been used to inspire practicum education in social work. Although social work education has itself been consistently informed by ideology related to notions of justice and equity, the practice of teaching and learning in the field has been largely reactive and drawn from a diffuse range of models and strategies. These learning approaches and their application to field education are summarised in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Learning Theory and Its Application to Field Education

Theoretical Approach	Proponents	Main Principles	Application to Field Education Placements
Behaviourist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorndike (1874–1949) • Pavlov (1849–1936) • Skinner (1904–1990) • Gagne (1916–) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on observed behaviour • Learning shaped by environmental features • Learning is teacher-based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning broken into small steps • Educator feedback principal teaching technique • Educator to modify milieu to elicit desirable learning outcomes
Humanist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rogers (1902–1987) • Maslow (1908–1970) • Kolb (1939 -) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is student-centred • Focus on student intrinsic motivations to learn • Emphasis on both cognitive and affective learning • Freedom of student self-expression, and unqualified regard for the learner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of student learning needs • Focus on student self-directed learning • Educator to create supportive milieu conducive to student learning • Emphasis on student support towards personal growth
Developmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piaget (1896–1980) • Kohlberg (1927–) • Perry (1921–) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition of critical transition periods in children's development • Acknowledgment of moral development over life course • Notion of readiness to access learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field education contract based on recognition of prior learning • Simulated learning activities used to introduce incremental learning opportunities • Focus on the notion of professional socialisation
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowles (1913–1997) • Boud (1948–) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accent on student perception, insight and interpretation • Learning is student based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of critical reflection in supervision
Social	Bandura (1925–)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning through observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote observation opportunities • Conscious use of role modelling
Critical theory	Friere (1921–1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on notions of culture, philosophy and autonomy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive use of critical reflection • Incorporation of anti-oppressive and empowerment models of practice
Experiential	Dewey (1859–1952)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning through direct experience and reflection • Learners emotional response to the subject is valued • Process of learning as important as the outcome • Learning is student-based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of learning in genuine agency context • Use of role-play in supervision • Using A/V process recording, debriefing, critical reflection • Student & educator co-working, using live supervision

The table lists the different approaches to learning, the influential theorists, and the main principles related to each paradigm. The first three columns (*Theoretical Approach, Proponents, Main Principles*) were compiled with reference to the literature on learning theory and adult education (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Cranton, 1992; Joplin, 1995; Cross, 1981). The fourth column demonstrates how each of the differing perspectives have been applied to practicum education.

Clearly, diverse learning perspectives have influenced field education over the years. However, a wide search of the literature yielded just a few publications that provided specific theoretical analysis of social work field learning. These publications can be grouped into three categories. The first and largest group was prescriptive material relating practicum learning to principles of adult education as defined by Knowles (Gelfand et al., 1975; Clancy, 1985; Coulshed, 1993). The second was research material focused on Kolb's learning style matrices (Kruzich & Van Soest, 1986); Van Soest & Kruzich, 1994; Rashick et al., 1998). The third and by far the smallest category was research material on how students of social work learn (Gardiner, 1989). Apart from the works cited, nothing that uses learning theory or models of adult education as a basis for understanding social work education was found. From the focus taken in the literature, it would be fair to say that addressing the daily concerns of running a field programme has taken precedence over the application or development of learning theory for the practicum. As a valid generalisation, this focus has left the practicum virtually devoid of theoretical frameworks embedded within educational paradigms and unique to social work.

This theoretical void presented a serious challenge for me in conducting my research. In order to progress with this inquiry, I needed to derive a meaningful theoretical paradigm that could be used to understand practicum teaching and learning. To do this, I considered those elements distinctive to field education. The obvious starting point was to examine both adult education discourse and experiential learning.

ADOPTING A 'BLENDED' APPROACH FOR UNDERSTANDING PRACTICUM LEARNING

Interest in adult education theory had been particularly spurred in the second half of the twentieth century by the enormous increase in the number of adults participating in a

range of professional, vocational, workplace and recreational learning endeavours. Hence, although early educational theory predominantly focused on how children learn and develop (Piaget, 1926), in more recent years greater attention has been given to understanding how adults learn, resulting in the development of specific models of adult learning (Knowles, 1984; Hiemstra, 1993).

Although any one of the theoretical perspectives presented in Table 3.1 could be adopted in field learning, the principles of experiential learning are directly relevant to practicum education. It is the only approach that embraces the centrality to learning of direct interactive experience, which is underscored by principles akin to adult education (Lewis & Williams, 1994). Nevertheless, I doubted the adequacy of using experiential learning alone to examine field practice. Although experiential learning perspectives had been used to explore issues of workplace learning (Alderman & Milne, 1998), as an approach it did not fully acknowledge the impact of socio-political influences on student learning. Thus, in order to more fully integrate the notion of *context*, I considered it necessary to examine the practicum using a model for *learning in context* (Boud & Walker, 1991) as well as the experiential model. Table 3.2 outlines the distinguishing features of experiential learning and Boud and Walker's model of learning in context.

Clearly, either or both paradigms could be used to interpret field learning in social work. However, each offers a single unique perspective that is missing from the other, and critical to field education. Although genuine workplace experiences are part of experiential learning, this paradigm also incorporates the use of simulated activities to stimulate new thinking and learning. In field education this would include the use of role-play and closed-circuit video work to introduce different aspects of learning in an incremental way. Boud and Walker's model does not focus on these types of organised learning opportunities. Learning in their model is situated entirely within the realm of genuine experience, and does not incorporate simulation.

Table 3.2 Comparison of Experiential Learning and 'Learning in Context' Models

	Experiential	Learning in Context
Theoretical Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive
Key Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner, facilitator, peers & staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner, facilitator, peers & staff
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning facilitated through introducing student to new environment, real or created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is embedded within all interactions • Student engagement with the milieu central to learning process. Milieu includes both micro agency and macro socio-political environment
Learning Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on practical activities and concrete learning • Reflection used to consider practice experiences in order to improve future practice outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus is on getting student to be consciously aware of using processes of 'noticing', 'intervening' and 'reflecting' • Reflection used to shape understanding and challenge personal values

However, Boud and Walker's interpretation and incorporation of environmental influences is broader than the immediate physical work space that has become the focus of experiential learning. Within their model, facilitating student understanding of both micro and macro socio-political influences that impact on workplace practice is integral to the learning process. Students are encouraged to engage with, reflect upon, respond to, and intervene at both micro and macro levels of the milieu in which they are placed. This aspect of the Boud and Walker's model is particularly relevant for teaching social work. Developing students' knowledge and understanding of the wider social, cultural, political and economic factors that impact on practice is an essential part of social work education. In this way the notion of student engagement with the milieu serves two functions. It challenges students to examine their own personal values, as well as to carry out practice interventions that are informed by a political analysis.

Although this discussion has so far noted the differences between experiential learning theory and 'learning in context', it must be noted that both paradigms have a number of features in common. Both are focused on teaching and learning, both acknowledge the importance of the student/educator relationships and the impact of significant others on the learning encounter, and both take account of environmental influences on the teaching and learning encounter, although in a different ways. Through a process of integrating experiential learning theory with 'learning in context', I devised three central constructs that were used as the framework to analyse and interpret field learning. This new framework — 'Learning from Experience in Context' — is depicted in Figure 3.1.

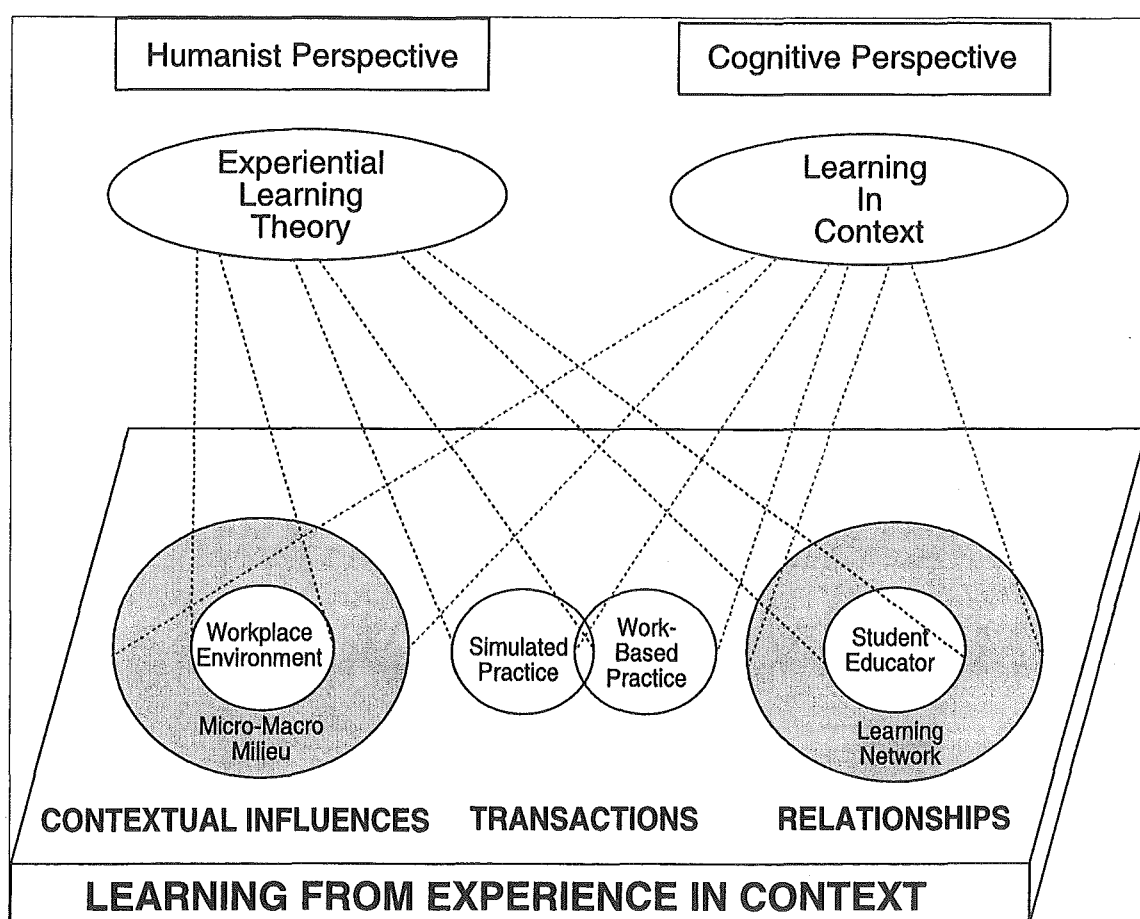


Figure 3.1 Learning from Experience in Context

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE IN CONTEXT: DECONSTRUCTING THE PARADIGM

The framework 'Learning from Experience in Context' is made up of three main components. These are experiential learning theory, the model of learning in context, and

the three constructs: *Contextual Influences*, *Teaching and Learning Transactions*, and *Relationships*. My inquiry was underpinned by this model of understanding the process of field teaching and learning and forms the basis of the research propositions introduced in Chapter One. Each of its components are now examined with the view to locating their origins within learning theory and principles of adult education.

Experiential Learning

Definitions of experiential learning include, “learning from experience or learning by doing” (Lewis & Williams, 1994:5) where “learning focuses on authentic learning experiences as the necessary basis for meaningful skill acquisition and human development” (Jackson & MacIsaac, 1994:22). The concept of ‘situated cognition’ is integral to experiential learning, where “cognition is a social activity that incorporates the mind, the body, the activity, and the ingredients of the setting in a complex and interactive and recursive manner” (Wilson, 1993:72).

Formative writing on experiential education appeared early this century in the work of John Dewey. *Experience and Education* (1938), provided the rationale for out-of-classroom learning with an emphasis on using students’ past and current experiences to derive knowledge and develop skills in problem solving (Cranton, 1992). Other key concepts in Dewey’s work included an emphasis on democracy to promote quality human experiences, and the notion of continuity in knowledge development. In this context, ‘continuity’ refers to a process whereby past and current experiences are integrated and serve to prepare students for later experiential encounters, resulting in deeper and more meaningful learning encounters (Burns, 1995). From this perspective, education is considered a lifelong social process, rather than a series of isolated, unconnected events (Cranton, 1992).

The philosophical foundations of Dewey’s ideas are akin to a humanist approach to education. Student learning is legitimated both by using objective reasoning and by reflecting upon emotional responses to experiences (Crosby, 1995). Although Dewey’s original work was not focused on adult learning, the notions of using direct experience to facilitate learning and drawing on student past experiences as a resource for learning, are principles firmly embedded in adult education (Cranton, 1992). Experiential learning and adult education have a number of value positions in common. Both paradigms

acknowledge the need for educational endeavours to be relevant to the learner, use activities adapted to suit individual learning styles, and promote student self-directed learning, where the 'teacher' performs more as a facilitator, coach or mentor.

More recently, the work of Donald Schön has provided an alternative frame of reference for understanding learning in applied disciplines (Schön, 1983; 1987). In particular, Schön challenges the imposition of theoretical paradigms to explain practice, using instead the term 'professional artistry' to articulate the process of decision making in practice (Schön, 1987:22). He argues that it is through an amalgam of knowledge gained from past experiences, theory, and intuition, that workers make spontaneous decisions. This decision-making process cannot be explicitly attributed to any set of practice rules or guidelines. He maintains that workers use a process of 'reflection-in-action' where responses to new or unexpected situations are shaped on the spot by workers drawing from knowledge and past experiences. (Schön, 1983:49-69). In this way, Schön argues, decision making in practice is not so much guided by positivist constructions of knowledge and theory, but rather through a blend of experience, knowledge, ideas and intuition. This paradigm is of particular significance for investigating the ways field educators work, that is, in terms of understanding skill development and knowledge transmission in the field.

As outlined in Chapter Two, social work has traditionally incorporated a practicum component in student education where 'learning by doing' has been the norm (Wijnberg & Schwartz, 1977). Using genuine practice experience has been the basis for learning in both the early 'apprenticeship model' of field education, and current practicum education, which also emphasises the use of critical reflection. The difference lies in the way the student and educator interact and use the experiences to learn. Whereas the apprenticeship model was focused on the student completing sets of tasks in the field in a way that was largely directed by the supervisor, current models of field education place emphasis on a collaborative relationship. Both the educator and student plan field experiences that will fulfil individual student learning needs and provide opportunities for critical reflection (Taylor, 1996). Although the use of genuine experience is incorporated into both models, the *process* used to facilitate student learning differs. In particular, early 'apprenticeship' field education was not conducted in a way that reflected the democratic principles of experiential learning.

Considerable academic attention has been given to how experiential learning theory can inform professional education across a range of disciplines, including social work (Raschick et al., 1998; Cavanagh et al., 1995; Svinicki & Dixon, 1987). Applying an experiential approach to field education involves using methods such as structured observations of social work practice, audio and videotaping of student practice, student and field educator working together, and student presentations (AASWWE, 1991; Davenport & Davenport, 1988). In addition, inductive learning can be aided through the use of journals, concept maps, critical incident analyses, autobiographical work (Boud & Knights, 1996); role plays, simulations, and the making and analysis of process recordings (Papell & Skolnik, 1992). The aim of these methods is to facilitate student reflection on alternative views and assessments of situations, making professional judgements, and generating informed decisions. In conducting this research, I was motivated to discover the degree to which students and field educators used experiential teaching and learning methods. With this in mind, I included in the student questionnaires (See Appendices B & C), items on the tools and methods used in experiential learning.

Experiential learning theory was the first frame of reference used to develop the model 'Learning from Experience in Context' (Figure 3.1). The second significant influence on the theoretical design was David Boud and David Walker's work which addresses the notion of context in learning (1990; 1991; 1998). I discuss their model in the next section of this chapter.

Situating Learning in Context

While considerable attention has been paid to creating physical environments conducive to the enhancement of adult student learning (Vosko & Hiemstra, 1988; Fulton, 1991), and to the notion of self-directed learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991), the social context in which adult learning takes place has largely been ignored (Brookfield, 1984; Boud & Walker, 1998). Yet, recognition of the social context in which field education occurs is fundamental to understanding the data that is collected in this field of inquiry (Silverman, 1993). Walker and Boud's model of the influence of context on teaching and learning is illustrated in Figure 3.2 below.

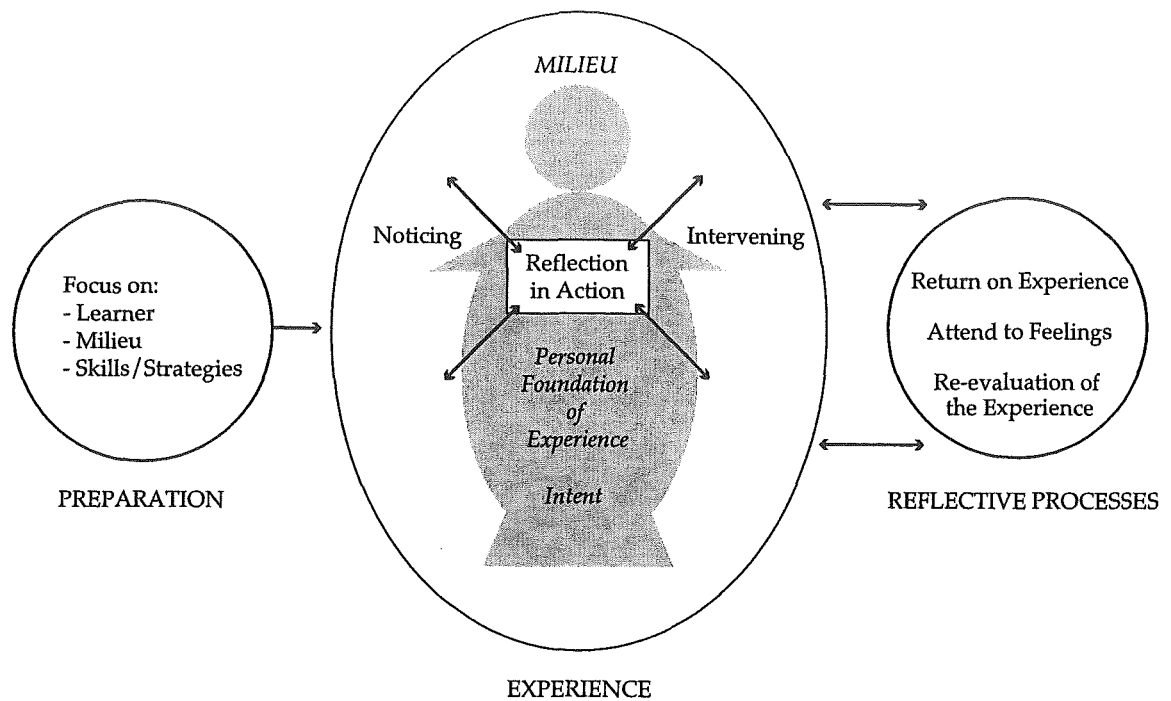


Figure 3.2 Influence of Context on Teaching and Learning

Boud & Walker (1998:202) contend: “Understanding context is always hard-won and there are always multiple readings of what it might be”. In their model of practicum learning, they distil the elements that, throughout the placement, impact on the interchange between the student and the learning milieu. It is the interaction between the learner and the learning milieu which creates the learning experience. Milieu is defined in the following way:

The milieu is much more than the physical environment; it embraces the formal requirements, the culture, procedures, practices, and standards of particular institutions and societies, the immediate goals and expectations of any facilitator, as well as the personal characteristics of the individuals who are part of it (Boud & Walker, 1990:65).

The concept of milieu in Boud & Walker’s model therefore equates with the context in which practicum learning takes place. The experiences, values and intent that the learner brings to the educative encounter are central to the ongoing nature of the interaction between the learner and the milieu. In this way, the model reflects Gardiner's contention (1989:59) that, in order “to understand the relationship between teaching and learning, and the influence of context, it is necessary to look closely at learners’ perceptions of the

learning task in a particular context, and their conceptions of the learning required to accomplish it”.

In addition, the learner on placement needs an understanding of agency history and formal and informal power dynamics in order to appreciate the milieu in which the learning encounter is taking place. The prevailing ideological positioning of the agency within welfare provision will also impact on the student learning experience, as will agency responses to issues of class, gender and ethnicity. Within the milieu, the student interacts with the learning experiences via processes of ‘noticing’ and ‘intervening’ (See Figure 3.2).

‘Noticing’, which can occur on a number of different levels, is both an activity and a measure of the degree to which the student engages with the learning milieu. Conscious use of noticing involves the student developing particular skills and strategies in order to become more fully involved in the teaching and learning interchange (Boud & Walker, 1990). In an interview about how nurses develop expertise, Patricia Benner referred to the intuitive nature of noticing in this way: “We find in these nurses a profound ethic of responsiveness. They will notice embodied responses and will attempt to be true to and not violate those responses” (Benner, 1992:84).

‘Intervening’ refers to action by the student, within the learning situation, which affects the learning milieu or the learner. Such actions may include either conscious or subconscious responses to some feature of the learning milieu (Boud & Walker, 1990). Intervening with the milieu involves the learner in extending and testing his/her understandings, and enables the learner to explore more about the events that have been ‘noticed’ (Boud & Walker, 1990). The degree to which a learner intervenes with the milieu is affected by a number of conditions including the learner’s level of confidence, experiences in past learning situations, and degree of motivation to learn. Conscious or subconscious conditioning may prompt intervening by the learner.

The facilitator has a role in encouraging learners to ‘notice’ and intervene. During the course of the placement, the field educator may arrange opportunities for the student to have exposure to a range of different types of work situations in order for the learner to first notice and then, possibly, intervene. It is self evident that the learner may not understand any given situation in the same way as the educator does, and will interpret

each event through his/her own personal lens. The facilitator (field educator) has a role in preparing the learner for his/her interactions with the milieu with regard to skills and strategies. Due to the dynamic nature of the placement context, not all encounters between the learner and milieu will occur in a planned way. Unexpected opportunities and learning events are likely to occur.

The model illustrated in Figure 3.2 incorporates three phases to practicum learning — preparation for the placement, actual placement experiences, and reflective processes (Walker & Boud 1994:8). As noted above, the field educator has a role in preparing the student for his/her exposure to the interaction with the milieu. However, Walker & Boud situate the learning within the wider realm of milieu, suggesting that the student, school and agency, as stakeholders in the placement process, all have a part to play in preparing for the placement learning encounter.

The second phase of the model incorporates the student encounter with the learning milieu, namely experience. This is a dynamic process, characterised by the student noticing and intervening with elements of the placement milieu. The third phase incorporates the reflective process whereby the learner's assumptions and prior experience are drawn out to inform the creation of new understandings about the learning experience. Such reflection may occur before or after the learning experience. The facilitator has a role in ensuring that reflection is not oppressive and mechanistic. Mindful of the power differential in supervision, Boud & Walker (1998) caution against the abuse and misuse of the reflective process in the learning context.

The macro influences on practicum teaching and learning have been identified and discussed by Boud & Walker (1998), Taylor (1997), and Shardlow & Doel (1996), among others. These authors note that field education programmes are strongly influenced by macro and micro contextual features that affect educator and student relationships, agency structure and policy, as well as the content and process used to teach the social work curriculum. Together, these factors shape the delivery of field education and constitute the complex context in which the teaching and learning encounters exist. Context, therefore, is defined as the micro and macro milieu in which field education takes place. Boud & Walker explain the notion of context in the following way:

The context to which we are referring is the total cultural, social and political environment in which reflection takes place. This broader context is so all pervasive that it is difficult to recognise its influence. It is, however, mirrored in and is in turn modified by particular local settings within which the learning occurs: the classroom, the course, and the institution. . . The learning milieu, as we conceived of it then (1990) represented the totality of human and material influences which impinge on learners in any particular situation. These include, co-learners, teachers, learning materials, physical environment and everything that was to be found therein. Whilst these influences are undoubtedly important and provide some key resources for change, a conception of milieu which focuses on these alone is far too limited to describe adequately the context of learning and its effects. Context is perhaps the single most important influence on reflection and learning. It can permit or inhibit working with learners' experience (Boud & Walker, 1998:196).

THE THREE CENTRAL CONSTRUCTS

In order to incorporate both 'experience' and 'context' into the theoretical framework that would guide this research, I developed the model 'Learning from Experience in Context', illustrated in Figure 3.1, which includes a blend of these features. Most notably, three constructs embrace experience and context, and can be applied to practicum learning. These are: an account of *contextual influences* in designing and processing the learning; an acknowledgement that the learning encounter is enmeshed and influenced by a series of multi-layered *relationships*; and an examination of the *teaching and learning transactions* integral to field education. In the next section of Chapter Three I discuss these constructs and explain how they relate specifically to this research on social work field education in New Zealand.

Contextual Influences

Both the process of facilitating experiential learning and the practice of workplace training are greatly influenced by the context in which the teaching and learning encounter takes place. This construct refers to the workplace environment in which the student placement occurs, but also includes the wider political and social milieu in which social work is delivered. Context therefore refers to cultural norms both in the agency and in its external environment.

For the purposes of this discussion 'context' is examined from a macro socio-economic and political perspective, noting how these factors influence the daily practice and organisation of social service delivery. In New Zealand, the curious combination of Te

Tino Rangitiratanga and neo-liberal ideology forms the macro context in which current social work field education is delivered. It is a paradox that under an economic rationalist regime, indigenous models of practice have flourished. Both of these contextual influences are discussed in turn.

Commitment to bi-culturalism: As alluded to in Chapter Two, the publication of *Puao-te-ata-tu* (Department of Social Welfare, 1986) was something of a watershed in the New Zealand welfare sector, exposing and challenging the racism inherent in social work practice and welfare provision. Since then, considerable attention has been paid to the development of indigenous models of practice (Bradley, 1995; McFarlane-Nathan, 1997; Fulcher, 1998; Connolly & McKenzie, 1999) and to the analysis of welfare policy from an indigenous perspective (Snook, 1995; Walsh-Tapiata, 1999), creating more diverse means of conceiving and implementing welfare policy.

A continuum model has been used to illustrate the range of bi-cultural goals and structural arrangements in the New Zealand public service (Durie, 1995:3) as seen in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 *A Bi-cultural Continuum*

Bicultural Goals				
Cultural skills and knowledge	Better awareness of the Maaori position	A clearer focus on Maaori issues and Maaori networks	Best outcomes for Maaori over all activities	Joint ventures within agreed upon frameworks
Structural Arrangements				
Unmodified mainstream institution	A Maaori Perspective	Active Maaori Involvement	Parallel Maaori institutions	Independent Maaori instjtutions

According to Durie's analysis there was no consistency across New Zealand's public service sector in terms of the degree to which bi-cultural goals and structures were found, as ministry practice lay anywhere on these continua. Nevertheless, educational

requirements for social service course accreditations required a demonstration of how the Treaty of Waitangi has impacted on course design and implementations, including the provision of culturally appropriate field supervision, and accessing placements where bi-cultural practice occurs (Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, 1997).

The influence of ideology on welfare provision forms an integral part of the context in which social work students learn. In recent years there has been a considerable shift in the provision of welfare, education and health services from the public to private sectors, in keeping with the focus on economic rationalism. However, it was a shift that has enabled territorially-based iwi to provide services in fields that were formerly monopolised by the State (Bradley, 1997). Curiously, the forces of economic rationalism has contributed to the renaissance of social service delivery for Maori and by Maori. Notwithstanding this positive development, current neo-liberal ideology has impacted significantly on the structure and delivery of welfare services in New Zealand.

Neo-liberal Ideology: In the period under review, New Zealand's social policy cannot be seen in isolation from the global economy, where economic rationalism was the order of the day. Key features of the neo-liberal approach to welfare included the reduced role of the State in direct social service delivery; the use of contracting arrangements for the provision of services; and the split between funder/provider roles in the provision of welfare services (Le Grand & Bartlett cited in Cheyne et al., 1997). Emphasis is given to managerialism, efficiency, measurement of outputs, accountability, and fiscal restraint. In particular, economic policy determined how matters of welfare were addressed, resulting in responses being couched within management jargon and frameworks, ostensibly devoid of political influence (Cheyne et al., 1997).

At the time, Beddoe and Davys (1994:8) offered this description: "There is a striving for efficiency, consistency and tightly focused task orientation which is constantly undermined by staff shortages, managerial changes, political interference, intensified public scrutiny and other internal and external threats". This was the context in which welfare agencies operated, and thus it is within this socio-political and economic climate that field education occurred. Within the social service industry there was divergent opinion about the merits of this technical rationalist approach. Some practitioners and educators expressed considerable frustration with the way in which the professional

concerns of social work were subordinated to the technical aspects of service delivery (Randal, 1994; Sutton, 1994; Henderson, 1998). For example:

New managerialism is a contaminant of professional supervision through its demands for task competence, job specific training and incessant measure of inputs, throughputs and outputs. The need for results and outcomes can quickly undermine the quality of the process and this does not sit comfortably with the more generic values placed on education and supervision. . . Fieldwork is not immune from the exigencies of the market economy (Randal, 1994:36).

Others spoke out in support of working within the neo-liberal paradigm (Keall, 1994; Stewart, 1998). For example, Keall (1994:31) wrote, “You are not there (in social services) to be nice and do good deeds. Knowing your business starts with knowing what you are funded to provide and to whom. This includes all the business management theory about defining your outputs, promoting a vision, strategic management”. The language used to describe the tasks and purpose of welfare was a sure indicator of the ideology governing social service delivery. The focus on agency cost containment and efficiency was in direct tension with the notion of providing for staff development and professional education in the field. The student on placement was situated at the nexus of this uneasy relationship. It was against this agency backdrop that the daily teaching and learning interactions between the student, agency staff and clients occurred during the period of my survey. Interestingly, research on the impact of context on teaching and learning outcomes indicates that good teaching and learning outcomes are still possible in adverse settings (Ramsden, 1996).

Contextual influences is the first of the three constructs that, as I have indicated, will be used in this thesis to examine field education. The second construct from Figure 3.1, *the teaching and learning transaction*, is discussed next.

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING TRANSACTION

Both experiential learning and the model of ‘learning in context’ are concerned with the *processes* of facilitating learning. This focus is in keeping with the principal aim of this research — to discover teaching and learning strategies that enhance student learning in the field. The notion of ‘transaction’ was developed in recognition of the fact that both concrete activities and reflective processes contribute to learning in the field. The term ‘transaction’ acknowledges too that students, workers, educators and clients in the

practicum are involved in a system of mutual exchange, and that, for the student, learning is embedded in all interactions (Galbraith, 1991a).

In understanding student learning, one of the most helpful frameworks I was able to identify came out of research conducted in the 1980s, in which students' 'deep' or 'surface' approaches to learning could be differentiated (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). As with the Walker and Boud model, the notion of *student intent* is integral to how learning occurs. Students interested in understanding ideas and delving for meaning approached subject content using a critical analysis. Entwistle and Ramsden classified this as characteristic of a 'deep' approach to learning (1983). Where the student intention was to 'cope with course requirements', the process of learning tended to be fragmented and characterised by rote learning and lack of reflection. This is where 'surface' learning occurred (Entwistle, 1997). Although this type of categorisation on its own is an oversimplification of learning (Cooper, 1994b), proponents of adult education acknowledge these dichotomous approaches: "A concern with meaning and understanding is (thus) central to an experiential conception of the teaching and learning process, for the gap between reproduction and understanding represents a quantum leap in the quality of what has been learned" (Hounsell, 1997:240 Parentheses in original).

Like others before me, I believe that reflection is a crucial factor in guiding the student from surface to deep approaches to learning. It is my contention that three factors relating to teaching and learning are common to both experiential learning and the notion of adult learning in context. These are (i) facilitating critical reflection, (ii) acknowledging difference in learning styles, and (iii) demonstrating respect for adult responses to learning challenges. How educators facilitated reflection, demonstrated respect for students and acknowledged difference were key elements that I sought to investigate throughout the research.

Deconstructing Reflection: Boud and Walker encourage the use of reflection-in-action as well as reflection-post-action to facilitate student awareness of new ideas, and to aid their understanding of concepts and practice. Facilitating student reflection is also central to experiential learning situations (Caffarella & Barnett, 1994). Using reflection to create new understandings is not perceived as a linear process (Boud et al., 1985). For example, both student and field educator may return to the same problem on several occasions in

order to reconceptualise understanding and formulate alternative practice strategies. It is crucial that a strong emphasis is placed on student use of thoughtful contemplation and debate. In this fashion, the student may use imagery or metaphor to help categorise and construct meaning around process (Gould, 1996). Reflection has been defined as “a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciation. It may take place in isolation or in association with others” (Boud et al., 1985:19).

Although 'reflection' is central to experiential learning, the skills used to facilitate reflection by students have not yet been adequately deconstructed (Boud et al., 1985; Mezirow, 1985). In addition, 'reflection' has been identified as the aspect of experiential learning with which students struggle the most (Mezirow, 1985). Arguably, this intellectual struggle is no surprise given the ambiguity surrounding what critical reflectivity entails. In his book on becoming a critically reflective teacher, Brookfield (1995:8) explains the concept in the following way:

[R]eflection becomes critical when it has two distinctive purposes. The first is to understand how considerations of power undergird, frame, and distort educational processes and interactions. The second is to question the assumptions and practices that seem to make our teaching lives easier but actually work against our best long-term interests.

Fundamental to the use of critical reflection is the process of unearthing and examining power differentials and tensions that exist for the student, the field educator, and the client population (Gould, 1996). Theories on reflective practice argue that practice competence cannot be derived solely from the application of rules and procedures, but is gained through critical analysis of practice experiences (Gould, 1996). Critical analysis challenges the competency-based models of practice, where 'knowledge, skills and values' are defined as discrete units that can be demonstrated in practice (Hopkins, 1995). It challenges too, the adequacy of positivist research to provide explanations for the intuitive aspects of social work practice (Papell & Skolnik, 1992). Instead, reflective practice is embedded within 'the artistic, intuitive processes which some practitioners bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict' (Schön, 1983:49). It follows, therefore, that in order for educators and students to attempt such reflection, teaching and learning methods that facilitate this process need to be incorporated into the practicum. These methods include techniques whereby the student

and educator revisit *practice moments* in order to explore and investigate practice in depth. As previously noted, audio and video recordings, journal and process recordings as well as structured observations all serve to provide material for reflection, and the aims of my research called for an investigation into the extent that these methods were used in the field by educators and students.

The use of critical reflection to facilitate 'perspective transformation' is used in professional training across a range of disciplines (Armaline & Hoover, 1989; Davies, 1995; Kwan, 1995). 'Transformation' refers to changes in values, behaviour and understanding as a result of detailed examination of active learning experiences. These changes in cognition illustrate a developmental aspect of experiential teaching and learning, where both student and field educator experience changes in thinking and behaving through the educational encounter.

It is self-evident that for field educators to be competent in using the process of critical reflection in student supervision, they first must learn what this approach entails, and how it can be applied to field learning. Systematic attempts to promote the use of critical reflection among field educators has yielded promising results. For example, Rogers & McDonald (1992) found that training educators to use this method impacted significantly on the way they subsequently worked with students.

Acknowledging Difference in Learning Styles

The notion of matching students with educators, and the idea of planning placement learning on the basis of learning styles, have been touted as desirable in social work education (See Chapter Two). Kolb's model for experiential learning has been used as the basis for understanding learning style difference, and this model 'sits comfortably' with adult learning theory (AASWWE, 1991:60). Kolb differentiated learning into four basic styles which equate the use of different strategies to facilitate learning. Kolb's proposed learning cycle and strategies are noted in Figure 3.3 below.

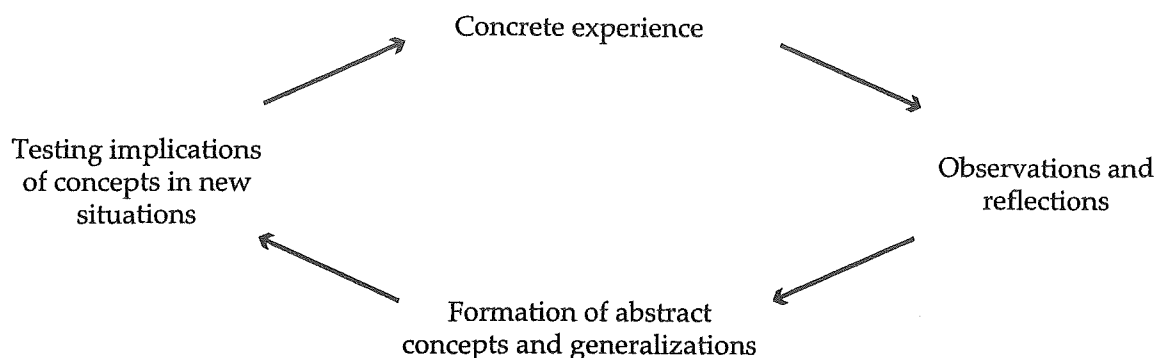


Figure 3.3 Kolb's Proposed Learning Cycles and Strategies

(Source: Kolb & Fry, 1975)

Kolb depicted transformative learning as the four-part process in which the learner has a concrete experience, reflects on the experience, distils abstract conceptualisations as a result of reflection, then goes on to a phase of active experimentation using the new knowledge and insights gained through the process. Kolb's model was initially derived from the work of Dewey and has been further translated into inventories of preferred learning styles. Research related to applications of Kolb's model in field education was discussed in Chapter Two. Using learning styles questionnaires and inventories enable students and educators to identify the unique characteristics the learner will bring to the practicum. Further to this, characteristics common to adult students have been identified, and these impact on the way adult students engage with experiential teaching and learning encounters (Brookfield, 1991).

Demonstrating Respect for Adult Responses to Learning Challenges: In his work on reflective teaching and learning, Brookfield (1991:40-44) identified seven common adult responses to learning situations. These include experiencing the *imposter syndrome*, where adult students perceive everyone else as being much more capable than themselves; the presence of *connectedness*, where students encounter some deeply felt meaning associated with the learning, sometimes resulting in highly emotional responses; *episodes of challenge*, where significant learning events emerge for students out of difficult situations, dilemmas and crises; student lack of opportunity to carry out *reflective speculation*; the occurrence of *transitional fluctuation*, where learning is not experienced as a neat progression from one level of complexity to the next, but instead is characterised by continual shifts between old and new ways of thinking and practising; the importance

of a *learning community* from which the student can gain emotionally sustaining support during the educative process; and the need for *teacher credibility* in the eyes of the student, gained through the demonstration of skill, intellect and experience.

This concludes the discussion of the *teaching and learning transaction*, the second of the three constructs used to examine field education in my research. The third construct to emerge from blending experiential learning theory with the model for learning in context, as seen in Figure 3.1, is *Relationships*, and this notion is discussed next.

RELATIONSHIPS

This construct was derived out of recognition that multiple stakeholders have an investment in the placement process. Complex connections exist between schools, students, educators, agencies and the wider community. While these multi-layered connections are acknowledged within both Boud and Walker's model, and experiential learning theory, the part they play in influencing the quality of learning experience was integral to understanding how field education could be enhanced.

For the purposes of conducting this research, the notion of relationship is addressed on two levels. Firstly, the primary relationship between student and educator is discussed with reference to practicum supervision. Secondly, the nature of the connections between the wider network of immediate placement stakeholders, such as the agency, school, student and supervisor is addressed with reference to how relationships between these parties impact on practicum teaching and learning.

Given the primacy of the supervision process for students involved in field learning, the relationship developed between student and educator is likely to have a major bearing on student learning during the placement. The significance of the supervisory relationship in social work practice has been emphasised in a range of publications (Bogo & Vayda, 1998; Kadushin, 1992; Tolson & Kopp, 1988). In particular, a good relationship is equated with encouragement of professional development and promotion of good practice, while a poor relationship has been correlated with worker stress and burnout (Young, 1994).

One student text on field education notes that the “ideal” supervisory relationship is affected by differences of gender, race, religion, age and physical challenge, as well as differences in learning style, communication and ways in which authority issues are managed (Thomlinson et al., 1996:146). Although each of these potential differences is no doubt important in influencing how students and educators work in partnership, listed together they form a blunt, oversimplified view of relationship determinants. I believe the notion of power, and how power is exercised, overrides factors related to specific aspects of diversity.

Although the educator may not perceive himself or herself as powerful, the roles of student and educator confer differential status from the beginning of the relationship (Bogo & Vayda, 1998), even without taking into account differences between field educator and student ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age or social class. In addition, the educators in this project were all responsible for providing an assessment of student performance on placement. Inescapably, therefore, the notion of power and authority in the supervision process must be considered. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that the supervisor holds all the power in the supervision relationship. Supervisees can undermine this authority through passive conflict (Brown & Bourne, 1996).¹ It is asserted that real authority comes not from being authoritarian, but by demonstrating expertise in social work and using a collaborative, enabling approach in supervision (Brown & Bourne, 1996). Nonetheless, it is a general rule that students have less power in the agency, and less practice competence than the educator, and may experience feelings of vulnerability while on placement (Bogo & Vayda, 1998).

Negotiating how positive and negative feedback can be delivered by the educator to the student, and vice versa, can be crucial to avoiding relationship difficulties as the placement progresses. For both student and educator, the common human desire for approval could get in the way of facilitating an honest, challenging teaching and learning interchange (Bogo & Vayda, 1998).

¹ Looking ahead, this point was clearly illustrated in the interviews I had with field educators (See Lucille, Chapter Seven, page 171) .

Kadushin (1992) makes a case for adopting something of a developmental approach to supervision, as the educator and student's relationship is subject to change over time. He argues that in the early stages of the supervisory relationship the new social worker (or student) wants to acquire technical skills and much of this is done through observation and imitation. Accordingly, the instructional/expert role of the supervisor is given more emphasis, highlighting a hierarchical relationship between student and educator. As the supervisee becomes more familiar with the identity of social work, the skills and knowledge required to do the immediate task, the relationship shifts to being less hierarchical and more collegial. Since the students respondents in my research were all on their first placement, I anticipated that there would be a demand for educators to deliver technical advice, comment on performance, provide structure and be a little directive, in keeping with Kadushin's developmental model of supervision.

A second paradigm for understanding the relationship between students and educators is evident from the reported research on student supervision, that is, the success of supervision from a student viewpoint can be determined by the degree to which the educator demonstrates certain personal and practical qualities, such as being supportive (Walker et al., 1995), being available for regular uninterrupted supervision (Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996), and providing ongoing feedback about work performance (Kissman & Van Tran, 1990). These qualities appear to signal commitment on the part of the supervisor. I therefore anticipated that my research would show that similar qualities were influential in the relationship students developed with their field educator.

As for the qualities of students which are particularly valued by field educators, there is a surprisingly sparse social work literature on this. However, research on student learning in the nursing practicum has identified that student attitude is paramount in determining the outcome of field learning (Nolan, 1999). Nolan refers to the student 'frame of mind' as integral to the learning process, and develops this analysis by citing the qualities of curiosity, flexibility, taking responsibility for own learning, and being prepared to 'work to learn' as indicators for effective student engagement with learning in the field (Nolan, 1999:121-124).

The above discussion has focused on the primacy of the student and educator relationship. The second network of relationships that needs to be considered is that

which exists between the agency, school, student and educator. I have devised Figure 3.4 to illustrate these relationships. Both formal and informal relationships between the various parties in Figure 3.4 influence the way the teaching and learning on placement occurs. These relationships fall into six categories: relationships between the agency and school; the school and the student; the student and the agency; the educator and the school; the educator and the student; and the educator with the agency. Each of these entities in turn has relationships with a further set of 'significant others'. This secondary layer of relationships lies outside the parameters of the primary relationships examined in this research. Nevertheless, their existence is worth noting as they constitute part of the context in which the teaching and learning occurs.

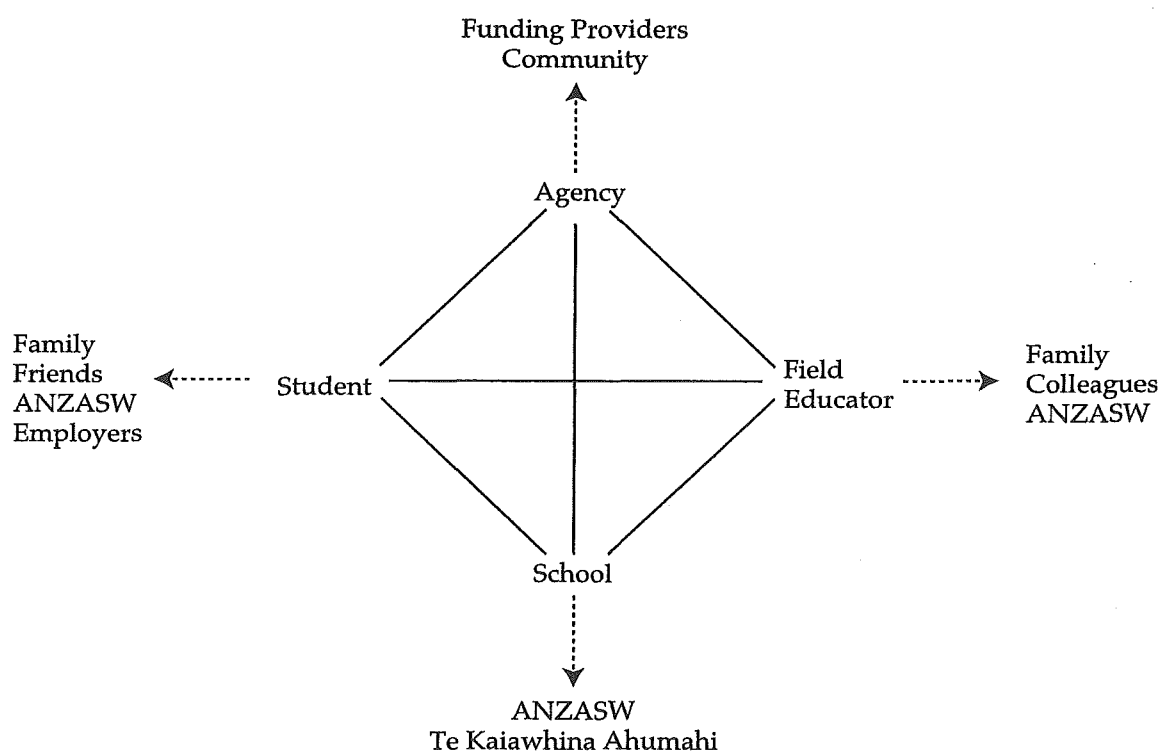


Figure 3.4 Network of Relationships

The school/agency relationship is often formalised through written contracting procedures and liaison visits by faculty members. Moreover, it is not unusual for there also to be informal contact between the school and agency personnel by way of friendships and joint membership on committees. The agency/student relationship is characterised by a two-way process of accountability, where the student is both a consumer of education and a provider of service. The agency has responsibility to provide a safe and constructive

learning environment, as well as ensuring quality of service to agency clients. The dual roles of both agency and student in this relationship call for careful negotiation early on in the placement. The rights and expectations of each party would normally appear in the student learning contract which the field educator and student complete in the beginning weeks of the placement. In this way, the field educator acts as both agency representative and student advocate. The educator would normally have agency employee status, and would be formally contracted to carry out tasks listed in a job description, and be expected to adhere to the agency's practice policies and protocols. In addition, the educator may have membership of a professional social work association (shown in Figure 3.4 as 'ANZASW'), necessitating adherence to the social work Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. The student formally relates to the educator, the school and the agency, and the student's performance in the agency is measured against agency norms and practice competency standards. The relative strength of relationship between these parties is subject to the formal and informal ties between them, the frequency and level of communication, and the degree of goodwill that exists.

The differences between school, agency and student perspectives on field education have been clearly summarised by Bogo & Vayda (1998). In that publication, the authors considered the purpose and mission of schools and agencies, their expectations and reward systems and approaches to social work and governance. They concluded that field education occurs within the context of inter-organisational relationships, where issues of organisation commitment to education, supports and resources, channels of communication, collaboration and reciprocity need to be overtly negotiated (Bogo & Vayda, 1998:33). The interconnected nature of these relationships influences the way field education occurs and is experienced by the parties involved. The notion of *reciprocal exchange* between student, school and agency forms a strong subtext in practicum education (Frumkin, 1980; Homonoff & Maltz, 1995).

Once I had decided to use the above three constructs to guide the research, I used these to formulate the propositions stated in Chapter One. Given that the principal aim of this research was to discover how field teaching and learning could be enhanced, the propositions were developed to test out the extent to which *contextual influences*, *teaching and learning transactions* and *relationships* impacted on educational outcomes in the practicum. In the next chapter I outline the method used to conduct the research.

SUMMARY

The purpose of Chapter Three was to document the theoretical paradigms that formed the basis of this inquiry. Connections were made between a range of theoretical paradigms on learning and the practice of field education. However, no one paradigm stood out as having had a strong influence on field learning, so it was necessary to adopt a developmental approach to the construction of a theoretical framework to guide this research. Experiential learning theory and principles of adult education provided the starting point for developing this framework. From the beginning, the experiential paradigm did not adequately account for the highly contextualised nature of field learning. In order to take account of possible macro and micro socio-political impacts on student learning, it was necessary to draw on a second model of learning — Boud and Walker's model of 'learning in context' (1990). By an integration of experiential learning theory with Boud and Walker's model, three central constructs were synthesised, (See Figure 3.1). These were the notions of *contextual influences*, *teaching and learning transactions* and *relationships*, which together form the model 'Learning from Experience in Context', a framework subsequently used to investigate, analyse and understand field learning in New Zealand.

With the single exception of Gardiner's material (1989), social work has been largely devoid of discipline-specific frameworks for guiding field teaching and learning. The strength of 'Learning from Practice Experience' lies in the fact that it draws from the most relevant of learning paradigms to understand the unique features of field learning; it incorporates the notion of context in a way that accounts for contemporary socio-political influences, and it acknowledges the interconnectedness of student and educator relationships within the teaching and learning encounter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

Chapters Two and Three of this thesis discussed the previous research on field education and outlined the theoretical constructs that have been used to understand the process of practicum learning. The purpose of Chapter Four is to explain the research design and outline the methods used to gather and analyse the data.

The chapter begins by providing the rationale for using a comparative mixed methods approach and then documents the specific research questions arising from the literature and theory on field education. Next, the chapter describes the research population and sampling procedures, and aspects relating to the questionnaire design and interview schedules are discussed. This part of the chapter is divided into seven subsections outlining the factors influencing the questionnaire design, interviewing, pilot testing, data collection and recording procedures, response rates, data analysis and interpretation, and data validity and reliability.

Both students' and field educators' perceptions of field education were sought in order that this information could be used for three purposes. It was anticipated that the research findings could be used (i) to inform education providers and agencies about factors that enhance student practicum learning, (ii) to further theoretical development which guides practicum education, and (iii) to provide clues on how social work programmes and agencies may support field educators in their work with students. It was expected that each of these three areas would be influenced by the context in which the teaching and learning encounter took place. The notion of context and its critical influence in this research has been discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

USING A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

A comparative, mixed methods approach was incorporated in the research design in three ways. Firstly, the students' and field educators' views on practicum teaching and learning have been compared. Secondly, students were surveyed before and after their first placement in order to compare responses as a result of having experienced practicum education. Thirdly, educators and students were drawn from three different schools of social work in order to compare practicum experiences across schools. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to obtain the data in order to identify the contradictions and similarities evident in the information that was forthcoming from each approach.

RATIONALE FOR USING MIXED METHODS

An often-stated principle of research is that whatever the method selected, it needs to be in keeping with the problem under investigation (Punch, 1998). However, decisions regarding research method are also influenced by a range of other factors, including personal values, time, and expertise (Creswell, 1994).

A further consideration is the degree to which the research subject has already been studied, and the amount of existing literature available on which the researcher can build. Where considerable material is available and the variables are known, theory building is likely to have occurred. The research problem emerges from existing material and the approach to the research is likely to suit a quantitative design (Creswell, 1994). Where little is known about the subject area, and possibly a theory base does not exist to explain a phenomenon, a qualitative approach has greater utility (Creswell, 1994). For this research both conditions exist, providing the rationale for using mixed methods. Although a great deal of writing and research has been conducted abroad, particularly in North America, the United Kingdom and Australia, scant information is available about the topic of field education from a New Zealand perspective. In addition, very little has been published in the international literature on theory that can be used to inform field education.

The efficacy of using either qualitative or quantitative methodology has been the subject of longstanding debate (Bryman, 1984). This debate has been founded on differing philosophical positions regarding the interpretation of 'truth' and 'reality' (Hartman, 1994:11) Until recently, use of the differing methodologies has been treated in an almost mutually exclusive way, with each approach being associated with a distinct epistemological position (Bryman, 1992). The incorporation of both methodologies in the research process has only been possible through the creation of an uneasy alliance.

Proponents of quantitative approaches have argued that qualitative material lacks rigour, whereas those using qualitative methods have suggested that quantitative analysis oversimplifies the complexities of real life situations (Trute, 1997). Recent discourse on research methodology has explored ways in which qualitative and quantitative methods may be blended to provide a productive integration of the two models (Trute, 1997; Creswell, 1994; Brannen, 1992). Supporters of an integrated approach have put forward a number of compelling arguments that support using mixed methodologies. These arguments are summarised below.

Using several levels of inquiry to examine a research problem facilitates the investigation of diverse aspects of the problem (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). The validity of findings can be enhanced when similar results are found using different methods (Denzin, 1970), and

results from each method can be compared to highlight contradictions that require further investigation and explanation (Jick, 1979; Madey, 1982; Brannen, 1992). Combining methods can provide a more complete picture of under-represented populations. The qualitative approach ensures that the population in question 'gives voice' to their issues, whereas the quantitative approach serves to measure the extent and patterns of inequality (Brannen, 1992:22).

Several overseas studies of social work education have used a mixed methods approach (Walker et al., 1995; Marsh & Triseliotis, 1996; Secker, 1993). Although these studies have not been primarily concerned with the development of learning theory in relation to practicum education, as documented in Chapter Two, they have all considered particular aspects of field education that have subsequently been included in my research.

Just three previous studies have been completed on social work field education in New Zealand and each used a qualitative design. The first investigated new graduates' views of their social work training (Harre-Hindmarsh, 1992), the second focused on the experience of field educators (Ellis, 1998), and the third reported the results of using the 'Contact-Challenge' method of exposing students to client experiences (Napan, 1999). The aim of this research has been to provide both a broad picture of the practicum in New Zealand, for which a quantitative approach was most appropriate, as well as accessing an intimate account of student and field educator experiences, more suited to a qualitative approach. The decision to use a mixed methods approach was therefore determined by the strengths that each method offered in addressing the subject of field education. This approach offered scope for developing practicum teaching and learning theory, and at the same time addressed gaps in knowledge about the pragmatics of delivering field education in New Zealand. Using both approaches in a complimentary fashion enabled in-depth findings to emerge that can be more broadly generalised (Frankel, 1994). In the next section of this chapter the specific research questions relating to each of the theoretical constructs are outlined.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS UTILISED IN THE RESEARCH

Three central constructs to be explored in this research were outlined in Chapters Two and Three. They are the notion of *context* and its impact on teaching and learning, the *teaching and learning transaction*, as experienced by students and educators, and the notion of *relationship* in practicum education.

Questions Relating to the Context

The notion of context is characterised by the connections and associations between the student, field educator, agency and school of social work. It also includes taking account of the wider social, economic and political dimensions that are brought to bear on welfare education. The pedagogy and practice underpinning the teaching and learning transaction included consideration of the way students and educators think about and carry out the tasks associated with practicum education. The notion of relationship is considered in light of student and educator experiences of supervision, the impact of formal and informal networks, and the influence of student and educator personal attributes on the practicum encounter. The research questions pertaining to each of these concepts are outlined below.

'Context' is broadly interpreted. Factors that contribute to, and shape the context in which field educators deliver clinical training include student preparation for practicum learning, conditions that promote learning in the agency, placement structure, exposure to client groups and intervention models, agency support for field education, educator motivation, and levels of liaison between the parties involved in the practicum.

How do students experience the context in which they learn?

Preparation. *How well prepared were students and field educators for the practicum?*

Conditions to promote learning. *What conditions did educators and students believe promoted learning in the agency environment? What were the conditions that educators and student identified as most critical to promote learning? Did student views on conditions that promote learning in the agency setting change as a result of having been on placement?*

Structure. *What placement structure did students and field educators prefer and did student views on placement structure change after having been on placement?*

Exposure to client groups and methods of working. *What client groups and methods of working did students have access to on placement? What types of work did students do on placement? How did client work impact on student learning in the field? To what extent did students learn about bi-cultural social work practice on placement?*

Agency support for field education and workload pressure. *To what extent did field educators feel their agency supported having students on placement? To what extent did agency workload pressure prevent educators having students on placement?*

Field Educator Motivation. Why did educators commit themselves to providing field education in a climate of scarcity and change?

The final set of questions related to context overlap with the notion of relationship in field education. They refer to the nature of connections that exist between schools of social work and agencies that have students on placement.

Liaison between Schools of Social Work and Agencies. To what extent did educators' believe the communication between schools and agencies was effective and beneficial. How beneficial did students perceive the liaison function? To whom were field educators accountable? Was accountability in practicum teaching and learning implicit, explicit or both?

Questions related to the Teaching and Learning Transaction

In light of the philosophy underpinning experiential learning and its immediate applicability to student education on placement, it was expected that field educators would use this approach in working with students. This section of the research was therefore devoted to discovering the extent to which experiential teaching and learning techniques were known and used by educators, and the extent to which students found these techniques helpful. One prerequisite for meaningful learning is the degree to which student **learning needs** are identified and catered for with appropriate learning opportunities in the field (Knowles, 1984).

Learning Needs and Placement Allocation. *To what extent were students assisted in identifying their learning needs? To what extent were identified learning needs met in the placement? Did field educators perceive that students were allocated to the placements on the basis of getting learning needs met? How did students understand the placement allocation process?*

To explore more fully how field educators understood field teaching, they were asked to provide information about how important they perceived differing **methods** of educational input for facilitating learning on placement. These methods were mainly associated with experiential learning and included: having a structured orientation; having one to one supervision; having group supervision; observing other workers' practice; having one's own practice observed; reviewing video replays of interviews; reviewing audio replays of interviews; writing a case study; compiling an agency analysis; doing role plays in supervision; discussion of case notes; using a one-way screen; facilitating student-led presentations; and co-working with the field educator (AASWWE, 1991).

Methods. How effective did students and educators rate the above methods for practicum teaching and learning? Which methods were favoured, which were not favoured? Why were some methods used more than others? To what extent did students perceive that these methods were used on placement?

To gain further information on how students experienced field learning they were asked to complete a checklist noting the scope of educational services received. These services contained items commonly associated with practicum learning including having a written contract; having weekly supervision; using a learning styles inventory; frequency of liaison visits; workload management; frequency of feedback; having knowledge of assessment procedures; getting observed in practice and identifying the learning objectives for the next placement.

Problems and Obstacles to Teaching and Learning. What problems did students and educators encounter during the practicum? How were these problems overcome?

Unexpected Learning and Learning from Mistakes. What were the areas and moments of unexpected learning for students? Did students gain learning from 'negative' experiences? How did students value 'mistakes' as learning encounters?

Field Educator Training. To what extent were social work field educators trained to work with students? Why did some educators avail themselves of training opportunities while others did not? What did students think about field educator training?

Awareness of Adult Teaching and Learning Strategies. To what extent were field educators conversant with adult teaching and learning strategies? To what extent did schools of social work encourage educators to learn about adult education? How often did educators use learning style inventories or questionnaires? To what extent did the field education practice reflect principles outlined in current teaching and learning theory?

Questions focused on 'Relationship' in Field Education

The complex mix of multiple responsibilities and relationships embedded within practicum education is readily acknowledged in the literature (Gleed, 1996). The student and educator relationship, built around the supervision process, has received considerable attention as outlined in Chapter Two. In particular, the notion of matching students with educators, attribute specifications for educators and students, and the influence of student and educator biographies on the process of teaching and learning are addressed through the research questions.

Supervision Experiences. *What features did students identify as enhancing supervision? What factors inhibited the supervision process? What models of supervision did field educators use in their work with students? How did educators articulate the format of their work with students?*

Matching Students with Educators. *To what extent did field educators believe matching students with educators on the basis of gender and ethnicity enhanced practicum learning? Were there other characteristics that students and educators identified as more important criteria for matching? To what extent did student and field educator experiences of working together endorse the practice of matching on the basis of learning styles?*

Person Specifications for a Field Educator. *What types of qualities did field educators need to demonstrate in their work with students? Did gender, ethnicity, and qualification level influence the qualities educators and students valued?*

'Student' Specifications. *What qualities did students need to demonstrate in order to enhance the teaching and learning encounter during the practicum?*

Students and field educators in New Zealand. *What were the demographic characteristics of students and educators? What personal qualities and experiences serve to enhance the connection between students and educators in the field practicum? Did the learning exchange include acknowledgment of previous life experiences? How did educators articulate their personal journey from student to educator?*

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

When this research began in 1995, there were 11 schools of social work in New Zealand and this has just recently increased to 12. Arranging access to all programmes, the cost this would involve, and the volume of data generated, meant that it was impractical to approach all schools of social work to be part of the research.

However, in order to sample a range of students and field educators in New Zealand, three schools of social work were selected. These schools were located in the southern, central and northern regions of New Zealand and are labeled School A, B and C respectively. They were also selected to be broadly representative of University and Polytechnic

programmes (Tripodi, 1981). Students from all three schools were enrolled in a Diploma of Social Work course.

The research participants were the cohort of students on placement for the first time during 1996, and those field educators associated with each of the three social work schools. School A had a population of 25 students and 130 field educators. School B included a population of 72 students and 70 field educators. School C included a population of 30 students and 28 field educators. School A had a much larger number of field educators than Schools B & C as it included a pool of available field educators, while School B and C arranged field educators on an individual basis as students were matched with particular agencies.

The groups of students and field educators therefore constituted a non-probability sample with the schools being 'hand picked' by the researcher to serve the purpose of this particular study (Mark, 1996). This type of non-probability sampling is referred to as *purposive or judgmental sampling* (Baker, 1988), with no provision being made for random sampling at the three sites of the research.

While it is acknowledged that researchers usually prefer to use probability sampling techniques, a great deal of legitimate social work research has been conducted using non-probability samples (Mark, 1996). This method of sampling was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, the exploratory nature of this research lent itself to using a non-probability sampling technique (Seaberg, 1981). Secondly, the geographical distance between each school of social work was great, and therefore the cost of collecting data from participants using a random sampling procedure would have been prohibitive.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN

The design of the student and field educator questionnaires was informed by the emerging theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Three and factors addressed in earlier research on field education cited in Chapter Two. These earlier studies included material on matching students with educators on the basis of gender and ethnicity (Behling et al., 1989; Thyer et al., 1989; Black et al., 1997), field educator training (Larsen & Hepworth, 1982), supervision processes and learning conditions (Rosenblatt & Mayer, 1975; Brodie, 1993) and how well theory and practice were integrated (Berman-Rossi, 1988). Previous studies of student satisfaction with field education across a number of disciplines were also used to draw out features that students frequently reported had an impact on their learning (Wong & Wong, 1987; Kissman & Van Tran, 1990; Fortune & Abramson, 1993). The questionnaire items have been categorised under headings relating to the contextual

influences, teaching and learning transaction, context, and relationships (See Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

INSTRUMENTATION

No copyright measurement instruments were utilised in the research. Formats for questions on demography, access to client groups, and methods of practice were derived from a recent British investigation into field education (Walker et al., 1995). A copy of the original questionnaire was obtained from the principal researcher. Questions on client groups and methods of practice encountered were included to provide data on the practice context in which students and educators were working.

Two questions relating to field educator qualities were incorporated in both student and educator questionnaires (See questions 30 & 31 in Appendix B). These questions were included to gauge the nature of the relationship that students and educators expected to develop in field supervision. The design of these attribute questions was derived from similar surveys that had been conducted with practicum students in nursing and physiotherapy (Brown, 1981; Bergman & Gaitskill, 1990; Onuoha, 1994). The attributes were modified to incorporate items that were of particular relevance to social work including, '*Demonstrating anti-discriminatory practice*' and '*Demonstrating a commitment to social justice*'.

A further modification to the attributes from the nursing questionnaire was to include the notion of 'empowerment' with supervision, resulting in the attribute '*Uses an empowerment model of supervision*'. The definition for empowerment in this instance was derived from Amy Rossiter (1993). She used the term to:

... indicate a relationship where the student and teacher are mutually engaged in a process wherein the teacher's expertise is organized by the students authority over her own change process. In using the term this way I am trying to make the conceptual separation between authority and expertise. This is necessary in order to validate the locus of control in the student without rendering impotent the expertise of the teacher (Rossiter, 1993:81).

Since empowerment is integral to social work education, practice and supervision (Payne, 1997; Brown & Bourne, 1996), experiential education (Wilson, 1995) and adult learning (Brookfield, 1991), I believed it was important to link this notion with the provision of social work student supervision in the field.

Using a similar procedure to the nursing research cited above (Brown, 1981; Bergman & Gaitskill, 1990), the attributes in Question 30 (Appendix B) were then divided into three

domains, representing Professional Competencies, Student Centred Teaching Techniques and Personal Qualities. These categorisations were made to provide some clarity about the types of qualities that were most valued by students and educators. The internal validity of the domain categorisations was established by asking a group of five educators and five students to sort the attributes by domain. This process resulted in the categorizations outlined in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 *Categorisation of the Fifteen Field Education Attributes into Domains*

Professional Competencies (P.C.)	Student Centred Teaching Techniques (S.C.)	Personal Qualities (P.Q.)
A. Acts as a professional role model	C. Plans placement experiences that match my learning needs	D. Approaches life with a positive attitude
E. Demonstrates anti-discriminatory practice	G. Provides frequent feedback on my progress	F. Has enthusiasm for teaching
H. Demonstrates a commitment to consumers of the service	K. Provides a fair and objective assessment of my work	J. Has a personal commitment to social justice
I. Uses up to date knowledge and skills in practice	P. Encourages the development of my social work identity	M. Can be flexible when the need arises
L. Can articulate the links between theory and practice	Q. Uses an empowerment model of supervision	O. Has a sense of humour

These categorisations of attributes into domains did not differ a great deal from those established by nursing students (Bergman & Gaitskill, 1990). Two exceptions were 'Provides frequent feedback on my progress' and 'Provides a fair and objective assessment of my work'. These attributes were worded slightly differently in the nursing research where they were not personalised to the student experience on placement. As such

they were allocated to the Professional Competence domain rather than the Student Centred Teaching Techniques domain.

Student Questionnaires: The student pre-placement questionnaire included 66 items, and the post-placement questionnaire, 73 items. The questions were related to the theoretical constructs used to guide the research and are summarised as such in Tables 4.2a and 4.2b.

The broad categories under which information was sought from students included demographic data, preparation for the placement, matching student learning needs with placement opportunities, conditions to promote learning, educational input to promote learning, placement structure, and field educator qualities needed for student supervision. Students were also asked to respond to questions about preparing for placement, identifying learning needs, aspects of placement procedures, and problems encountered in the field.

Table 4.2a Student Pre-placement Questionnaire Items (n=66)

Items	Related Theoretical Construct
Demographic items: n=8	Teaching & learning
Gender; Age; Ethnicity; Qualifications;	Context
Previous work experience	Relationships
Preparation for Placement: n=10	Teaching & Learning; Context
Identification of Learning needs: n=3	Teaching & Learning
	Context
Conditions to promote learning: n=12	Teaching & Learning
	Context
Methods of Educational Input: n=14	Teaching & Learning
Placement Structure: n=1	Teaching & Learning
Field Educator Attributes: n=18	Teaching & Learning
	Relationships

Table 4.2b Student Post-placement Questionnaire Items (n=73)

Items	Related Theoretical Construct
Demographic: n=4	Teaching & learning
Gender; Age; Ethnicity; Qualifications	Context
	Relationships
Identification of learning needs: n=1	Teaching & Learning
Placement procedure checklist: n=9	Teaching & Learning
Conditions to promote learning: n=12	Teaching & Learning
	Context
Methods of Educational Input: n=15	Teaching & Learning
Placement Structure: n=1	Teaching & Learning
Placement enjoyment and socialisation: n=3	Context
Problem Areas: n=10	Teaching & Learning
	Relationships
Field Educator Attributes: n=18	Teaching & Learning
	Relationships

Strictly speaking, the items cannot be categorically related to just one domain. Some items, such as field educator attributes, link predominately with one construct: relationships, but also overlap with factors relating to teaching and learning.

Field Educator Questionnaire: The field educator questionnaire included 75 items, several of which appeared in both the student pre- and post-placement questionnaires, as mentioned above. The field educator questionnaire also addressed areas of field educator qualifications and experience in supervising students, access to training and agency support, accessibility to work with different client groups, methods of work, views on matching students with placements, and impressions on the communication and liaison functions between the school and field educator. Table 4.3 summarises the item classifications and relates these to the theoretical constructs of the research.

Table 4.3 *Number and Categorisation of Field Educator Questionnaire Items*

Items	Theoretical Constructs
Demographic: n=7	Teaching & Learning
Gender; Age; Ethnicity;	Context
Employment; Qualifications	Relationships
Providing Field Education: n=5	Context
Client groups and methods of work: n=2	Context
Field Educator Training: n=5	Context
Adult Learning: n=4	Teaching & Learning
Matching students and educators: n=4	Relationships
Liaison between schools & educators: n=3	Context
	Relationships
Conditions to promote learning: n=12	Teaching & Learning
	Context
Methods of Educational Input: n=14	Teaching & Learning
Placement Structure: n=1	Teaching & Learning
Field Educator Attributes: n=18	Teaching & Learning
	Relationships

The questionnaire included both open and closed formatted questions. The closed questions were mostly five-point Likert-type scale ratings, with a rating of one indicating 'Not Effective', 'Not Important' or 'None' and a rating of five indicating 'Very Effective', 'Very Important' or 'Extensive', respectively. A decision was made to include five response categories, as this appeared to be current practice in social work and allied health research

(Mark, 1996) and has been utilised in similar studies with student populations (Knight, 1996; Dunlevy & Wolf, 1992; Zimmerman & Westfall, 1988).

INTERVIEWING

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students (n=12) after the placement experience and with field educators (n=13), to supplement the quantitative data from the questionnaires. It was anticipated that the interview material would provide more explanatory data than the questionnaires were able to offer. It was also anticipated that the interviews would give students and educators an opportunity to discuss aspects of field education that were important to them that did not appear in the questionnaire format.

The student interview schedule comprised 17 open questions. These are summarised in the interview guide in Table 4.4 where the questions are related to the theoretical constructs for this research.

Table 4.4 Social Work Student Interview Guide

Research Themes	Interview Questions
Teaching and Learning Transaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking back to your last placement, what were the teaching and learning methods that your field educator used? • In your view, which methods were most effective in facilitating your learning? • Why were they most effective in facilitating your learning? • How would you rate your last placement in terms of how much you learned about being a social worker?
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking back to your placement, what processes and events encouraged your learning? • Are you able to identify any obstacles or constraints to your learning that occurred on the placement? • What types of work did you get to do on your first placement? • What types of work didn't you get an opportunity to try, that might have helped your learning? • Why didn't you get to do this work?
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would you describe the supervision you received on placement? • What were the best aspects of your supervision? • What were the worst aspects of your supervision? • In what ways did your field educator provide a role model for competent social work practice?
Related to all constructs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In terms of enjoyment, what aspects did you most enjoy? • What aspects did you least enjoy? • If you were giving advice to the next student to go on placement where you have just been, what would that advice be?

The field educator interview schedule included 16 open questions and these are summarised in Table 4.5 where the questions are once again related to the theoretical constructs for this research.

Table 4.5 Field Educator Interview Guide

Research Themes	Interview Questions
Teaching and Learning Transaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about the teaching methods you use with students on placement. • Which teaching methods do you think work best, and why? • How much input have you had about adult teaching methods? • How do you assess the students' practice competence while they are on placement with you? • Tell me about the problems you experience in your role as field educator? • What strategies have you used to overcome these problems?
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students rarely fail field placements. Why do you suppose this is? • Tell me about the accountability you have in your role as a field educator.
Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking back to when you first became a field educator, what sort of preparation did you have for that role? • What are the qualities of a good field educator? • How are these qualities identified and nurtured by the school of social work you are associated with? • To what extent do you get supervision in relation to the work you do with students?
Related to all constructs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think back to a student placement that went particularly well. What contributed to the success of the placement? • Think back to a time when you supervised a student and things did not go well. Describe in as much detail as you can what went wrong.

In student interviews, questions were constructed around aspects of learning that had been identified as significant in earlier research on student learning. In retrospect, the interviews could have focused less on the teaching methods and more on aspects of relationships, as these factors appeared to be more significant to students than pedagogical considerations. However, this trend was not evident until some way through conducting the interviews.

Although only two questions in the field educator interview schedule were specifically focused on 'Context', this was the area that emerged as being particularly significant to educators. The results relating to contextual features are presented in Chapter Five. It was not a hindrance to have just two questions devoted to this area, as field educators spontaneously discussed a range of other areas related to context with little prompting. Information on how the interviews were conducted appears in the next section of this chapter.

Conducting the Research Interviews

A brief review of literature on interviewing was undertaken before embarking on designing the interview schedule and conducting the interviews. Ann Oakley, in her critique on using positivist paradigms to guide survey interviewing, argued that the exchange between interviewer and interviewee has traditionally been characterised by endeavours to achieve "objectivity, detachment, hierarchy and 'science'" (Oakley, 1988:38). This contention is evident in methodology discussions where the interviewers are warned about sources of 'interviewer distortion' (Gochros, 1981:272). Oakley noted that the 'proper' interview is a 'masculine fiction' (1988:55), and suggested that the desire for interviewer distance undermines trust building between interviewer and interviewee. She proposed a feminist paradigm for research interviewing, where personal involvement on the part of the interviewer, in relation to the research subject and interaction with interviewees, is an imperative on which feminist research interviewing must be grounded. This is a position supported by other social researchers (Reinharz, 1979; Finch, 1993; Fontana & Frey, 1994) and it is from this position that I conducted the interviews for this study.

The conversations were semi-structured. The conversation between the interviewees and myself was neither open to any subject that arose nor based on a highly structured questionnaire. Interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed. The interview guides illustrated in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 provided a plan for the 'conversation'. Although the aim of the interview was ultimately to discover explanations for why field education was experienced in particular ways, overt 'why' questions were kept to a minimum in order that the interview remained spontaneous, and did not become an intellectualised exchange (Kvale, 1996).

Before each interview began, the purpose of the research was discussed, the Research Information Sheet was read by the interviewee, and the consent form for taping the conversation was signed by the interviewee (See Appendix E). At this time, any questions that the interviewee had about how the material would be used were also answered.

Not surprisingly, some of the responses to interview questions spanned more than one area of the research. At the same time, the field educator interview schedule did not address the theme of educator role transition and development explicitly, this subject arose out of questions related to teaching and learning theory and the context of providing field education.

On completion of each interview, a short debriefing occurred where interviewee questions about the process were answered and I once again made assurances of anonymity. During the debriefing, interviewees sometimes raised matters that they were not prepared to discuss on tape. Although not recorded, these matters were often related to negative aspects of field education, where interviewees asked if other students or field educators had had similar experiences. The occurrence of interviewee disclosure after the tape had been turned off raised the question of how much information was filtered during the interviews, due to the recording process. In some situations interviewees permitted me to take notes on these matters, others did not.

'After tape' conversations relating to significant items lessened as I became more familiar with the interviewing process, more confident about the use of probing questions during the taped sessions, and more aware of the significance and need for reciprocity between interviewee and interviewer (Kvale, 1996; Fontana & Frey, 1994). The first three or four student interviews were rather stilted, while later ones were characterised by spontaneity, humour and an improved flow of information.

In the above discussion I have outlined the survey and interview techniques used in the research. In the next section of this chapter I explain how these methods were first pre-tested, and go on to outline the process for student and field educator data collection.

PRE-TESTING OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Each questionnaire was trialed by asking ten second-year students from School A to complete and comment on draft questionnaires. This pre-test group included a mix of female and male students, and an ethnic mix of people from both Maori and Pakeha descent. The interview schedules were pre-tested with three second-year Diploma students. The field educator questionnaire pre-test was conducted with ten educators from a South Island school of social work not associated with the original research. Three field educators not included in the research population, completed the interview schedule pre-test. None of the pre-tested interviews or questionnaires were included in the final analysis.

As a result of the pre-tests some minor changes to the wording of some questions were made to ensure clarity. The most significant changes to the questionnaire format for both

students and field educators were made in relation to the field educator attributes question. From the pre-test, small modifications were made to the wording of some of the attributes, and the second section of the attribute question was added to include the selection of five 'Most Important' attributes. This extra question was included as it was found in the pre-test that both students and field educators rated many attributes as being 'very important' while the research was endeavouring to distinguish between those considered to be important and those that could be rated as 'Most Important'.

The pre-test process also resulted in the addition of two items based on 'experimental' attributes. These were inserted to check the degrees of variability in perception respondents were using to complete the questionnaire. These attributes were '*Assesses my work in an intuitive subjective way*' and '*Leaves me to make the links between theory and practice*'.

Suggestions made by participants in the pre-test resulted in three additional questions being added to the field educator questionnaire. These additional items were related to the context in which field education occurred, and gauged field educator opinion about agency support for having students on placement, workload agreements and workload pressure. In the next section of this chapter, student and field educator response rates to the questionnaires are documented.

DATA COLLECTION FROM STUDENTS

Data collection from students occurred in four phases. Students at each of the sites were asked to complete a short questionnaire in their first week of social work training (Phase One, Appendix A). This survey was used to introduce students to the project and gauge student impressions about the nature of field education. Its purpose was to provide some insights about which client groups and models of social work students were most interested in learning about on placement. The responses of this survey were not subject to in-depth analysis, but helped inform me about fruitful areas of inquiry that were probed in subsequent questionnaires.

Next, students from each school were surveyed using group-administered questionnaires immediately before going out on first placement (Phase Two, Appendix B), and immediately after concluding placement (Phase Three, Appendix C). This stage of the research represented a one-group pre-test/post-test design (Mark, 1996). It is a design appropriate for generating associational knowledge and for beginning approximations of cause-effect knowledge (Tripodi, 1981). However, it should be noted that the primary aim of this research was to identify students' and field educators' opinions on a range of topics

related to field education. The design was not intended to track individual students' experiences resulting from being on placement.

The context and range of student placements were too diverse to consider the placement as the 'experimental' condition. Students in the same class were placed in an array of settings that involved accessing differing learning opportunities. The variance in placement experiences militates against comparing individual students' responses in a meaningful way. However, pooling group responses allowed a broad picture of student experiences in the field.

Finally, a 10% sample of the total student population from each site was invited to participate in an individual semi-structured interview (See Table 4.4 for interview schedule). While there was a schedule of broad 'starter' questions for this interview, opportunity was given for considerable elaboration and discursive exploration during the interview process. This phase of the data collection introduced the opportunity to collect some qualitative data (Allen-Meares & Lane, 1990).

Given that each of the schools had differing time frames and structures for sending students out on first placement, considerable attention was given to co-ordinating the student data collection from each of the three sites.

DATA COLLECTION FROM FIELD EDUCATORS

The data collection from field educators occurred in two phases. A questionnaire for field educators was mailed from the three schools of social work (Phase One, Appendix D). The questionnaire focused on the three theoretical constructs outlined above with the inclusion of items relating to field educator demographic details. This process is indicative of an ex-post facto research design, in that field educators were surveyed about their experience of delivering clinical education 'after the event' (Mark, 1996:166). This design enabled me to gather evidence to support or reject the research propositions outlined in Chapter One, where the independent variable (the delivery of field education) could not be manipulated, thus resulting in the cause-effect linkage being made by logic (Charles, 1995; Mark, 1996).

This mail-out to field educators included a letter explaining the project, the questionnaire itself and a stamped addressed envelope to return the completed questionnaire. Questionnaires sent out from Schools B and C also included a covering letter from the respective school Head of Department giving endorsement for the research. (This was not necessary for questionnaires sent out from School A where I was known). Responsibility for mailing the questionnaires rested with the individual school sites, in order to maintain the confidentiality of field educators. At School B, where the initial response rate was not

high, a second questionnaire and stamped addressed envelope was sent out by the school to all field educators.

After the questionnaires were returned, a 10% sample of field educators from each site was invited to participate in a semi-structured interview about the process of delivering field education (Phase Two). Individual field educators at Schools B and C were first approached by the Head of these respective schools and asked if they would be willing to be interviewed. I followed up these initial inquiries, and times were arranged to conduct the interviews. When approaching field educators, Heads of schools were asked to be mindful of inviting those with a range of experience in field education, and to include if possible both Maori and Pakeha. I made personal approaches to field educators from School A to organise interviews. The above procedure for inviting field educators to participate resulted in a convenience sample from each school being accessed to interview.

As with the student interviews, there was a schedule of 'starter' questions for these interviews that are documented in Table 4.5. However, in keeping with using a semi-structured format, different topics were also explored as they arose during the course of the interview.

The results from both student and field educator questionnaires and interviews were then blended to provide an integrated account of field education in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. In the next section of Chapter Four, student and field educator response rates to the questionnaires are documented, along with data on the distinguishing demographic characteristics of the respondents.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AND RESPONSE RATES

Table 4.6 summarises the response rates from each of the schools for the pre- and post-placement student questionnaires and for the field educator questionnaires. The response rates for student pre- and post-placement questionnaires for School A (84% and 88% respectively) were consistent with having group-administered student surveys conducted during class time. The rate of field educator responses (61.5%) was possibly higher than would be expected for a mailed survey (Neuman, 1994). This may have been due to the fact that I was known personally to the majority of field educators from this school.

Table 4.6 Response Rates from Schools A, B & C for Student Pre- & Post-placement, and Field Educator Questionnaires

		School A	School B	School C	Total
Student Pre-Placement	Population	25	72	30	127
	N. of responses	21	34	26	81
	Response rate	84.0%	47.2%	86.6%	63.7%
Student Post-placement	Population	25	72	30	127
	N. of responses	22	36	20	80
	Response rate	88.0%	50.0%	66.6%	63.0%
Field Educators	Population	128	70	28	226
	N. of responses	80	32	18	130
	Response rate	61.5%	46.0%	64.2%	57.5%

However, School B student questionnaire response rates (47% and 50%) were lower than would be expected from group-administered surveys. This was due to communication problems within the school, where tutors had not been expecting the surveys to take place and inadequate preparation had occurred for the administration of the questionnaires. Access to half of the School B student population either did not occur or was on a very limited basis. Extra pre- and post-placement questionnaires were left at the school for students to complete in their own time. There was limited response to these. Field educators from School B were mailed two sets of questionnaires, an original and a follow up due to a poor initial response rate. The final 46% response rate from School B is in keeping with what may be expected from a mailed survey (Neuman, 1994).

School C had a pre-placement student response rate consistent with a group-administered questionnaire (86.6%). The post-placement response rate was lower than might have been expected (66.6%). However, the post-placement questionnaire was administered in the final week of the academic year, all formal lectures had concluded and several students were absent from class. Inquiries at the time revealed that these absences did not appear to

result in a particular subset of the class being away, but were of a random nature. The field educator mail-survey yielded a higher response than may have been expected. The initial mail-out was followed up by an informal telephone call to a number of field educators known to the Head of School C, encouraging completion of the questionnaires. Not every field educator was contacted by telephone.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS IN THE RESEARCH

The description of the student population that participated in this research is divided into two sections. Firstly, comparisons of the student demographic characteristics are made between schools in order to establish the nature of student populations at each specific school (Table 4.7). Secondly, the similarity of student pre- and post-placement samples within each school is demonstrated (Table 4.8) in order to establish equivalence between the pre- and post-placement sample groups.

There was no significant relationship between gender and school attended. There was, however, a significant relationship between ethnicity and school attended. School B had the most diverse student population, and School A had the least diverse population. School A had a greater proportion of students with previous tertiary qualifications than Schools B and C. This difference can largely be explained by School A having admission criteria that differed from Schools B and C, in that previous tertiary qualifications were a requirement for entry. By calculating the mean age it was established that the mean age of students at all schools fell between 32.8 and 36.8 years and there was no statistically significant difference found between student age and school attended.

Table 4.7 Comparison of Student Sample Demographic Data (Post-placement)

Demographic Item	School A	School B	School C	χ^2
Gender:				
Female	15	31	18	$\chi^2=4.1$ d.f.=2, $p>.05$
Male	7	5	2	
Ethnicity:				
Pakeha	19	19	14	$\chi^2=10.2$, d.f.=4, $p<.05$
Maori	1	14	5	
Other	2	2	0	
Tertiary Qualifications:				
Certificate in S.W.	8	12	4	$\chi^2=35.3$, d.f.=6, $p<.001$
Bachelors Degree	11	7	0	
Masters/Other	3	5	0	
N/A	0	12	16	
Age:				
21-30	11	9	8	$\chi^2=3.8$, d.f.=4, $p>.05$
31-40	5	11	6	
41-50	6	13	5	Mean age across all schools:
Mean age	32.8	36.8	34.8	35.1

In the pre-placement questionnaire, students were asked a number of questions about their previous work experience: whether they worked in the home (to cover being a caregiver); had work experience unrelated to social work; had experience of human service work, excluding social work; and had previous social work experience. χ^2 analysis on these

questions by school indicated there was no relationship between students' previous work experience in any of these categories and school attended ($\chi^2 = 1.0; 2.8; 0.8; 4.3; d.f.=4; p>.05$, respectively).

PRE- AND POST-PLACEMENT EQUIVALENCE

It is certain that the student sample from School A differed by just one participant from the pre- and post-placement surveys, as I knew the individual members of this class. However, I did not know students at Schools B and C, and therefore chi-square analyses were used to determine whether the student pre- and post-placement samples were also similar at these schools. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Comparison of Pre- and Post-placement Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Item	Pre-placement	Post-placement	χ^2
Gender:			
Female	55	64	$\chi^2=1.7$, d.f.=1, p>.05
Male	20	14	
Ethnicity:			
Pakeha	51	52	$\chi^2= 1.8$, d.f.=2, p>.05
Maori	20	20	
Other	9	4	
Previous Tertiary Qualification:			
Certificate in S.W.	20	24	$\chi^2=3.8$, d.f.=5, p>.05
Bachelor of Arts	20	17	
Bachelor of Science	2	1	
Masters	4	6	
Other	8	3	
N/A	22	28	
Age			
21-30	30	28	$\chi^2 \approx 0$
31-40	23	22	
41+	26	24	

These comparisons suggest that the pre-placement and post-placement samples were essentially equivalent in nature. The two groups can therefore be considered the same. There were no significant differences between the pre- and post-placement student participants on the basis of gender, ethnicity, previous qualifications or age.

These analyses demonstrate that the pre- and post-placement student samples across all schools were made up of individuals with very similar characteristics. This was expected as the same classes of first-year students were surveyed twice, although there were absentees on both occasions. Tables 4.7 and 4.8 documented student respondent characteristics. Similar estimations were done to identify field educator characteristics, and these are presented in Table 4.9 below.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FIELD EDUCATORS IN THE RESEARCH

This next section gives an overview of field educator demographic characteristics and provides a comparison of educator characteristics across Schools A, B and C. Table 4.9 below summarises this information.

Field Educator Gender: The field educator population across the three schools included 70% female and 30% male respondents. There was a relationship between field educator gender and school ($\chi^2=8.3$, d.f.=2, $p<.05$). School B field educator sample had an equal number of male and female field educators, although it is the norm for more females than males to work as social workers and field educators (Marchant & Wearing, 1986). In this way School B field educator sample differed from Schools A and C.

Ethnicity: There was a significant relationship between field educator ethnicity and associated school ($\chi^2=27.6$, d.f.=4, $p<.001$). The major factor contributing to this difference was that School A had a much higher proportion of Pakeha field educators than Schools B and C.

Age: There was no statistically significant difference in the age of field educators from each school, $p>.05$. The mean age of field educators in each school was similar, with the mean educator age across all schools working out at 41.5.

Field Educator Social Work Qualifications: A difference was evident between field educators with social work qualifications and associated school ($\chi^2 = 48.6$, d.f.=2, $p<.001$). The major influencing factor was that all field educators from School A were required to have a social work qualification. The field educator samples from Schools B and C included participants with and without a social work qualification.

Employment Status: There was no relationship between association with school and field educator part-time, full-time or retired from work status. There was, however, a significant relationship between 'years in social work' completed by field educators and the associated school. Although field educators across all schools had an average of 11 years of social work experience, the field educator sample from School B included seven respondents with less than one year experience in social work ($\chi^2=33.4$, d.f.=4, $p<.001$).

Number of Students Supervised on Placement: A difference between schools was evident when comparing the previous number of students that field educators had had on placement. It would appear that field educators from School C had supervised a greater number of students than those from Schools A and B, and educators from School B had

supervised fewer students than those from School A. By calculating the weighted average for numbers of students supervised on placement, it was found that School A field educators had supervised on average 4.5 students, School B educators had supervised on average 2.8 students and School C educators had supervised 6.2 students on average.

By comparing educator characteristics between schools it was possible to identify that the educator populations associated with each school differed in a number of critical ways. There was an unexpected balance of educator gender for School B that was not reflected in Schools A and C educator samples. In addition, School B educators were more likely to have no experience of working in social work, and had supervised fewer students than educators from Schools A and C. Educators from School A differed from those from Schools B and C in that they were predominately Pakeha and were all qualified social workers. Meanwhile, educators from School C had a history of providing supervision to students more frequently than those from Schools A and B. These differences had implications for understanding, and analysing the questionnaire responses, indicating that it was important to make between schools comparisons of field educator questionnaire responses.

Table 4.9 Inter-school Comparison of Field Educator Demographic Data

Demographic Item	School A N=80	School B N=32	School C N=18	
Gender:				
Female	62	16	13	$\chi^2=8.3$, d.f.=2, p<.05
Male	18	16	5	
Ethnicity:				
Pakeha	77	19	13	$\chi^2=27.6$, d.f.=4, p<.001
Maori	2	11	3	
Other	1	2	2	
Age:		2 missing cases		
21-30	6	4	1	N.S.
31-40	29	8	5	
41-50	33	16	12	Mean age=41.5
51-60	11	2	0	
Has S.W. qualification?				
Yes	80	15	11	$\chi^2=48.6$, d.f.=2, p<.001
No	0	17	7	
S.W. experience (years)			1 case missing	
0	0	7	0	$\chi^2=33.4$,d.f.=12, p<.001
Less than 1	10	7	4	
1-5	22	5	6	
6-10	18	3	6	
11-15	22	7	1	
16-20	5	2	0	
21-25	3	1	0	
26-30				
Students supervised	6 missing cases	3 missing cases		
1	14	12	1	F=6.18, d.f.=2,118, p<.01
2	14	4	2	
3	11	7	2	
4	7	1	1	
5	4	1	2	
6	4	0	1	
7	1	1	3	
8	7	3	0	
9	0	0	3	
10	6	0	1	
11+	6	0	2	

In the above section of Chapter Four, an overview of student and field educator respondent characteristics from each school has been presented. The final pages of this chapter detail how the data was analysed and interpreted, and address the question of data verification and reliability.

DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaire data were mostly formatted using five-point Likert scales producing categorical data. For these questions, weighted means and standard deviations were calculated. Results from the final attributes question in both the student and field educator questionnaires were calculated using the Z test statistic in order to compare attribute selections made by proportions, using sample sizes larger than 30. For the remainder of the questions, meaningful data were obtained from examining frequencies and using chi-square to determine statistically significant relationships between variables.

USING A COMPUTER PACKAGE TO ANALYSE QUALITATIVE DATA

QSR NUD.IST 4 was used to store, code and retrieve the interview material. Computer packages for analysing qualitative data are not designed to 'coerce' data into a particular form. Instead, NUD.IST uses an index system that allows for data analysis to be conducted in a developmental fashion, using a tree structure where coding nodes can be built upon each other (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The system allows for accurate content analysis, enables the linking of relevant data segments and is particularly useful in facilitating theory development (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Paradoxically, the strength of the package in facilitating developmental analysis can also present as a weakness for some researchers, in that the application offers many ways for a researcher never to finish a study (Richards & Richards, 1994). It was therefore helpful in this research to have the three theoretical constructs to use as delimiting factors in the analysis.

INTERPRETATION OF INTERVIEW DATA

In the first instance, an inductive content analysis was carried out to discover emerging themes using open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During this process, 36 categories were identified. These categories are listed in Appendix F. Next, the interview data was examined to find material relating to contextual influences, the teaching and learning transaction and, the impact of relationships. This phase of the analysis was, therefore, deductive as it specifically related to identifying material linked with the theoretical constructs used in the research.

Miles and Huberman (1994) note that the challenge of qualitative data analysis is to remain mindful of the explicit research questions and purpose of the study at the same time as continuing to be open to unexpected results or data that may re-educate the researcher. This tension was evident throughout the examination and analysis of the interview material in that the theoretical constructs used in the research created some clear boundaries for investigating the data. Therefore, material that appeared to fall outside of these constructs was, from time to time, overlooked. This problem of research selectiveness in relation to interview content and interpretation was partially addressed by having a second reader of the transcripts identify key issues and factors for further investigation.

The initial categories were derived entirely from the interview material and theoretical constructs of the research. They were made up of descriptive, interpretive and pattern codes. During the course of examining the data in this way, memoing was used to flag potential lines of inquiry.

The themes that emerged from this coding exercise were then integrated with the results from the questionnaire analysis to provide explanations, illustrations or contradictions of the quantitative findings. In this way, the interview data analysis was used as a 'touchstone' in the research, to test out and verify the results generated from student and educator questionnaires. A second, and equally important function of the interview analysis, was that it allowed the very personal and human aspects of struggle and excitement in teaching and learning to be examined.

VERIFYING THE DATA & QUESTIONS OF RELIABILITY

A number of strategies were used to enhance the reliability and content validity of the data. Firstly, several of the questions were derived from earlier social work and nursing research, as outlined above. The nursing research had addressed questions of reliability and validity in its questionnaire design and administration (Brown, 1981). The content validity for the domain categorisation of field educator attributes was tested out first by asking five educators and five students to categorise the qualities into the three domains, Professional Competencies, Student Centred Teaching and Personal Qualities. The final categorisation was determined as a result of consensus in this categorisation process. The questionnaire items designed to address issues of client work and methods of practice used in the British research on field education, were similar to those that would be used to classify New Zealand social service delivery, and were therefore adopted for this research with some semantic modifications (Walker et al., 1995).

Pre-testing was used to get feedback on the clarity, structure and method used to gather the data, and suggestions for making the instrument more robust were incorporated. Both males and females, Maori and Pakeha, mature-aged students and students who were entering social work in their early twenties were included in the pre-testing sample. The questionnaires were also scrutinised by three academics in social work education. The main suggestion to increase the accuracy of responses was to increase the scales used from three- to five-point Likert measures.

I collated all questionnaire data and entered it on to the computer myself, with the exception of interview transcripts. A typist transcribed the interviews and I later individually checked each one. A mixed methods approach was adopted in order that contradictions and similarities in questionnaire and interview data could be identified. This approach enabled a measure of 'triangulation' to be incorporated into the data analysis.

In order to strengthen the degree to which the results could be generalised to schools of social work throughout New Zealand, three separate schools in different geographical locations were selected to be part of the research. Although all schools were offering the same level of Diploma in Social Work, the student and field educator population at each school differed in terms of previous qualifications and ethnicity. These differences were recorded in detail earlier in this chapter. By surveying students and educators in schools that represent a cross-section of the New Zealand social work education community, the degree to which results can be generalised is improved.

SUMMARY

The purpose of Chapter Four has been to explain the rationale for the research design and provide an outline of the methods used to gather and analyse the data for this project. Three factors contribute to the strength of the design. Firstly, the research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. Secondly, the research focuses on the experiences of both students and educators in practicum teaching and learning. Thirdly, the research population was accessed across three schools of social work located in different parts of New Zealand. Together, these factors allow for the identification of contradictions within the data, and increase the possibility of generalising the research results. The research results related to each of the theoretical constructs are documented in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE IMPACT OF CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON FIELD EDUCATION

In this chapter, the research findings related to the teaching and learning *context* are reported. Each of the topics included in this chapter address some aspect of the 'learning milieu' articulated in the Walker and Boud model (1994). The chapter is divided into eight sections:

- student preparation for placement;
- conditions to promote learning;
- placement structure;
- exposure to client groups;
- practice models used by field educators;
- agency support for field education and work pressure;
- supervisor motivation for providing field education; and,
- liaison between schools and field educators.

PREPARATION FOR PLACEMENT

Walker and Boud's model for learning from experience (1994) identified preparation as the first phase in the student learning process. Using a five-point Likert scale in the pre-placement questionnaire, students were asked to rate their level of preparation for placement on ten items. The anchors were level 1, indicating 'Not prepared', to level 5, indicating 'Very prepared'. The weighted mean responses to these questions are reported in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Weighted Means and Standard Deviation of Ratings of Preparation for Placement

How well prepared do you believe you are in:	School A		School B		School C	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Micro-skills training	3.8	0.77	3.5	1.04	3.6	0.86
Contracting procedures	3.2	1.04	3.3	1.10	2.9	1.26
Supervision processes	3.6	1.25	3.9	0.88	3.3	1.20
Assessment requirements	3.5	1.12	3.9	0.00	3.1	1.20
Knowledge of S.W. role	3.9	0.74	3.4	1.09	3.8	0.86
Reporting harassment	4.0	1.14	3.6	1.19	3.3	1.28
Practice safety	3.9	0.80	3.6	1.07	3.2	1.41
Physical safety	4.0	0.87	3.6	0.00	3.6	1.16
Emotional safety	3.7	1.20	3.7	1.02	3.4	0.93
Cultural safety	3.6	1.09	3.9	0.85	3.8	0.77

There was little variation in student ratings of preparation across all schools. Students mostly rated their preparation in the pre-placement questionnaire between average and above average (Mean 2.9 – 4) on the ten items. However, during post-placement interviews a clear pattern emerged where students from School B were, in retrospect, dissatisfied with their placement preparation.

I don't think that really the preparation we got for placement was enough, and we had done some modules talking about social work itself but we didn't go into things like what would be expected of us once we went on placement, not until the day of our interview with whatever placement we were put in. It was a bit of a culture shock. We needed more preparation.

(Interviewer): What do you think that preparation might include?

Listening to previous students, you know, bringing some of them on board and getting them to talk about how their placements were, what it was like for them with supervisors and case allocations. The types of cases they got.

(Mary, Student, School B)

I didn't feel it (preparation) was good at all actually. Like I went to CYPS and I knew that they dealt with children and families, that's really all I knew. . .I didn't feel at all

prepared. This was one thing I was going to tell you about. This here (showing the practice package) this really freaked me out. When it says everything we are supposed to know before we went out, I looked at that and I thought "I haven't done half of that". . . We hadn't touched on the Treaty of Waitangi, we hadn't done any human development.

(Jill, Student, School B)

I don't feel there was a lot of preparation actually. When you say preparation, do you mean in respect to my particular placement or do you mean in general?

(Interviewer): In general.

We did a module, that did sort of look at assessment and that sort of thing, but I don't feel there was a lot of preparation.

(Interviewer): What sort of preparation do you think would have been useful?

I think there are quite a few things, for example the contract. We had a module after the placement which went into how to prepare a contract, and that should have been before because I had no idea how to prepare a contract and I think that's quite a big thing since everything kind of relates to the contract.

(Ann, Student, School B)

Well there wasn't any preparation really except writing out the reasons I wanted to go and giving that to my tutor. The preparation was minimal. I had to be placed somewhere, that was it! Please take me!

(Pani, Student, School B)

During the interviews, students from Schools A and C tended to list the types of things done in sessions prior to placement without commenting on the merits or quality of the preparation. There was clearly a discrepancy between the average ratings that School B students made of preparation prior to going out in the field, and how student interviewees from this school subsequently viewed the preparation after their placement. This same discrepancy was not evident in the student interview material from Schools A and C.

In retrospect, it would have been useful to ask field educators about their perceptions on how well students were prepared before arriving on placement. Although this was not a specific question put to educators, a few commented on preparation, and in particular it was clear that field educators from School A expected that students would have been prepared for placement experiences.

I think she (the student) came with a reasonable understanding of what the placement could provide and she certainly had some clear learning goals of her own. I am aware that was something she was required to develop at the University. . . I think the University's preparation around goal setting is useful and contributes to the success.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

I assume they (the students) come prepared. That the skills groups would have prepared them for talking with clients, and in the skills of engaging, of assessment and contracting. I don't think they ever prepare them for termination. That's always a struggle for students regardless, and probably some would get well into their second year before there can be any changes there. But the assumption is that they have been given a good grounding before they come on placement.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

I think they're fairly well prepared. I mean there is a whole lot of work done before they come out on placement.

(Marama, Field Educator, School A)

Educators from Schools B and C did not comment on preparation specifically except to note a possible disparity between the teaching about social change in the classroom and the attendant expectations that students have in going out in the field.

My concern which I have fed back to the institution was that some of the students that have come here come with the idea that they are going to make great changes over night. I mean field work teachers don't need that and its very hard to get their (the students) feet on the ground when they come in with high faluting ideas that they are going to make some massive changes.

(Ilene, Field Educator, School C)

CONDITIONS TO PROMOTE LEARNING

Pre- and post-placement student questionnaires and field educator questionnaires each contained an identical question related to conditions that promote learning in the field. This question was included to compare student and field educator views on conditions within the agency context that promote learning. Investigation of this issue was prompted by the thought that student opinion on what important conditions for learning might change as a result of having been on placement. Twelve items were contained within this question, and respondents were asked to rate the importance of these items for promoting learning, using a 1-5 Likert-type scale. The anchors were level 1, indicating 'Not Important', to level 5, indicating 'Very Important'. Weighted average response rates were calculated for each item and are noted in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Mean Ratings by Pre- and Post-placement Students and Field Educators on Conditions to Promote Learning in the Field, Across Schools

Condition	Student pre-placement (n= 81)		Student post-placement (n= 78)		(t-test*) comparing Student pre & post ratings	Field Educators (n=129)		(t-test*) comparing Student post- placement & Field Educator ratings
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		Mean	S.D.	
Clear set of learning objectives	4.3	0.9	4.2	1.0	N.S.	4.7	0.6	-4.00*
A structured orientation to the service	4.6	0.6	4.3	0.9	2.46*	4.6	0.6	-2.61*
Team supportive of student learning	4.0	1.2	4.7	0.6	-4.67*	4.5	0.6	2.32*
A place to call one's own (desk & chair)	4.2	1.0	4.0	1.2	N.S.	4.5	0.7	-3.35*
Regular uninterrupted supervision	4.5	0.7	4.5	0.9	N.S.	4.8	0.5	-2.70*
Access to literature on agency policy	4.7	0.6	4.4	0.7	2.89*	4.4	0.6	N.S.
Staff acceptance of student role	4.4	0.7	4.5	0.6	N.S.	3.9	0.5	6.97*
Access to agency resources	4.2	0.8	4.2	1.0	N.S.	4.3	0.7	N.S.
Emphasis on experiential learning	4.3	0.7	4.5	0.7	-1.80*	4.5	0.7	N.S.
Being challenged on competency	4.3	0.8	4.4	0.8	N.S.	4.3	0.7	N.S.
Being challenged culturally	4.4	0.7	4.3	0.8	N.S.	4.3	0.6	N.S.
Being challenged on ethical decision making	4.4	0.7	4.5	0.7	N.S.	4.6	0.6	N.S.

*t-test statistically significant, $p < .05$

All conditions were seen as being of above-average 'importance' in terms of enhancing student learning (Means ranged from 4.0 – 4.8), with the exception of '*Having access to literature on agency policy*' where students regarded this item as less important than the others. A more fruitful line of enquiry for this topic may have been to compare student

'Importance' ratings of conditions for learning pre-placement, with student reports of how frequently these conditions were in fact present on placement.

Than they did prior to going out in the field. Similarly, they rated having '*Emphasis on experiential learning*' significantly higher post-placement ($t=-1.80$, $d.f.=157$, $p<.05$). The two conditions that students rated significantly lower post-placement was having '*Access to literature on agency policy*' ($t=2.89$, $d.f.=157$, $p<.05$) and '*A structured orientation to the service*' ($t=2.46$, $d.f.=157$, $p<.05$) Clearly then, students changed their views about the level of importance of the above three conditions after having been out on placement. Being part of a team that supported student learning, and having an emphasis on experiential learning were regarded as being significantly more important by students after they had been in the field, while having access to literature on agency policy was regarded by students as being less important.

When comparing student post-placement with field educator ratings of conditions, students rated the following conditions as being significantly less important than educators ($d.f.=205$, $p<.05$); having a '*Clear set of learning objectives*' ($t=-4.00$); having '*A structured orientation to the service*' ($t=-2.61$); having '*A place to call ones own (desk & chair)*' ($t=-3.35$); having '*Regular, uninterrupted supervision*' ($t=-2.70$). Conversely, students rated the following two conditions as being significantly more important than field educators: '*To be in a team that supports student learning*' ($t=2.32$) and to have '*Acceptance from staff of the student role*' ($t=6.97$). These results indicate that students and field educators differ significantly in their views about what conditions enhance learning in the field.

Two items listed in Table 5.2 are discussed further in Chapter Six. These are having an orientation to agency and work, and accessing experiential learning opportunities. Supervision and challenges will be discussed in Chapter Eight where aspects of the student/field educator relationship are examined in more depth. Of particular significance in terms of considering the impact of context, is the nature of the team environment in which the student was placed. Students strongly endorsed the fact that the team environment in which they were placed impacted greatly on their learning.

I enjoyed the team. We worked in a team right, so we all actually sat in one room, and so there was a lot of learning and interaction in that, and people you know gave you support

after phone calls that were particularly tough. You could overhear everyone's conversation and I guess that was a downer, but it has that plus of checking out, you know, and the humour and the fun and they're there helping each other out. I mean that was an experience of seeing a team in action and I really really enjoyed the multi-cultural team mix and gender mix.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

Well the team played a big part in learning. The fact that from the word "go" they used to have the meetings on Wednesday afternoon and they changed that so I could go to meetings with them, and so that really made me feel accepted, it was great.

(Tanya, Student, School A)

I felt comfortable there, they (the team) encouraged my learning, they accepted the questions I asked and they allowed me to get into all sorts of issues, even though it wasn't new for them they appreciated it was new for me. So you know they encouraged me to get into situations to help my learning, they encouraged me to get as involved as I could.

(Mary, Student, School B)

Students were mindful that they were entering into an established work culture, and as Walker and Boud note (1994), this is part of the unfamiliar territory for the student to negotiate during practicum.

You go into an establishment like this one that is already ticking over in their team. To break into a team for three months, if you're just a student, is a very difficult and very uncomfortable situation. You have to be diplomatic and I felt by going in humbly, I feel if you are going to go in there with preconceived ideas, with a plan to try out all this theory you've learned, you're going to come horribly unstuck and become very unpopular.

(Marion, Student, School C)

Two students interviewed had been on placement in agencies where there was no team structure. This appears to have been problematic for both.

Well the main constraint in my placement was that it was sole charge. I had just one person I was completely dependent on to give me my learning. She was untrained and I felt she had acquired some pretty negative ways of working.

(Claire, Student, School C)

I think one of the main problems in the placement was the isolation. There was basically only me and her, she's not a social worker and because of that my learning was really impaired. I had to go outside of the organisation to get some experience of being with a social worker. So the isolation was a very big barrier to my learning.

(Mandy, Student, School B)

Later in the same interview, Mandy goes on to discuss how having a number of students placed together would enhance the practicum. In this way she refers to the notion of a

'learning community' identified in Chapter Three as being essential for providing emotional sustenance to the adult learner (Brookfield, 1991:49).

I would have liked my own space. I found sitting next to the practice teacher all day encroached on my space. . . I know in the previous year she had had four students at a time, which might have been better than having one

(Interviewer): Because there's support for each other?

Yeah, because I felt very isolated and at times I wondered if I actually fitted in there.

(Mandy, Student, School B)

Not all students were placed in team environments that were supportive of student learning. One student talked about being in a team that was openly antagonistic towards people with qualifications.

Because it (the agency) was dealing with domestic violence and the majority of the women who worked in the place had been in violent relationships, they would say to me "Well you don't know squat. You can't know what it's like because you haven't been there. . .". They didn't like people with qualifications basically. There was a competitive thing going on there between them and other community agencies, between qualified and non-qualified staff.

(Fiona, Student, School C)

Field educators noted repeatedly the importance they placed on their team in terms of contributing to the student learning process during the placement.

You have to have a team and a senior who is committed to having students in the agency.

(Marama, Field Educator, School A)

I like the feedback that I get from the team. That's often where I get the real feedback about the student's competency and really good assessment material.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

She (the student) went out with a number of social workers in order for her to look at what they did and we linked that with the theory in supervision. We have a number of groups running during this placement and so she (the student) participated in those, and that was part of her assessment. So I'd go along to the social worker she was facilitating with and say "Well, how did it go?".

(Ilene, Field Educator, School C)

Another educator commented that aside from the team input, the degree of understanding around the purpose of student placements, and the extent of structure within the agency environment also impacts on student learning experience.

Basically the environment was not structured enough to accommodate the student and the school (High School in which student was placed) had expectations that were actually far too high for what the student was there to do.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

Accessing agency resources was another item in Table 5.2 that related to conditions to promote student learning. Accessing resources did not appear to be a problem for most students interviewed except one, who was conducting research and requiring a computer to compile her report. In this instance the agency hired a computer for the student to use. This action not only led to the project being successfully completed, but enabled the student to fulfil placement requirements outside of normal working hours. This was of particular significance for this student who was juggling a number of work commitments to meet financial obligations.

Having the computer meant that I could work in the weekends and the evenings. It made it possible for me to do it. Whereas if I actually had to be somewhere at those times, like in my office or at the agency I couldn't have completed the project.

(Karen, Student, School A)

Several students noted how it was particularly helpful to have reading material available about the policies, procedures and purpose of the agency in which they were placed.

I have to say that a lot of the material that was written about Maori mental health and how the agency came to exist within the wider mainstream mental health services was really helpful. The agency had a lot of material on that, like policies and law, plus who started it (the agency), why it was started and that was quite important for me to know why they were there and what they could do to help Maori people.

(Pani, Student, School B)

Educators on the whole were mindful of providing the resources students required and some went to particular lengths to ensure the comfort of the student.

Their desk space they (students) have is usually in my office, so they also have a second desk space. They always get their own pens and stationary, which is really nice to have. Always flowers on the desk, always food. I know there are things I can't provide, but these are the things I can provide. They get a transport allowance if they use their own car.

(Tamara, Field Educator, School A)

PLACEMENT STRUCTURE

Since there is debate about what placement structure best serves student learning in the field, students were asked before and after their placement whether they preferred block,

concurrent, or a mix of block and concurrent placement in their training. Students from Schools B and C had a block placement structure for first placement and School A had placement and classroom work running concurrently. Chi-square analyses showed no statistically significant difference in student preference of placement structure between pre- and post-placement samples for Schools B and C with about half of School B students favouring block placement (56%) and about half of School C students (47%) favouring a mix of block and concurrent placement structure. However, School A students demonstrated a significant shift of opinion regarding placement structure between pre- and post-placement surveys ($\chi^2=9.41$, d.f.=2, $p<.01$). Pre-placement questionnaire results showed the majority of students from School A preferred a mix of concurrent and block training practicum structure (57%). However, post-placement surveys revealed a shift to preferring just the block placement option (65%). Over all the schools, the order of placement preference in post-placement questionnaires was, firstly, block structure (55%), secondly, a mix of block and concurrent structure (37%), with concurrent placement being the least favoured and selected by just 8% of the students.

Field educators were also asked to note which structure they believed was most conducive to student learning. About half of the educators from Schools A (54%) and C (50%) favoured a mix of both block and concurrent placements, while about half of the field educators from School B (52%) favoured block placements. Using a concurrent placement structure alone was not favoured by the majority of educators from any school.

Student comments about placement structure revealed shortcomings in both concurrent and block placements. These reservations were mainly linked with the nature of the workflow in the placement agency. In Chapter Six, Pani (a student) notes that there was not sufficient work for her to do during the block placement (See page 154). For another student, the concurrent placement structure meant that she missed some vital parts of processing youth justice cases.

All day Friday was in Court and Thursday everybody was trying to get ready for Friday, so they (the staff) weren't too accessible. It was like if you were going to write court reports they need to be finished before Thursday so you needed to be there on Monday Tuesday and Wednesday to do them. I don't think the two days a week (on placement) worked in that agency.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

For Claire, the placement had not been a successful learning encounter and therefore the block placement felt like a long time to spend in an agency where she perceived she was not learning good practice.

Because this was a three-month placement it was long and it feels really unfortunate, it feels like fairly wasted time and I wish something had been built in there. Maybe that's one of the disadvantages of block placement. It was like being thrown in there to sink or swim.

(Claire, Student, School C)

There was no other material in the interview data indicating student or field educator views on placement structure.

EXPOSURE TO CLIENT GROUPS

Social workers have traditionally worked with a wide range of client groups. As one of the aims of this research was to find out the types of learning experiences that students have access to on placement, educators were asked to note which client groups they served. Results from this question are noted in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 *Number and Percentages of Field Educators that could Access Different Client Groups for Training Students*

Client Groups	School A		School B		School C		Total	
	N=80	%	N=32	%	N=18	%	N=130	%
Children & families	41	51	20	63	10	56	71	55
Ethnic Minorities	19	24	16	50	10	56	45	34
Maori	20	25	18	56	8	44	46	35
Mentally ill	29	36	8	25	6	33	43	33
Adolescents	13	16	19	59	9	50	41	32
Offenders	23	29	13	41	4	22	40	31
Children in care	21	26	9	28	3	17	33	25
Elderly	19	24	8	25	3	17	30	23
Physically Disabled	14	18	3	9	4	22	21	16
Other	13	16	6	19	7	39	26	20

Work with children and family client groups could be accessed most frequently (55%) by field educators for students during their placements. This client group was also the most accessible to students in a recent British study of field education (Walker et al., 1995:54). The least accessible work was with clients who had a physical disability (16%), the elderly (23%), and children in care (25%). This differed from the British study where the least accessible client groups were offenders and work with ethnic minorities.

Just 35% of field educators could access placements that afforded students the opportunity to work specifically with Maori. School B field educators were able to access practice opportunities for students with Maori most frequently (56%) and School A, least frequently (25%). The lack of student access to work with indigenous people has implications for school accreditation in light of Te Kaiawhinua Ahumani guidelines and will inevitably impact on student learning about bi-cultural practice. This matter is discussed in more depth in Chapter Eight under policy related to social work education.

The 'Other' category (N=26) of clients included work with: women (N=9); people with addictions (N=4); terminally ill clients (N=3); clients with past experience of sexual abuse (N=3); caregivers (N=2); and people on a low income (N=2). The remaining replies were single responses of differing client populations, including sex-industry workers, people with an intellectual disability, and adults with anger management problems.

Of the twelve students interviewed, five were placed in community welfare agencies, three had been at the Children and Young Persons Service, two were placed in Maori social service agencies, one was placed in women's health and another was placed in a private practice. Of the thirteen field educators that were interviewed, five worked in community welfare agencies, two worked in community mental health, a further two worked for CYPS, one was in private practice, one worked in a medical centre and another worked in women's health.

One of the constraints to student learning centred on not having sufficient client contact, therefore compromising understanding about the work of the agency. One student had the task of setting up a support network for women victims of domestic violence.

I didn't get to meet any of the women who would eventually come into the groups. It takes a long time for women to respond to that type of pamphlet, they can have it for a long time before they pick up the phone. . . I was reading up about domestic violence,

trying to learn about the dynamics of family violence but I . . . I never met the people so it was really inadequate for me because I didn't meet the people behind it.

(Fiona, Student, School C)

There were quite a lot of difficulties in respect to the young people I was dealing with — communication problems, they spoke very poor English — but there was a lack of opportunity to actually see these students because they were at school all day, the only time I could see them was if they popped in in the evenings. This was one of the reasons I started to stay late actually, so there was a lack of being able to see the people I was working with.

(Ann, Student, School B)

During the interviews students were asked to recall any 'magic moments' on their placements. A number of the 'moments' referred to involved aspects of relationship building with clients.

A magic moment. Well one that immediately comes up is just a sense of a human thing, was a really good rapport with a client. It was a Tongan client so language was a bit of a difficulty, but we really got a good rapport together and after I'd helped her move out of the Refuge she rang up about two days later, and its something to do with English being a second language, that expression comes out, it was "Claire I love you and I am bringing you some fish". That was just lovely you know, it was really heart touching.

(Claire, Student, School C)

Another one (magic moment) was helping a little girl get out of a taxi. She was always quite hard to get out of the taxi and the taxi driver used to complain about her all the time. This taxi driver couldn't get her out this day, so I went out and started to lift her out. "Come on" I said "let's get out" and then she wouldn't because she gets anxious. Then the taxi driver was getting really angry and grabbed her by the ponytail and then he realised that I was there and he didn't do that. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. So then I could lift her out because she was scared of the driver, and she gave me a cuddle. That's a magic moment, when you realise you can make a difference.

(Mandy, Student, School B)

One student recalled two moments that were memorable, if not magic, where he confronted the reality of working with co-workers and clients from a different cultural background from his own.

I think a moment was my first introduction to one of the bi-lingual workers and my natural reaction was to shake her hand, but she withdrew her flesh up her sleeve and told me it was not appropriate for her to touch me, and I was immediately confronted with different cultural expectations. You know, like I was in a lift with some clients and when it opened I stood back to let them go out first, but in their culture the males go first, not the females. So those situations really bring home to you that you're there to learn.

(Harry, Student, School A)

With the exception of the two students who were placed within Maori social service agencies, the students interviewed did not appear to have had much contact with Maori

clients. A number of students did, however, have considerable contact with clients from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds other than Maori. In this way the interview data from students reflected the questionnaire results from educators, where work with other ethnic groups could be accessed more readily for students than work with Maori.

The growing diversity of refugee immigration to New Zealand has highlighted the need for developing services in this country to meet the needs of this client group (Briggs, In Press). This development forms part of the changing context in which field education is provided in New Zealand. Two of the students and one of the educators interviewed, worked specifically in the area of refugee resettlement. Other students and educators worked in community mental health services where they also had contact with refugee populations. These developments give rise to debate on the political and ideological position adopted by ANZASW whereby social workers give priority to practising in a way that reflects a bi-cultural approach. Bi-cultural practice and working with diversity will be discussed further in Chapter Eight where some recommendations for policy development in field education are made.

Although a number of students worked with clients from different ethnic backgrounds from themselves, some had minimal exposure to this type of work.

I didn't get much cultural stuff, although its mainly white middle class out there (geographic area in which student worked), although on saying that the teenager that I mentioned before was part Maori part Samoan, so I did have a small involvement with her family. But I didn't really get much cultural stuff.

(Jill, Student, School B)

Jill's account was in stark contrast to Pani's, who was placed in a community health team dedicated to working solely with Maori clients.

I think one of the things that really stood out for me was being able to communicate with the staff about things Maori for Maori clients. I think it really helped my understanding.

(Pani, Student, School B)

PRACTICE METHODS USED BY FIELD EDUCATORS

Table 5.4 gives a summary of the types of practice methods that field educators at each school felt they could demonstrate to students. Field educators were most likely to provide learning opportunities for students using individual casework (91%), task-centred

social work (78%), and methods associated with crisis intervention (68%). These findings are similar to those from a recent British study on field education placements (Walker et al., 1995:67). Opportunities for learning about play therapy, social care planning, welfare rights work and family therapy were least available to students. Using chi-square, it was determined that there were no statistically significant differences between the schools in terms of the practice opportunities offered to students.

Table 5.4 *Number and Percentage of Field Educators who could Demonstrate Different Types of Practice, by School*

Method	School A		School B		School C		Total	
	N=80	%	N=32	%	N=18	%	N=130	%
Individual Casework	73	91	30	94	15	83	118	91
Task centred	63	79	25	78	14	78	102	78
Crisis Intervention	56	70	19	59	13	72	88	68
Groupwork	51	64	13	41	11	61	75	58
Counselling	48	60	16	50	6	33	70	54
Community work	22	28	17	53	12	67	5	51
Social Skills Training	25	31	12	38	8	44	45	35
Family mediation	28	35	12	38	3	17	43	33
Family therapy	22	28	9	28	3	17	34	26
Welfare rights	17	21	5	16	10	56	32	25
Social Care planning	21	26	8	25	9	50	31	24
Play therapy	7	9	4	13	1	6	12	9
Other	7	9	2	6	3	17	12	9

The interview material from students reflected the above findings in that they appeared to have most opportunity to do individual casework. However, although most of the students reported doing practical tasks on placement, this must be distinguished from using a task-centred approach with clients. No student referred to using a task-centred model for client intervention. Given that this interview data reflects first-placement experiences, it is

possibly not surprising that students appeared to spend a good deal of time doing practical tasks.

Basically I was involved with meeting immediate needs of clients like housing, food benefit applications, tenancy and immigration problems.

(Harry, Student, School A)

I did a lot of filing, working out community donations, running out in the van and picking up goods and bringing them back.

(Claire, Student, School C)

I had to organise some recreation for the students, like the Friday forum, that was my responsibility, and odd things like taking them to the doctor.

(Ann, Student, School B)

While there is no dispute that doing practical tasks with clients is one part of the social work role (Compton & Galaway, 1994), a balance needs to be struck between students performing these tasks and subsequently integrating their experiences with social work theory and principles. This integration process did not appear to happen for Harry, Claire or Ann. In this way, these student experiences can help inform social work programmes about inducting agencies and field educators into a teaching and learning role. Ways to monitor the quality of field placements are discussed further in Chapter Eight.

Several students interviewed had the opportunity to learn about groupwork and community work, but none of the students or educators interviewed worked in areas where play therapy, social care planning or welfare rights work were practiced. One student noted in particular the absence of welfare rights work.

I guess because it was a statutory agency (agency in which student was placed) there was very little social change work done, but there was a lot of social control.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

Phillipa attributed the lack of social change work as a reflection of the nature of the agency in which she was placed. This is a credible observation given that she had her placement in a statutory agency. However, no students referred to being involved in overt social justice activities, although several did appear to be involved to some degree with client advocacy (See Harry above, page 120).

AGENCY SUPPORT FOR FIELD EDUCATION AND WORK PRESSURE

Using a Likert-type 1-5 scale, field educators were asked to rate the extent to which they felt their agency supported the practise of having students on placement. The anchors were level 1, indicating 'No support', to level 5, indicating a 'Great deal of support'. Seven field educators (6%) indicated they had had no support. The remainder of the responses were evenly spread across the scale, with 20% noting 'Below average' support, 23% noting 'Average' support, 29% 'Above average' support and 22% a 'Great deal of support'. Out of all field educators, 49% rated their agency support between having no support to average support inclusive.

Ninety percent of field educators had no agreement with their agency of work that made allowance for student supervision in workload allocation. Five percent did have such an agreement. The question of an agency agreement was not applicable for the remainder of the sample. This pattern was similar for all schools.

These results differ markedly from those of a similar study in the U.K. where it was found that 60% of field educators had agreements with their agencies to reduce workload while they had students on placement. (Walker et al., 1995). In the same research, the majority of educators felt they had sufficient time to discuss client issues, integration of theory and practice, and professional development issues with the student during the placement (Walker et al., 1995:98). The difference in terms of agency support for educators may be explained by the radical changes in the way field education in the U.K. is now structured. Both agencies and educators need to be formally accredited to have students on placement. This accreditation process includes the understanding that agencies will attend to creating a teaching and learning culture within the workplace.

Field educators from the three schools were asked to note if they had decided in the past not to take a student on placement because of agency workload pressure. For 88 field educators (68%), workload pressure had determined at some stage that they would not be able to supervise a student. However, more field educators from Schools A (n=67, 85%) and C (n=10, 56%) had made decisions not to take students because of workload pressure, than educators from School B (n=11, 34%); ($\chi^2=30.96$, d.f.=4, $p<.001$).

Both questionnaire results and interview data concur with reports from the literature that practicum learning is taking place in agency settings characterised by instability and change, where, due to resource cutbacks, workers are expected to 'do more for less' (Taylor, 1997:12). Students and educators made frequent references to agency workload pressure and the lack of time to complete practice obligations and facilitate learning.

It's not straightforward. The resources are just not there. You might have well-meaning field educator, but because of her workload and agency restructuring and development, the environment is just not too conducive for learning.

(Harry, Student, School A)

I think the pressure in the agency was another obstacle (to learning). Like I mean that will always be there but at times I probably considered the pressure they were under, over the top of my learning needs, I found it difficult to assert what I wanted to do knowing that they were working flat to the boards.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

At times there is a sense of not being able to deliver what I would like to my student due to work pressure. That's definitely a problem. There have been times when it's difficult to even find five minutes to say "Well look you can get on with these things". I guess that's present in a lot of placements, but not all, and that's part of the nature of this agency, but not all agencies.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

The economics of it all have forced us to have placements with supervisors who aren't social workers and that's a negative thing which wouldn't have happened twenty years ago.

(Pauline, Field Educator, School B)

Lack of agency support for field educators was evident in some interviews.

It's (having students) hard within my own workplace because they don't give you any support.

(Interviewer): Your workplace gave you no support in having students?

Nothing. Never came to see me. Never thanked us for doing the 86 FGC's (Family Group Conferences). All they did was criticise because one went wrong.

(Huia, Field Educator, School B)

The worst thing for me actually, that went wrong was that I didn't have enough support from my agency to actually deal with it (failing a student).

(Bill, Field Educator, School A)

An ongoing problem is work pressure. That's a biggie. When you're a social worker you have to be available to clients and students do take a lot of intensive time. I don't tell my operations manager about the amount of time I spend with student, you know she'd be pretty upset. . . I have to justify the time I spend on the student to the management, who have a great deal of difficulty getting their heads around the fact that social workers need

supervision and so you know why should I be spending time with this student whose not actually paying us?

(Ilene, Field Educator, School C)

Although 22% of field educators in the questionnaires noted they had a 'great deal of support' for having students on placement, none of the educators interviewed appeared to be in this position. It seemed that although teams within social work agencies were often receptive to having students, this support was not necessarily forthcoming from agency management, as Ilene's account shows. When educators discussed the tensions inherent in juggling having a student and doing the work of the agency, priority was inevitably given to completing agency work.

I have my work and my responsibilities to the agency to maintain. At the end of the day that's the bottom line because that is where my job is and that's what I depend on and I can't jeopardize that.

(Gail, Field Educator, School A)

Gail's clear stance on her priorities reflects that of other field educators. In Chapter Six, field education was referred to by an educator as a 'sideline of what we do'. This position is confirmed in the way Gail prioritises her responsibilities.

SUPERVISOR MOTIVATION FOR PROVIDING FIELD EDUCATION

Given the clearly marginalised status of providing field supervision to students in agency settings, the rapid turnover of field educators referred to in Chapter Two is not surprising. However, the demographic information in Chapter Four shows that some educators had provided student supervision over the course of many years. Investigating educator motivation to become involved and remain involved in supervising students was not one of the original aims of this research. However, interviews with educators did uncover some motivations for supervising students, and these may be used to inform social work programmes on how to enhance educator participation, and address the problem of turnover.

It's (being an educator) been an interesting process for me. It's been a useful opportunity where a student makes me think, question and examine my practice and makes me relate it back to theory in a way that I wouldn't do if I weren't being called to account for why I did something. So unquestionably I have found it an exercise that, whilst it's been demanding, has had some clear spin-off benefits for me that's contributed to the analysis I attach to my practice and that's been really useful.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

I want to say I have learnt a lot from students. You know there are heaps of skills that I don't have, ways of engaging with clients and just different approaches. Especially in the area of family therapy where some students are able to develop much better than I have developed. It's quite humbling but nice when you have students who have more skills in areas than me and nice to watch them proceed well in their careers

(Bill, Field Educator, School A)

Having students has meant I have developed links with other agencies and strengthened existing relationships. I've been challenged, I've been involved with students doing research and that aspect I really enjoyed because it developed my own knowledge. So I just enjoy the contact I have with students.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

The accounts above largely reflect educator opinion about why they continue to have students on placement. One educator described student supervision as a "two-way street" (Gail, School A), where both she and the student learn and develop together. This is a reciprocal process that will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Seven. On the whole, educators enjoyed their time with students and found it provided the means to examine and reflect upon their own practice. At a time when training budgets and agency resources for supporting professional development are being cut, conducting student supervision provided a means for workers to extend their knowledge and skill base. Two educators, however, noted their prime motivation to have students was to ease agency workload.

It was different for me. I was bogged down with a lot of work and so I approached the University thinking that students would be quite cheap labour, I mean to be honest about it . . .

(Huia, Field Educator, School B)

I mean for us it's a real asset having a student here and I mean it's basically a free staff member for four months. That's how my boss sees it. Like she is really keen for me to get students in and we're talking about getting two this year.

(Hilary, Field Educator, School B)

Accessing additional staffing was the main motivation for Hilary and Huia to supervise students, unlike Margaret, Bill and Alan, who supervised students to support their own professional development and the development of social work as an occupation. Utilising students to boost staffing did not appear to be a regular practice, although one student certainly perceived there was a lack of reciprocity in her placement.

Where I went to wanted a student, 'cause they asked for a student and they wanted a student for doing that project, but there was a lack of appreciation on their part that when they take a student that they have obligations and responsibilities to that student. It was

very much a one-way process in terms of what I could do for them, and not what they could do for me.

(Fiona, Student, School C)

How the agency and its staff view student input forms a critical part of the learning milieu. Whether the student is treated as a worker or learner will influence student relationships and the structure of learning opportunities within the agency context. This was evident in Mary's account in Chapter Six where being treated more like a worker than student, and having 18 cases to attend to actually compromised her learning during the placement (See page 149).

The practice of using students as substitute staff has implications for safeguarding students against exploitation in the workplace, as well as implications for how practicum learning is conceptualised by some social service agencies. These matters are discussed further in Chapter Eight where the concerns of this research for future field practice are addressed.

LIAISON BETWEEN SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK AND FIELD EDUCATORS

The literature on field education notes the importance of quality communication occurring between the school of social work, field educators and social service agencies (Homonoff & Maltz, 1995). The influence of communication between school and field was further highlighted in the theory on adult education where the significance of partnerships and relationships within the teaching and learning context are acknowledged (Taylor, 1997). In order to gauge how field educators perceived communication from the schools of social work on matters relating to student placement, they were asked to rate the effectiveness, frequency and benefit of the liaison they had with schools. Using a five-point Likert scale, 1 indicated 'Not effective/ frequent/ beneficial', and 5 indicated 'Very effective/ frequent/ beneficial'. Field educator responses to these questions are noted below in Table 5.5.

Overall, field educators from each of the schools gave indifferent ratings to aspects of liaison between themselves and the schools of social work. However, educators from School B rated the liaison lower than educators from Schools A and C on all three items. This difference was statistically significant on just one item related to the '*effectiveness of communication between the school and educator*' ($\chi^2=31.1$, d.f.=8, $p<.05$). Pre-placement

visits between the student and agency educator were part of the placement protocol for all schools, however, tutors from school B also participated in these visits. Tutors from Schools A and C were not routinely included in the pre-placement visits.

Table 5.5 *Weighted Means and Standard Deviation of Ratings Field Educators made on Items Relating to Liaison with Schools of Social Work*

Nature of Liaison	School A		School B		School C	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Effectiveness of communication between the school and educator	3.8	0.9	2.5	1.1	3.3	1.0
Frequency of liaison visits	2.8	1.1	2.3	1.1	2.6	0.9
Benefit of liaison visits during a student placement	3.5	1.1	3.3	1.3	3.7	1.0

The material from interviews indicated a range of issues relating to liaison between the school and field. For the purposes of reporting views on liaison they have been categorised under four headings. These are: reports of good and not so good liaison; enhancing integration of theory and practice via liaison; using liaison to address unique student needs; and mixed perceptions about accountability.

REPORTS OF GOOD AND NOT-SO-GOOD LIAISON

In regard to liaison between the school and agencies, field educators noted the importance of tutor reliability and timekeeping. Not surprisingly, educators saw these aspects as a gauge of school commitment to field education.

I mean particularly in this last placement the backup from varsity in terms of the practice meetings with the tutor, they were kept and valued. I felt my input was valued. I felt I was really well supported by the varsity, which was really good. I didn't have a strong sense of that the first time I had a student. Just knowing there was someone there I could talk to if there were concerns and that they were going to be there when they said they would be there, it was good.

(Hilary, Field Educator, School B)

We had an arrangement with the tutor and she had to change it, she had to cancel. My expectation was that this would be a priority and that she would be here at a certain time on a certain day and at a certain time in the placement. That was what I was working towards, having her there at that time and she was unable to make it because she was too busy. . . I felt it was a bit casual. I think the first priority should be to the student and supervisor.

(Ilene, Field Educator, School C)

The significance of having accurate information and close liaison with the school was emphasised particularly in situations where educators were working with students who were struggling to meet course requirements.

I had a student with a huge amount of personal stuff going on and it was affecting her performance. I raised it with her several times and at that stage I was quite linked in with the tutor. We must have already had one tutor visit, we had another one urgently. I also had to alert my agency hierarchy so I had to go up through my supervisor to the unit manager. . . I pointed out the risks to her we were all communicating around the risks of her failing the placement or not completing it in order to fit in with agency accountability and university's responsibility. We communicated a lot about that and thank God she (the student) was open to that.

(Gail, Field Educator, School A)

I don't think the University were open with me about the degree of difficulty with this student and it may have been fair from their point of view, but either they weren't open or I didn't ask the right questions. I would have liked to have known more about her when I offered a placement. We were a busy department and I couldn't be there to hold her hand so she was a student who needed more, I was working part time at the time, so she needed more than I could give, and I wasn't really aware of that at the time.

(Pauline, Field Educator, School B)

The multi-dimensional nature of relationships in field education and their impact on field learning was discussed in Chapter Three. One educator referred specifically to the importance of how relationships with the school had developed over time and notes the value of that relationship.

I keep being given students so that means I think we now have a relationship with the school in that they have sufficient trust of us to have their students. It's the personal relationship that is a big thing. I guess it's a bit like anybody, if you have a person to identify with and to contact then that is more helpful than having a huge fifty page manual on how to do it. It's the personal contact between the school and the agency and the visits during the placement that bind us together.

(Jan, Field Educator, School C)

Another educator noted how poor liaison and support from the school had a critical impact on her personal self-esteem and future development as a field educator.

I felt so let down after my first experience with the student, so let down by the school. I did actually mention to the field liaison at the time that things were not going well and that my student just refused to see clients and somehow at the end of the day I felt that I was inadequate as a teacher. I was getting stuff like “ Well he’s a really good student, he’s one of our top students”. Well I wasn’t feeling like one of the top fieldwork teachers and so I just withdrew, and didn’t offer placements.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

ENHANCING INTEGRATION OF THEORY AND PRACTICE VIA LIAISON

Educators clearly articulated that they needed liaison with schools in order to be better informed about how to assist students integrate theory with practice.

I think it's very important to have regular yearly field staff liaison days where supervisors can be brought up to date with the content of the course, about what’s going on in the school and about the students.

(Pauline, Field Educator, School B)

It would be quite useful to have maybe a couple of hours orientation for course supervisors on what the course content is, you know, like how much is theory and how much is ethics and how much is on the Treaty, so we know the particular angle of this school, so we know what the students have been trained to look for.

(Jan, Field Educator, School C)

Educators from all schools commented on the how communication between school and agency could be enhanced in order to address a number of current ‘gaps’ in the field education system.

On assisting with the professional development of the educator:

I think we (the educator and school) have a very loose relationship. Like I know they are there and I could go to them for support if I needed it and that’s great. And I would do, and I know they come out for the tutor visits and that’s great, but I feel as if, what do they know about me! You know, like it’s. . . could they help me? Could they support me? Like I have identified a limitation I have got as a field educator (Integrating theory and practice). Is there anything they could do to help me with that?

(Marama, Field Educator, School A)

On ensuring consistency in student assessment:

I think at times there is a lack of consistency across tutors about what constitutes a standard in terms of passing the placement and I think that’s a really difficult issue to address. There’s a whole range of what’s acceptable for passing. . . and there is a lot of hearsay and wondering about that.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

USING LIAISON TO ADDRESS UNIQUE STUDENT NEEDS

Literature on adult learning emphasises the complexity of student lives and their attendant multiple responsibilities. Educators are urged to take cognisance of the multiple roles that adult students must attend to (Brookfield, 1986). Cited in the literature review for this research are also many ideas about how notions of adult learning have been used inform social work education. However, with the exception of debating the value of placements in an agency of employment (Randel, 1997), there has been little attention to how schools, students and agencies can work together in order to accommodate students who have multiple responsibilities and simply cannot work the set placement days or hours.

One student interviewed noted how the liaison between her employer, the field educator and the school enabled a successful course completion at a time when it appeared that this would not be possible, due to her multiple responsibilities.

I think it's important to say that if the people involved like the fieldwork co-ordinator, my supervisor, my employer, and the agency manger (placement agency) hadn't all had an attitude of flexibility and trust, I suppose you know the trust that I was actually getting on with it (the research) and I wasn't doing nothing. . . What I am trying to say is if people around me hadn't had that trust that flexibility the whole thing would have been a nightmare for me as a student and I can't see how I could have at the end of the day gone to lectures, done a placement and held down a job. I don't see how that would have been possible if the placement hadn't been one that had all those things built into it. I couldn't have met all the needs and expectations that had to be met and I probably wouldn't have learnt as much as I might have got so demoralised that I would've pulled out.

(Karen, Student, School A)

Although the literature and theory on adult education emphasises the need to take cognisance of the many facets of adult student lives, Karen's placement appeared to be the only example from the 12 students interviewed, where individual commitments were factored into the placement process in a planned, purposeful way.

One educator noted how important the school tutor visits were in terms of ensuring the continuity of learning for the student and highlighting areas to address for the educator. In this way the tutor provides a key link between school, agency and student learning processes.

Tutor visits are helpful to just open our eyes to the things we have not been looking for and to use their experiences of the student in the classroom, as well as the previous placement to make good learning connections. The department has been very supportive in that. The visits have been timely and really helpful.

(Gail, Field Educator, School A)

MIXED PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ACCOUNTABILITY

Educator opinion varied a great deal in terms of who they saw themselves to be primarily accountable to for their work in field education. Although educators appeared clear in their own minds about their lines of accountability, the variance of opinion on this issue raised a question of consistency in terms of standards and expectations.

I think I am accountable to my employers first, to the practice. If they were to come and say to me Lucille, this is just too awful (student practice), this is terrible and we've had complaints from this client or that client, then the placement would most definitely end.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

My accountability lies with my profession, my professional integrity and ethics. I am a member of the Association (ANZASW) so I have that accountability. I am certainly accountable to the agency management if something goes wrong with the student.

(Marama, Field Educator, School A)

For student work I am accountable to the University.

(Huia, Field Educator, School B)

I am accountable to the student. It's up to me to ensure that I have helped that person pass, so that at the end of the time she won't have wasted her time, that she will pass and by ringing that pass I know and she knows that she's a better person for it. Yeah, my accountability is to her.

(Ilene, Field Educator, School C)

The accountability is to the client first. Secondly to the agency. Every step of the way it is to the client and thirdly it is to the student because we are responsible that they get the work they need.

(Jan, Field Educator, School C)

One educator acknowledged all the primary stakeholders in the placement process when she discussed accountability.

Well I think I am responsible to social work, that's why I think ANZASW is important, to the University, to my employers, to the students themselves and most importantly to the clients.

(Pauline, Field Educator, School B)

Apart from the fact there was variance in opinion about accountability, a general lack of accountability by educators to schools of social work was also noted.

It is interesting to consider the accountability that is required from the University, or isn't. There aren't many checks in place. . . my sense is that accountability is a pretty ad hoc process which I imagine would only be checked if there were obvious problems.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

I don't think that the way the organisation is set up (field education) anyone's really thought about the accountability thing.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

Understanding where accountability lies for both the student and field educator forms an integral part of the context in which the practicum teaching and learning occurs. Given that the student is subject to an assessment process during the course of placement, their line of responsibility to the University to meet assessment criteria and to the field educator to successfully complete placement tasks are more overt. There did not appear to be any formally contracted lines of accountability established between schools and field educators. Lack of formal understandings between these parties will be considered further in Chapter Eight, where the policy implications emerging from this research are discussed.

Although students were not asked specifically about their views on accountability between educators and schools, one student hinted at this issue after having an unsatisfactory placement. . .

I guess I have a little question about the school, knowing what they did know about my placement, but they let me stay in there and battle it out. I wonder if it would have been more professional of them . . . knowing that, because I didn't hide my difficulties of learning at all.

(Claire, Student, School C)

SUMMARY

This chapter presented findings on eight aspects of context. These were: student preparation for placement; conditions that promote learning; placement structure; student exposure to client groups; practice models used by field educators; agency support for field education and work pressure; supervisor motivation for providing field education; and liaison between schools and field educators.

Prior to placement, students from all schools rated their preparation as being between average and above average on a five-point Likert scale. Post-placement, students from School B expressed disappointment with their preparation. Students from Schools A and

C were noncommittal. Field educators, particularly from School A, expected students to be well prepared before arriving on placement.

When examining conditions that promoted learning, the only marked change in student opinion between pre- and post-placement ratings was for the item '*To be in a team that supports student learning*'. Students rated this item as having greater importance after they had been out on placement. The team culture impacted in a substantive way in terms of how the student tackled learning in the field. Isolation was identified as a problem for students who were not placed in team settings. Field educators also noted in interviews that they drew on team members to help facilitate student learning and assessment.

A discernible shift of opinion was identified in student opinion about preferred placement structure before and after placement. This shift was mostly due to students from School A changing from selecting a mix of concurrent and block structure pre-placement, to preferring a block only structure, post-placement. Educators mostly selected using a mix of block and concurrent placement structures. Student comments suggested that agency workflow was the best way to determine which placement structure was most suitable. Some agencies did not have enough work to have a student full time, while in others, students would miss vital pieces of client work if they were only present two days per week.

Educators were able to access work with children and families most readily, while the elderly, children in care, disabled people and Maori were the least accessible client groups. Lack of access to the above client groups has implications for how students can learn about diversity and bi-cultural practice in the field. Students reported in interviews having little contact with Maori, apart from those students placed in social services dedicated to serving Maori clients. A number of students had substantive contact with refugee ethnic minorities.

Educators identified that individual casework and task-centred casework were the most readily accessible methods of intervention in which they could offer students learning opportunities. Interview material from students identified that they mainly worked with clients on an individual basis. A number of students had opportunities to learn about group work processes. Most students undertook doing practical tasks with clients and around the agency. However, no students specifically identified that they were using a

task-centred approach in their work with clients. There appeared to be a total absence of welfare rights work. This type of work was one of the least accessible from educators' point of view, and no students reported being involved in any overt planned social justice intervention.

In regard to motivation, educators reported that having students on placement enabled them to question and reflect on their own practice in a way that they would not normally do. Generally, educators enjoyed having students and regarded being an educator as an integral part of their own professional development. Two educators identified that they wanted to have students as they saw them as providing 'free labour' for the agencies. Two students who were interviewed felt that there was a lack of reciprocity from the agencies in which they were placed.

Educator ratings of agency support for field education were spread evenly across a five-point Likert scale, with 22% noting they had a great deal of agency support. Interview material with educators presented a different picture, where teams were often supportive of having students but agency management was not necessarily supportive, unless the student was considered to be 'free labour'. Ninety percent of educators had no workload formula to accommodate their role as student educators. There were frequent references by both educators and students to the fact that educators had substantive workload pressures, and this at times compromised the facilitation of student learning.

Educators viewed the reliability and frequency of liaison between the school and themselves as a gauge of school commitment to field education. Several educators reported incidents of being 'let down' by school tutors. One mature student with significant financial commitments identified that the liaison and communication between the school, placement agency and her employers provided the key to enable her to complete the placement requirements.

Although educators felt they were accountable for their work with students, there were very mixed views as to where that accountability rested. In regard to field education, educators felt a distinct lack of accountability between themselves and the schools of social work.

CHAPTER SIX

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING TRANSACTION

This chapter reports the quantitative and qualitative findings from the research about teaching and learning activities in the practicum. These findings are related to the second construct used to guide the research, the teaching and learning transaction. The chapter is divided into seven sections which include: meeting student learning needs; the significance of placement allocation; methods used for teaching and learning; problems and obstacles to learning; unexpected learning and learning from mistakes; field educator training and awareness of adult learning strategies.

MEETING STUDENT LEARNING NEEDS

Adult teaching and learning literature places emphasis on meeting individualised learning objectives (Knowles, 1984). The extent to which New Zealand social work students are assisted with identifying their learning needs and allocated placements on the basis of their learning needs is unknown. Several questions were posed in the student pre- and post-placement and field educator questionnaires on the matter of meeting individual student learning needs (See Appendices B, C & D). A summary of the results related to identification and matching of learning needs with placements is noted in Table 6.1. The first four items in the table relate to student experiences of 'matching', while the remaining two items record field educator responses to questions on matching. The frequency distribution relating to the above figures appears in Appendix H.

Table 6.1 Mean, Standard Deviation and Chi-square comparison of Responses by All Schools to Questions Relating to Identification and Matching Placements on the basis of Learning Needs

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	χ^2
Degree of school tutor assistance	3.2	1.3	30.86***
Extent to which allocation was made to matching learning needs	3.3	1.4	10.84
Extent to which students felt allocation would meet learning needs	4.1	0.9	6.82
Extent to which placement did meet learning needs	3.4	1.1	7.75
Field educator rating of match between the last student and placement offered	3.7	0.9	6.27
Field educator rating of match between second last student and placement offered	3.6	1.0	7.05

*** $p < .001$

Using a Likert 1-5 scale, students were asked pre-placement to rate the extent to which course tutors assisted with identifying individual learning needs. The anchors were level 1, indicating 'Not at all', to level 5, indicating 'To a great extent'. There was a significant difference between student responses from schools on this matter ($\chi^2 = 30.86$). This difference was attributed to student ratings of tutor assistance from Schools A and B being skewed left, while School C ratings are skewed right. This indicates that students from School C rated tutor assistance as less than those students from Schools A and B. Across all schools the mean response to this question was 3.2 with a standard deviation of 1.3.

Using the same five-point Likert scale as above, students were then asked to identify the extent to which they felt placement allocation was made in order to meet their individual learning needs. There was no statistically significant difference between student

responses from schools on this matter ($\chi^2 = 10.84$). The mean rating across all schools was 3.3 indicating that students believed that schools took 'average' care in allocating placements on the basis of learning needs. The standard deviation was 1.4.

The final question on learning needs for students in the pre-placement questionnaire asked students to rate the extent to which they felt their placement allocation would in fact meet their individual learning needs. Again, there was no statistically significant difference between student responses from schools ($\chi^2 = 6.82$) and generally students were reasonably optimistic about the extent to which they felt the placement allocation would meet their learning needs (Mean = 4.1, S.D. = 0.9).

In the post-placement questionnaire students were asked to rate the extent to which identified learning needs were in fact met on placement. It was found there were no statistically significant differences between student responses from the three schools ($\chi^2 = 7.75$). The mean across all schools was 3.4 (S.D. 1.1), suggesting that students felt their placement had met learning needs in an average way.

Field educators were asked two questions related to meeting students' learning needs using the same five-point Likert-type scale as students. They were first asked to recall the last student they had supervised and rate the extent to which the student learning objectives had been matched with the learning opportunities the field educator could offer. There was no statistically significant difference between schools in field educator responses to this question ($\chi^2 = 6.62$). The mean response across all schools was 3.7 (S.D. 0.9), indicating field educators perceived an 'above average' effort had been made to match student learning objectives with placement opportunities. The same pattern of responses was evident when educators were asked to consider how well the student before the last one they supervised was matched on the basis of learning needs.

On the whole, both students and field educator ratings of matching students learning needs with placement opportunities were similar. The one difference noted between schools was for tutor assistance in identifying learning needs, where students from School C rated assistance significantly lower than students from Schools A and B.

A great deal of social work literature has been devoted to the question of meeting students' individual learning needs in field education (AASWWE, 1991; Cooper, 1995).

Both students and educators in this research were aware of the need for clarity around student learning goals, especially in relation to the placement allocation and contracting phases.

Well some of the success of this placement I think I have to attribute to Julie as a student, that she's open and flexible. I think she came with a reasonable understanding of what the placement could provide and she certainly had some clear learning goals of her own. I am aware that was something she was required to develop at the University. I think that was a useful contributing factor, that she had done some thinking about what she wanted and what she needed so that she had reasonable clarity about that before she came here.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

My preparation for placement was around being very clear about what I wanted to learn and what I needed to get out of it. I have an eventual goal in terms of where I want to work in social work, so I needed to get something that would assist me in that. So the biggest thing I did to prepare was becoming very clear about what I needed to achieve in placement.

(Fiona, Student, School C)

In situations where placements had not gone well for either a student or educator, a mismatch between the student and placement on the basis of learning needs was frequently cited.

(Interviewer): What went wrong with that placement you were just talking about?

I think it was about expediency. I think I offered a placement, and there was a vacancy and there was a student that needed a placement but the student's learning goals weren't matched.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

One mature student who had worked in local government before entering the social work course had had little exposure to practice situations. She was placed in an agency where mostly administrative tasks needed doing, with little client contact. Ann commented:

I just think the placements should be fitted more with what is expected of you as a social work student. The idea is to learn the social work roles. I mean these placements are really important and I think there should have been a better fit, so that I mean I'm someone that lacks any experience of social work, I come from an academic base, I don't have any practical experience. So I think they should be tailored to fit that, particularly the first placement.

(Ann, Student, School B)

However, the 'mantra' of meeting student-articulated learning needs has been challenged by educational theorists and social work educators alike (Brookfield, 1986; Thomlinson et al., 1996). Just one educator made reference to the notion that students are not always

fully aware of their own learning needs or indeed the learning opportunities available to them.

I think it's very important to take cognisance of what the student wants to achieve on their placement but not to be drawn in to confusing what they need to learn with what they think would be a nice placement. You know people say, "I really want to go to women's refuge" but when you press them they need to learn something that they would learn in a different setting. I think it's really important that the school clarifies just what are the learning goals.

(Pauline, Field Educator, School B)

Most educators interviewed appeared to ascribe to the notion that it was the student's role to articulate their learning needs. Educators were subsequently guided by these stated needs in planning the placement.

I learn from the student what their particular learning needs are and I want to respond to those. I guess I include procedures in the contract in order to meet those learning needs.

(Michael, Field Educator, School A)

If a mature student came to this placement I would be totally led by them. That's if they said "I've got this area I want to know about, how best are we going to do that?", I would totally be led by them, and would resource the student in meeting that learning goal.

(Gail, Field Educator, School A)

Not all students had a set of learning needs that they expected to be fulfilled during the placement. Some adopted a developmental approach where learning needs emerged during the course of the placement.

I didn't walk in there knowing what I wanted to learn. I didn't really even know what it (the agency) was about really. I didn't know what I would be doing when I first came in and the first three weeks was reading mountains of stuff, I didn't even know what that was all about. But just by one opportunity coming up, another would follow and I just really saw what I wanted to learn and was given the opportunity to take those chances. Those opportunities. So it was a placement catered for me. It wasn't brought down from the top "She should be doing this".

(Tanya, Student, School A)

Given the centrality of field placements in the formation of a student's professional development and social work identity, it was surprising that students appeared to expect little in the way of tutor assistance in identifying learning needs. One student commented:

It's a really important part of your development as a social worker (the placement), so I think it's worth while for each student to spend ten to fifteen minutes discussing with their tutor what are their learning needs. OK and then the tutor can discuss with you which placement he or she feels is better for you.

(Interviewer): When the list of placements goes around the class, does it show what the practice opportunities will be at each place?

No.

(Ann, Student, School B)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACEMENT ALLOCATIONS

Although the data from the questionnaires indicate that both students and educators were reasonably satisfied with the way learning needs were matched with placement opportunities, the interview transcripts left no doubt about the significance students placed on the allocation of placements. Students described placement allocations in emotional terms, where self-esteem, personal safety and future career opportunities appeared to be threatened.

It was really quite nerve wracking, because I stepped off the plane from Australia from a holiday, came back here and my answer machine had a message to say that the placement had fallen down. My initial reaction was well was it me? Had I. . . was it a personal thing, because I had understood at the interview that I was accepted and then all of a sudden it had been turned down. It made me feel very insecure. Like I say I was looking to myself and saying is it me, what had I done wrong or had I said something wrong?

(Marion, Student, School C)

What was important about where I was placed was the safety. It just had an enormous impact on my learning which I think is possibly an issue for me all the time. For me it's like if I don't know the boundaries and learn I need to know that there's safety in a lot of different ways, emotional safety and physical safety. Yeah, otherwise I'll be too busy worrying about how to look after myself rather than learn from the situation.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, gaining access to quality student placements in social work agencies is not an easy task, either in New Zealand (Beddoe & Worrell, 1997) or overseas (Cooper, 1995). Both students and educators questioned placement allocations in some agencies on the basis of suitability for student learning.

I think that finding placements must be a very hard job. I'm sure it is. But it may be that the school needs to seriously look at where some of those students are going and put a lot more time into it (the allocation process). . . There's a lot of agencies out there who really don't have a clue how to help students and in fact need more help themselves. I think that that is a problem . . .

(Jan, Field Educator, School C)

I just think that students should be looked after a hell of a lot better than that. I'm out there and had to worry more about maintaining this placement, and maintaining the reputation of the school, rather than myself. I felt that that was a burden that was put upon me. It was about maintaining the reputation of the school rather than the fact that this isn't

a good placement for me. Do I have a right to make a noise about this because it doesn't feel good? I slipped through because my placement was changed at the last minute and they (course tutors) knew about this particular placement and they had big problems there in the past and were not going to send any more students there. It slipped through the screening process and then they (course tutors) had a conversation apparently about me being in there and because I'm older and have life experiences they thought I might be able to cope. Not a healthy situation.

(Fiona, Student, School C)

The notion of 'luck' playing an integral part of the placement allocation was raised by several students, who either referred to themselves as lucky or unlucky in regards to allocation process.

I feel a lot of it is just luck of the draw how good a placement you get and I just feel that I was lucky to get a good placement, like you're out there for a long time and could basically waste your time. I think that is what happened to one or two people from what I heard, they felt they weren't getting much out of it. So it's really dependent on where you go, you know. I was really lucky you know, I couldn't have asked for a better placement.

(Jill, Student, School B)

References to 'luck' suggests that students did not perceive the placement allocation in terms of it being a managed process, governed by educational imperatives such as matching learning needs with practice opportunities within quality learning environments. The term 'luck' is suggestive of randomness, where the student appears to be in a rather powerless situation regarding the quality of the placement allocation. The organisation of field education is explored further in Chapter Eight where the 'luck' or management designs for the practicum are discussed in more depth.

METHODS USED FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

The theoretical foundation of this research cites the centrality of experiential teaching and learning methods in field education (See Chapter Three). Methods associated with experiential teaching have been clearly articulated in the literature (AASWWE, 1991:79-80), and these methods were cited in the questionnaires so that field educators and students could rate their effectiveness.

The perceived effectiveness of the educational methods rated by field educators and pre-placement students and the perceived usage of the methods during the placement was determined by calculating a weighted average of the ratings. These results are displayed in Figure 6.1.

Student pre-placement perceptions of effectiveness were generally consistent with field educators' perceived effectiveness ratings for each method with the exception of using audio and video reviews of interviews. Students tended to be slightly more positive than field educators about the effectiveness of using audio and video replays. Student pre-placement ratings of using video and audio recordings averaged 3.9 and 3.7 respectively. Field educator ratings for using video recording averaged 3.2 and educators rated use of audio recordings at 3.0. Neither students nor field educators rated the use of the one-way screen highly. The average effectiveness rating for use of the screen by students pre-placement was 3.2 with educators rating use of the screen as 2.8. Other methods were rated on average 4.0 and above by field educators and students in the pre-placement questionnaires.

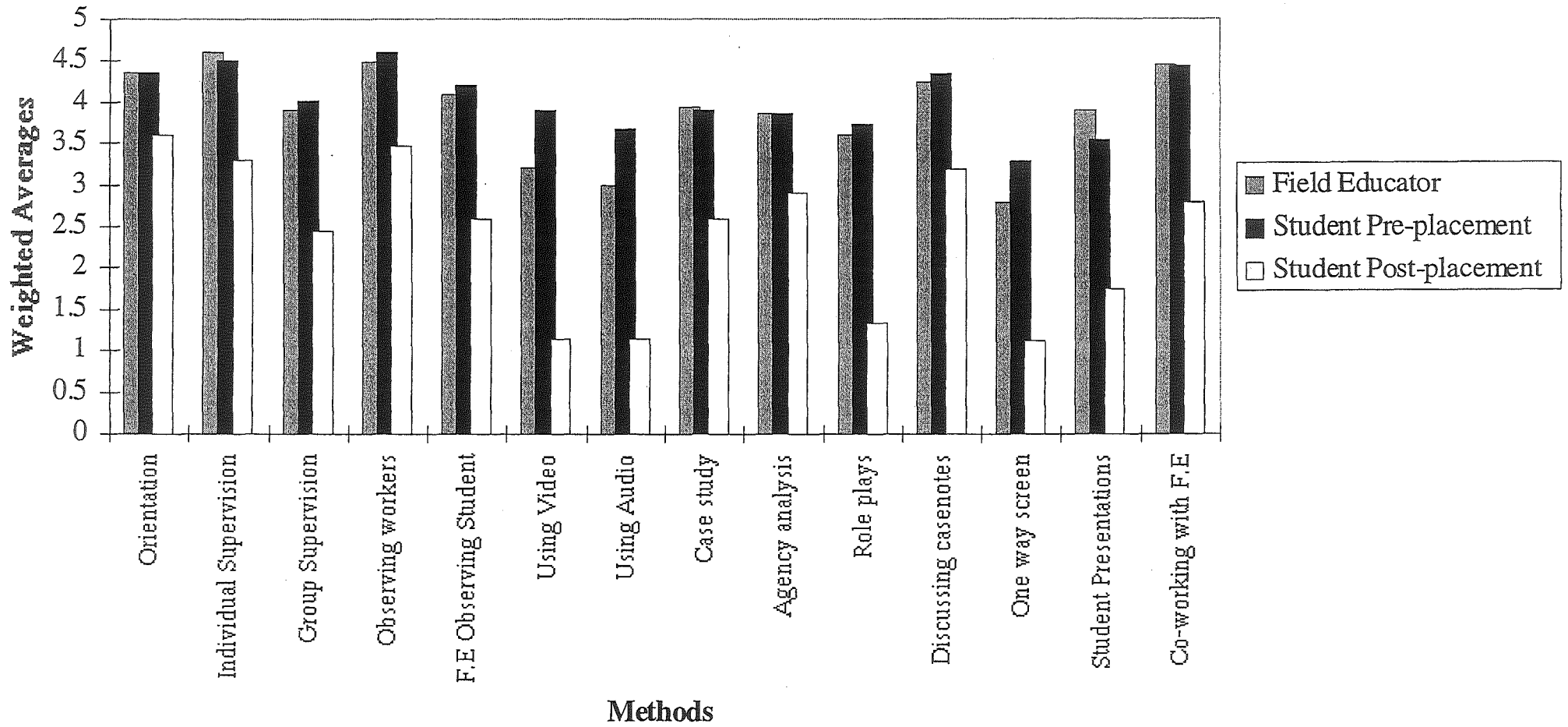


Figure 6.1 Teaching and Learning

Methods

There was a consistent drop between student pre-placement ratings of effectiveness for each method and the reported usage of the methods post-placement. The student post-placement questionnaire data revealed that some methods appeared to be utilised more than others: having a structured orientation to the service 3.6; having access to one to one supervision 3.3; observing other workers' practice 3.5; discussion of case notes 3.2.

Field educators consistently rated the effectiveness of methods higher than students reported they had been used. On average, field educators rated the effectiveness of the methods between categories 3 and 4 (Mean = 3.89). Students rated usage of methods between categories 2 and 3 (Mean = 2.78). The greatest disparities were evident in the following methods: field educator observing student practice; reviewing video replays of interviews; reviewing audio replays of interviews; using role-plays in supervision; use of one-way screen; student-led presentations; and co-working with the field educator.

Interviews with field educators provided some clues as to why some methods were used more than others. Practically all educators interviewed acknowledged the importance of providing the student with an opportunity to orientate to the service at the beginning of the placement.

At the beginning Julie and the other student in the organisation had an orientation period, where she could explore outside of this office and my area of responsibility to see what else was happening in the organisation. We spent some time going over discussing them and talking about what those different parts of the organisation do.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

Although providing some orientation to the service is an established procedure in clinical education, assessing how much orientation is the right amount for any given student also appears to be an important consideration. One educator was mindful of this and commented:

Obviously it's important for the student to get an orientation to the agency so that students know what the boundary is. But I think it's important that the supervisor of the student gauges how much the student needs for that. Like if it's too much the student gets bored, and kind of feels like they're not doing anything, so I think an orientation that's sensitive to the experience of the student is important.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

Most students noted that they had had an orientation period that was suitable in meeting initial learning needs. However, one had an overwhelming experience of orientation.

I had four weeks, when I got there they worked out four weeks orientation, which was really mind blowing. But in hindsight I feel I did really well. I really felt in the deep end and gradually I swam out the other end.

(Marion, Student, School C)

Another student had no orientation at all.

I missed out with orientating which would have given me some clues about points of liaison.

(Interviewer): How come?

Well I did ask for it and Terry (field educator) said "Well I've only been here eight weeks myself and so I haven't had a chance to orientate either".

(Tanya, Student, School A)

These comments suggest that having either too much or not enough orientation to the agency may compromise student learning during the initial stages of the placement.

Educators acknowledged the importance of observing the student in order to provide an accurate assessment of student competence.

I think it's absolutely important. I think that it's essential, and watching someone is much more appropriate than listening to a tape because there's so much more you can pick up. I mean engaging someone, it's not just about talking, it's about gestures and use of eye contact, about how you sit, about . . . I mean the whole body language thing, and that every student on placement should be observed.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

However, although most educators noted the importance of observing the student work, unlike Lucille, they qualified their statements with comments that suggested a good deal of ambivalence about actually conducting an observation. While they knew they could not accurately assess students without seeing them work, they were mindful that students felt uneasy about being observed. In the following extract, the educator draws on her own past experience as a student and relates her unease about conducting the observation.

Oh look the business of observing is really hard because I never liked that myself, so I never push that. I mean I do it because I have to, but I hated that myself and I remember you know one comment that Steve made at Probation, he said "Oh you make very quick assessments" but he saw that because he was sitting in on an interview and I think. . . it's a good way but its actually really scary for the student.

(Tamara, Field Educator, School A)

Since educators were aware of students feeling vulnerable about their practice being observed, some highlighted the need to help student prepare for an observation. Ilene helped the student prepare for observations by talking through the case with the student first.

Oh that's a tricky one. On the one hand we're not going to know how they (students) do it unless we observe, but I think it is a very difficult process, but it's up to us as educators to make the process as easy for the student as possible. I like to ease them into it. It's not OK to say, you know, you're doing the assessment today and I am going to sit and observe you, it's about building up a trust and a relationship first and talking about how they'd go about it.

(Ilene, Field Educator, School C)

Another strategy used by educators was to create a climate where the use of observation was introduced to the student early in the placement as an essential teaching and learning tool. First, the student would observe the educator and other social workers work with clients. Later in the placement, the student would themselves be observed in their work. The transition from being an observer to being observed was discussed by a few educators as a planned strategy to manage the student-learning process.

I guess we use a lot of observation. Like initially when they come on placement I take them out with me so that they would spend two or three weeks just observing what I'm doing and I also make sure that they have the opportunity to see people from the team so they have other styles, to compare, because we all have slightly different styles.

(Interviewer): You said that was what you do in the beginning. Was there something you do differently later on?

Well by mid-placement they have their own cases and I observe them. You know, we'll kind of reflect on how they thought it went and how I thought it went, which is hugely different. They usually think they've done appallingly because they are learning a new skill and it's sort of like learning to ride a bike, you have to think about it so much you're not really listening.

(Marama, Field Educator, School A)

When students were asked an open question about what methods were used to help them learn in the field, none of the 12 who were interviewed mentioned that they had been observed in practice. Most noted, however, that they had ample opportunity to observe others work. Educator ambivalence about using observation provides a possible explanation for the disparity evident in the questionnaire results, where observing student practice was rated highly by educators, but students perceived it to be one of the least used techniques for teaching.

Discussions with educators about using audio-visual technology as a teaching tool were characterised by similar expressions of ambivalence.

My thoughts on using videos are that they are an extremely wonderful learning tool and the opportunity that the video offers you to reflect on your own practice is second to none, but there are a whole lot of issues around videos with real clients. The issues of privacy, what is the information going to be used for, who's going to see it, when is it going to be destroyed, who owns the tape? I just think that it's too fraught and that the opportunity can be in role playing at the University, even videoing a supervision session can be a very powerful learning tool. But I do think that for real live situations it is just too fraught.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

(Interviewer): How often do you think that video and audiotapes are used with students on placement?

Not a lot. I think as social workers we tend to shy away from them.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

Reluctance by social work educators and supervisors to use audio-visual tools has been documented in earlier work (Munson, 1993; Shulman, 1993) and was evident in the questionnaire data about methods field educators would use. Therefore, it was not surprising that this sample of educators was not keen to use the technology. However, it does raise the question of how student work can be assessed accurately if neither structured observations nor recordings are being widely used in the field. One Maori educator noted that she would not encourage audiotaping for cultural reasons, as she believed the technology created a barrier between the student and the client.

The educator can also observe student practice by co-working. However, both students and educators referred to work done together in terms of the student 'tagging along' rather than in terms of the student taking on a co-worker role. The one example cited where it was planned for the student to be co-worker in an interview situation broke down when the educator forgot that this was to be the case.

My supervisor had said "Oh you can do this interview and I will take the notes". I said OK and prepared for it. It was an initial interview and it was a woman that had actually hit her child and she had come in for help. I sort of read the notes and everything and sort of got that into my head, we walked into the room and my supervisor did the interview! She forgot that I was supposed to be doing it and I sort of sat there with my mouth open for a minute and then thought Oh OK. She said to me afterwards "Oh, I think you were supposed to be doing that weren't you? Oh I am sorry.

(Jill, Student, School B)

Several students commented on how they used observation of other social workers as a means of learning in the field. For some this was a good way to facilitate learning.

Just watching Suzanne and some of the others, how they operated. I mean observation was probably one of the main ways I learnt. Especially when I watched Pam the supervisor there, she was just brilliant. I felt like I was just sitting there just soaking everything up she said. You know, even going to meetings and that kind of thing, listening to her opinions, you know she was just brilliant. I felt that I was learning all the time just listening to what she said and just the observation of other workers, it was a wonderful learning opportunity. I learnt a lot from observation.

(Jill, Student, School B)

Although observation worked well for some students, others felt they were placed with educators who were not good practitioners, therefore they observed poor practice.

A lot of learning was 'by example'. I would just sit and watch her do the things. That was the main technique used. The difficulty with my placement was that she was. . . I found her being mainly over the top, power tripping, negative personality. So she was really hard and she was in a sole charge position and completely untrained as well. . . Initially it was good, because for the first couple of weeks it felt appropriate sitting back and observing before I tried to work with clients. It was useful, but after that it would have been good to move on to something a little meatier and the other problem was that a lot of what I was observing felt really unsafe and not good, so it was difficult. I was sitting there observing stuff that was. . . I could feel the hair on the back of my neck rise, some very heavy-handed handling of clients.

(Claire, Student, School C)

Earlier research on the content of student supervision discovered that most time was spent on case discussion (Brodie, 1993). Students in this research also reported in the questionnaires that case discussions were used frequently as a teaching strategy in their placement supervision and this was borne out in the interviews.

I would have perhaps liked more varied discussion with my supervisor on some of the cases when it came to supervision. It would be things like, "Oh well this is what you need to do, these are the steps you need to do", where perhaps I would have liked to look more into the psychology of things, she wasn't in to that.

(Jill, Student, School B)

Both students and educators agreed that 'hands on' experience was an important aspect of learning in the field. Without exception, all students interviewed appreciated the opportunity to do 'real work'.

Reading the manual wasn't enough. I had to put that reading into action, being able to follow through on plans and follow through on court directives. By doing a case I was able to see how each stage went. The only thing I was discouraged about was that I

wasn't able to spend as much time with the person (client) as I thought I would. It was more paper work, work on the computer and more writing than you think.

(Mary, Student, School B)

Students noted that valuable 'hands on' experience was gained through a number of avenues apart from providing a direct client service. Learning to use the telephone in a professional manner, writing case notes up on the computer, completing income support forms and funding applications were aspects of 'hands on' learning that students appreciated.

Most educators were also enthusiastic about promoting 'hands on' work.

I like 'hands on' because I am aware they've been in a situation where they have probably been sitting in a classroom absorbing from books and being lectured to, you know, that kind of thing . . . They've got a lot to learn and this is a very short time frame in which to learn it. So, umm, I feel that immersion and hands on with lots of feedback and I think theory is important, lots of supervision about what you did, what you observed, what you thought you were going to do, what did you think you were going to observe. . .

(Ilene, Field Educator, School C)

However, student and field educator accounts of 'learning by doing' raised the question of gaining a balance in terms of students getting exposure to real work, while also having the opportunity to read about, reflect upon, and integrate the practice experiences that they had already acquired. The expression "being thrown in the deep end" was used by students on more than one occasion to describe their immersion into the daily work of the agency. One student during this, her first placement, had 18 families on her caseload.

I know this sounds contradictory but one of the major obstacles for me was to have so many cases. I was only able to give a percentage of time to each one, when I think I could have learnt um more by having fewer cases and more time to spend, and follow things through.

(Mary, Student, School B)

None of the students noted in their interviews that they used role-plays in supervision or the one-way screen to facilitate learning. Again, this is similar to earlier research on supervision where only minimal use of one-way screens was reported (Graybeal & Ruff, 1995). Some field educators noted they did not have access to one-way screens in their agencies and none of the educators used one-way screens routinely in their work with clients.

Just one student noted she had done presentations during her placement. The overall lack of reference by students and educators to using presentations reflects student post-placement questionnaire responses, where it appeared that presentations were used infrequently in field education. The one student who noted that she did do case presentations found it a useful, confidence-building exercise that modelled accountability in practice.

He (the educator) enabled me to develop a high level of independence and to be really open about my practice. Just to be really open and not hide or mask things. All the case presentations I did, and all the discussions I had with him, it was just second nature that I would talk about what was happening in my work.

(Tanya, Student, School A)

An alternative form of educational input that students found useful was attending training opportunities both within and outside the placement agency. None of the educators interviewed made reference to using training resources outside of the immediate student/educator dyad and team environment. However, those students that did access other training opportunities found the different kind of input useful. Two of the three students who had additional training opportunities were placed within a large statutory organisation where these resources were readily accessible.

The other learning that I did too which I found really valuable at CYPFS was they sent me off to quite a few courses. I really enjoyed those. I went to an induction course, I went to one learning how to use SWIS, which was absolutely diabolical. I'm hopeless with computers and machines and things like that. The other courses were good. I went to a sexual abuse awareness course... But one thing that really helped me was going to the social work process course. When I first got there (to CYPFS) I was really confused. There seemed to be so much going on and I couldn't put it into any kind of pattern. Then I went to this social work process course and I came back and could just fit everything into where they were in the social work process, you know what stage they were at.

(Jill, Student, School B)

Educational Services

In the post-placement questionnaires students were asked to respond either 'Yes' or 'No' to a number of questions related to the educational services they received on placement. These questions were posed for two reasons: firstly, to cover areas not already addressed under 'Educational Methods' and secondly, to check if there was consistency with results where the question content was repeated in a different form in the questionnaire. Repeat questions were posed in the areas of assessment, supervision, and observed practice. Table 6.2 notes the questions and the affirmative responses from each school.

Table 6.2 Number and Percentage of Students Who Received Educational Services

Educational Services	School A		School B		School C		Total	
	N=22	%	N=36	%	N=20	%	N=78	%
Written contract	22	100	31	86	20	100	73	94
Weekly supervision	13	59	22	61	9	41	44	56
Complete a learning styles inventory	7	32	12	33	6	27	25	32
Two or more visits from your school of social work	19	86	31	86	18	90	68	87
Enough meaningful work to do	15	68	24	67	15	75	54	69
Frequent feedback about your work	19	86	19	53	12	86	50	64
Know from the beginning how assessment would occur	19	86	15	42	15	75	49	63
Get observed in your work by the F.E. more than once	13	59	19	53	16	80	48	62
Identify learning objectives for the next placement	16	73	18	50	9	41	43	55

The practice of using written placement contracts was clearly well embedded in social work field education across all schools (94%). School C provided field educators with a standard contract form to be completed. Schools A and B did not supply these, but still expected that a contract between field educator and student would be established in the initial stages of the placement. Liaison visits from schools of social work also appeared to be occurring on a regular basis across all schools (87%).

Of concern, however, is that across all schools about one-third of students reported not being observed by the field educator more than once. Some students, who gave a negative response to this question, may not have been observed even on one occasion. Lack of observation appeared to be more serious in Schools A and B. This finding, combined with the fact that 44% of students did not receive weekly supervision, raises questions about

how accurately performance in practice can be assessed, as well as concerns about student practice and client safety. Some students in this first placement appeared to be working in the agency setting without a great deal of oversight, and some who were interviewed identified lack of supervision as one of the problem areas in their placement. This, coupled with the finding that 31% of students did not have enough meaningful work to do while on placement raises questions about the quality of student learning in the field.

I was at (name of agency) I wasn't given anything, I just walked in there. I was there for a specific reason, to set up um a support network for women living in violence and um I basically wasn't given anything, I just walked in there and [was] told to do it. So I was given nothing, absolutely nothing, just told to go out and do this, this is what we want, this is how we intend to run it. . . I didn't get anything in terms of fieldwork supervision and there were no models to work from. . .

(Fiona, Student, School C)

Just over a third of students (36%) reported not receiving frequent feedback about their performance. This is not surprising given the reported infrequency of field educator observations of student work. Responses to this question on educational services received were consistent with findings related to teaching and learning methods used, where a low level of field educator observation of student practice was also recorded.

A third of the students reported that they used an inventory to identify individual learning styles at the beginning of the placement. Given the emphasis placed on identifying learning styles in both adult education and social work literature, it is surprising that this practice had not occurred more frequently. The few students, who referred to their preferred learning style during the interview, did so to note if their personal style was compatible with the way the educator structured the placement.

We'd done a module before we went on placement and we had to look at how we learnt best. I decided that I learnt best by watching what other people did and then doing it, umm so that's why I found that best. My supervisor had asked me how I felt I learned best.

(Mandy, Student, School B)

Forty-five percent of students reported receiving no assistance from their field educators in developing learning objectives for the next placement. This finding suggests that educators were not viewing the student practicum within a developmental paradigm, where new practice challenges are planned and introduced in an incremental way.

PROBLEMS AND OBSTACLES TO LEARNING EXPERIENCED BY STUDENTS IN THE FIELD

The literature on social work field education demonstrated that students report experiencing problems in a range of areas when out on placement. In the post-placement questionnaires, students were asked to identify areas where they experienced difficulties. These have been outlined in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 *Number and Percentages for Problem Areas as Reported by Students: Post- Placement*

Problem Areas	School A		School B		School C		All Schools	
	N = 22	%	N = 36	%	N = 20	%	N = 78	%
Not enough work	9	41	13	36	7	35	29	37
Too much work	0	0	6	17	1	5	7	9
Lack of access to field educator	5	23	13	36	3	15	21	27
Conflict with field educator	1	5	5	14	1	5	7	9
Not enough feedback	6	27	16	44	5	25	27	35
Disagreement over assessment	2	9	2	6	1	5	5	6
No social work role model on site	4	18	14	39	7	35	26	33
Lack of integration between theory and practice	4	18	15	41	5	25	24	31
Other	2	9	3	8	5	25	10	13
No Problems	8	36	4	11	3	15	15	19

No one school stands out as being exemplary in terms of students experiencing 'problem free' practicum education. Students from all schools appear to experience problems in a number of areas. Most problems were associated with not having enough to do (37%), lack of access to the field educator (27%), not getting enough feedback (35%), not having a social work role model on site (33%), and lack of theory/practice integration (31%). Of most concern in these results is that a third of students had no social work role model on

site, while over a quarter had difficulties accessing the field educator. These figures suggest that even though this was a first placement, guidance on social work practice was not readily available to a sizeable proportion of students.

Problem areas noted under the 'Other' category in Table 6.3 included: conflict within the agency environment (2); student required to do work that was unrelated to social work (2); disinterested field educator (1); lack of group supervision (1); student given little responsibility (1); insufficient support from school of social work (1); power and control issues with field educator (1); and ethical conflict (1). An attempt was made to statistically cross-reference student demographic data: gender, ethnicity, age and qualification, with the problems experienced. However, the number of students in each category was too small to provide meaningful comparative results. Students did, however, discuss obstacles to learning during the interviews.

On not having enough to do:

I felt like sometimes there wasn't enough to do. I felt like there were days where um OK I could fill in my time, I could go and get a book and read or go for a walk down the road. Because some of the patients had gone back after the programme, I mean I could always find something to do, like I say read, but I always felt like some days there was not enough to do which was a bit. . . I felt like a bit of a spare part at times and I thought gosh this is like having a holiday, you're doing nothing, lie out in the sun and talk to someone. In the real world this is too much of a luxury and sometimes it wasn't even luxury, it just felt like a waste of time.

(Pani, Student, School B)

On lack of access to supervision:

(Interviewer): How would you describe the supervision you received on placement?

Very very poor. I didn't get any, I didn't get any supervision. What can I say, I didn't get any. I tried to set up three sessions and she (the field educator) didn't turn up or something came up, so I didn't, it just didn't happen. I had no supervision.

(Fiona, Student, School C)

I did have supervision but it was a little bit hit and miss actually. I was supposed to have it once a week but um things sort of happened that I didn't get it once a week, or if I did there were interruptions, um because people wouldn't realise we were having supervision and they'd come in and the phone would go and that kind of thing.

(Jill, Student, School B)

On having no social work role model on site:

There was a big obstacle in that where I worked none of the staff were qualified, um and there tended to be this little um, they weren't too positive about people like me going for qualifications, so I had to be careful what I said so as not to offend them..

(Claire, Student, School C)

On lack of theory-practice integration:

I was just thinking about the whole application of theory. You're doing theory all year and then you get out there and in this particular placement. . . it was just like two different worlds. I came to the course and just felt so delighted to be in the midst of a class of progressive, liberal thinkers and I sort of made this assumption which was this was what the world of social work is all about, which was very naïve really. It's left a paradox in my mind about this huge gap between the training establishment and the placement agency.

(Claire, Student, School C)

Student development of a social work identity during the practicum risks being compromised where there is no social work role model on site and students receive insufficient feedback about performance.

During the interviews, students identified other obstacles to their learning which included not having access to the resources necessary to complete placement tasks, an unstructured work environment, working within a hostile team and lack of client contact. These issues were discussed in Chapter Five where the context of the teaching and learning was examined. They will also be used to inform the discussion of practice implications in Chapter Eight.

Although students identified obstacles that compromised their learning in the field, educators also identified considerable constraints in facilitating the learning process. These constraints, including work pressure and use of time, were also discussed in Chapter Five, where the enterprise of field learning was considered within the wider context of social service education.

UNEXPECTED LEARNING, LEARNING FROM MISTAKES, AND LEARNING FROM NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

The interview material yielded insights into how learning occurred for students in unintended ways. Educational theorists recognise the haphazard and random nature of much learning that occurs outside the organised educational institutions, in workplace

settings (Boud & Walker, 1990). Although some of these learning events that students discussed were in relation to social work tasks, others were more focused on the development of greater self-awareness, assertiveness and personal insight. Claire had this to say about her learning in her placement:

One major piece of learning I got which isn't particularly relevant to social work but it's sort of personal really is that I will never let that process go that far again (an unsatisfactory placement) without standing my ground and that's been a major piece of learning for me. Having integrity to myself, being who I am and standing up for myself.

(Claire, Student, School C)

Another student also discussed the development of her assertiveness skills in light of problems she had on placement.

A lot of learning came out of some negativity, actually there were quite a few negative experiences for me with a lot of learning. I learnt about myself during that placement. I found I had a problem as far as assertiveness goes and the hours of my work were never really contracted. I would be working until fairly late in the evening sometimes because I wasn't able to stand up and say, well it's time to go. I had to start to draw some boundaries for myself and I found that quite difficult, but I did manage it. I sort of negotiated with her that I would be leaving at a certain time and I stuck with that. So that to me was quite a strong learning curve.

(Ann, Student, School B)

Developing confidence in the use of information systems and learning to become self-directed were unexpected outcomes for one student who completed a research project on her placement.

There was just heaps of learning going on. The ability to do the research for instance, like I wasn't confident about going to the library and accessing information and all that but I had to do all that on the project. So that was a learning thing that wasn't identified at the beginning but came out of it as we went along. There were things like being self-directed, in my work, like being able to gather and analyze information and put it together in a coherent form and those kinds of things.

(Karen, Student, School A)

Another student related how he unexpectedly learned more about the complexity of working with people in a helping relationship:

There for a short time you do gain some insight and you're left with the feeling like you're a babe in the woods because you don't really know what's going on, really. I'm referring to an incident where I found out in the termination phase, ah something that I did not know about a client and if I had known it would have greatly assisted the way I would have reacted to that particular client. That was a magic moment in that I understood how much I didn't know. . .and there's more going on here than I realized.

There are different levels of information that I hadn't even begun to tap into. In that sense it brings you down to earth.

(Harry, Student, School A)

Mary talked about a Family Group Conference that went wrong, leaving her in no doubt about the impact of her interventions for one client. . .

I think to be honest one of the things that stays with me now was a FGC (Family Group Conference) we had, and the balls up, it was a total mess from start to finish. . . and it highlighted for me just how things can go wrong if social workers don't communicate properly with clients. It was one of those moments that I won't forget and it was really at that point that um I realized that the action that I had done had actually affected someone, really really profoundly.

(Mary, Student, School B)

Educators referred to students making mistakes as being positive learning events and some were mindful of setting up a supervision environment in such a way that mistakes could be discussed in safety.

I think learning comes from the opportunity to do something practical and the opportunity to reflect on it in a safe supportive environment where mistakes are not going to be jumped on but seen as opportunities for change. I guess allowing somebody the room to make mistakes, it's about creating a safe supportive working environment.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

Throughout the interviews, educators frequently drew on their own experiences as social work students to inform how they worked with current students. This aspect of educator development is discussed in more depth in Chapter Seven. Specifically on the issue of learning from mistakes, one educator reflected:

I think that for me, as a student myself the ability for the educator to actually let me make mistakes and as long as there's no danger in them, yeah that's really important because it's the biggest learning curve that we have and I can think of both my current students when they've made mistakes. Nothing major, but just things they've really learnt from and those are the things they have written about in their assignments. They have thought hard about them and they've matched the theory to them and it's been a real learning curve.

(Hilary, Field Educator, School B)

Students also learned from observing the field educators make mistakes. In the following incident the student learned about the importance of preparation in conducting casework interviews.

As I said the social worker I was with was good with people, and she was, but one day she went in and did an interview and I was taking notes and I could see she hadn't prepared for it. It was interesting because it was obvious, and she'd forgotten like we'd seen these people before, but she'd forgotten. She had to like um she said to me "Oh Jill go out and get the notes you wrote before so I can look", you know because she was really floundering and she'd gone in without any preparation. So you know, I learnt from things people did well and things people didn't do well.

(Jill, Student, School B)

None of the incidents above were planned but arose out of fortuitous events that occurred during the course of the placements. The challenge for educators rested with helping the students recognise the learning that could be gained from these events, in order to promote the development of insight, self-awareness and skills. One student described how her field educator was able to facilitate this type of learning:

She (the field educator) would look at situations and say, "Well look at the learning that has come from that" rather than the other way around of say having a learning need and imposing it on to the situation. She would look creatively at what was taking place and we would analyse the organisation skills I might need to complete the task. . . So rather than imposing her learning methods on what I was doing, she was looking at what I was doing and looking for the learning in that.

(Karen, Student, School A)

FIELD EDUCATOR TRAINING

Field educators from each school were asked about the training that they had received to fulfil the educator role (See Appendix D). All educators from School A had attended a course on being a field educator, 25% from School B, and 44% of field educators from School C had attended a course. School A required field educators both to be qualified social workers and to attend training in order to supervise a student on placement. Neither Schools B nor C had these requirements, which explains the difference in training figures between schools.

Of those field educators who had been to a training course, 69% from School A did so before having a student on placement, and 50% from Schools B and C did so before supervising a student. Thirty-four percent of those trained to provide field education across all schools had students on placement before receiving any training in this new role.

Discussions with field educators about the training they had received for the role were characterised by references to the fact that most training had been a long time ago, and

the content was largely forgotten. A second pattern that emerged was that field educator experiences of training appeared on a continuum, with one or two educators having either no training, or a great deal of training. Other educators fell somewhere between these experiences but mainly near the 'minimal training' end of the continuum. Pauline, at one end of the continuum, had had the most training in becoming a field educator:

I had my first student in 1972 which was about 24 years ago and I did a course at London University which was about student and staff supervision, an evening course that my employers paid me to do. It was about eight evenings long and that was brilliant. My first student came from the Polytech in Hartford and they had pre-placement days, so that was my introduction.

(Interviewer): And what happened since then?

Well I did a course on student supervision at Teeside and then moved back to the North of England. Then I came to Palmerston North as a student unit supervisor in 1977 and worked there and — till 1980 there — and I was briefly a year as a student unit supervisor for the Department of Social Welfare and Victoria University so that included on the job training and I've done the Certificate of Supervision on at CIT. . . . I think it's important to have regular yearly field work staff liaison days where the field supervisors are brought up to date with the content of the course.

(Pauline, Field Educator, School B)

Another educator interviewed was situated at the opposite end of the training continuum, having had no preparation for this particular role. . .

I guess in terms of becoming a field educator, there wasn't any formal preparation. Like from the school point of view. I had no formal preparation and so the preparation was basically what I brought from my practice experience, that I've worked as a social worker for nearly twenty years, so basically it was my own experience that I brought.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

Viewing field educator training as a continuum, most educators reflected that they had accessed minimal training, but that it had been in the distant past.

I went to four half-day sessions at the University and I think Tom and Sue took them, I think. Yeah, there were different subjects, and the only thing I can remember is Sue doing something about the students learning to fly (Laughing).

(Interviewer): So you don't remember a lot about. . . ?

No, no. I remember it was useful at the time but it was a long time ago.

(Marama, Field Educator, School A)

... it was a long time ago since I started. I probably went to something at the school. We had an afternoon I think, some time ago, probably around 1992.

(Jan, Field Educator, School C)

One school offered curriculum objectives meetings to field educators prior to having a student on placement, but these were not well attended. An educator from a different school noted that she did not feel in touch with what the social work curriculum included and noted the following:

We would like to know what they are being taught. I mean we are sort of old hats, you know have been around a while and trained a long time ago. And some of us like myself never actually had social work training, we've just picked it up around the place, and it would be quite useful I think to have some idea of what the major push is in social work, at the moment. What the major changes there are coming through. So that would be quite useful I think.

(Jan, Field Educator, School C)

Course Type

Trained field educators were asked to select the type of course they attended on field education. Four percent of field educators across all schools attended an in-depth course, 82% attended an introductory course, 13% attended one session of training and 1% attended 'Other' training.

Ongoing Training

All field educators were asked in the questionnaire about their access to ongoing training such as, invitations to hear relevant speakers; in-service training offered on a regular basis; field educator support group; and no ongoing training. 68% of field educators were invited by schools to hear relevant speakers; 47% reported that their school offered ongoing training opportunities; 42% noted they could access a field educator support group and 13% noted they had no ongoing training opportunities. The majority of field educators did, therefore, have some field educator training opportunities available to them. These figures concur with interview data collected from the Heads of the three schools. Each Head noted that his school offered training to the educators.

Training Attended During the Last Year (1995-96)

Field educators were asked if they had attended any training session in the last year that related specifically to having a student on placement. Response rates from all schools showed a consistently low rate of attendance at training. Thirty-one percent of field educators from School A had attended training in the last year, 22% from School B and 28% of educators from School C. Several questionnaires contained short notes in the

margin from respondents on the matter of training. Field educators noted that their school had offered training opportunities, but they had not attended. These informal notes are in keeping with information gained from the Heads of each school who reported that training opportunities were made available to educators, however, these appeared to be on an ad hoc basis. No school appeared to have a regular system of field educator training, with the exception of the introductory induction course offered by School A.

The interview material provided some explanation as to why educators did not avail themselves of the training opportunities offered. Lack of time and pressure to complete immediate client work were the main reasons cited for not attending training.

There were a couple of training sessions available last year at the school but because of work commitments I just couldn't go.

(Hilary, Field Educator, School B)

As soon as I start thinking about that (training & supervision as an educator). . . When I think about what that might entail. . . There is a measure of resistance. I'm thinking "God how on earth am I going to accommodate that as well, where would it fit". Having a fieldwork student has been a lot of extra work already and I wouldn't want to add to it.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

I think too, that although there was a good course on, probably to be honest I must say I should have got to all of them but there are work constraints, and putting what appears most urgent first. I don't know the answer to this . . . I'm making excuses really. . . I guess as fieldwork teachers we have to become more committed to the process really. It (field education) is almost like a sideline of what we do at the moment.

(Bill, Field Educator, School A)

The notion of field education as a 'sideline' appeared to be strongly embedded in the culture and context of social work education. I believe this subtext impacted greatly on the way educators view their role with students.

Student Feedback about Educator Training

Students were aware of how training in the role of both social worker and educator impacted on the educational supervision they received on placement.

Well I was aware that she (the field educator) had no particular skill as an educator, but she was tremendous with working with the client group that she knew a lot about.

(Harry, Student, School A)

In this placement my agency supervisor had not done the Diploma, so the theoretical um kind of links didn't happen, although I thought I made them quite well. I would have liked to have explored in conversations some of those bigger, macro aspects of it.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

OK I think I was really lucky because my supervisor had done this course a few years before and so she knew the kinds of things that I would be needing. At supervision sessions she would ask me questions about what I thought I'd need and it was fairly structured.

(Mandy, Student, School B)

In the extract above the student refers to herself as being 'lucky' to have had a trained social work educator. The notion of luck was first raised by a student, in relation to the placement allocation process. 'Luck' in the example above, refers to the student feeling of good fortune at having access to supervision expertise. Further discussion about luck appears in Chapter Eight, where the current organisational culture of field education is examined.

Awareness of Adult Learning and Teaching Strategies

Adult learning theory, particularly associated with experiential learning, was the major theoretical construct that informed this research. Field educators were therefore asked four questions specifically related to aspects of using this theory in work with students (See Appendix D). Table 6.4 reports the responses to the first three of these.

Firstly, educators were asked if, at the time of becoming a field educator, they were supplied with information about adult learning techniques. Sixty-two percent of educators from School A said they were, 31% from School B reported they were, and 17% from School C noted they had been supplied with this information. Since School A facilitated an induction course that new field educators were required to attend, the higher response rate to this question, compared to Schools B and C, is not surprising. Overall, educators from School A received significantly more information on adult learning than those from Schools B and C ($\chi^2=17.02$, d.f.=2, $p<.001$).

Table 6.4 Field Educator Awareness of Adult Teaching

<i>Were you supplied with information on adult learning?</i>			
School		Yes	%
School A	n=77	48	62.3
School B	n=32	10	31.2
School C	n=18	3	16.6 **
<i>Were you invited by the school of social work to attend training on adult learning?</i>			
School A	n=79	38	48.1
School B	n=32	10	31.2
School C	n=18	7	38.8
<i>Do you use a learning styles inventory?</i>			
School A	n=80	20	25.0
School B	n=32	4	12.5
School C	n=18	2	11.1

** ($\chi^2 = 17.02$, d.f.=2, $p < .001$)

Secondly, educators were asked if they had subsequently been invited to attend a lecture, seminar or workshop specifically on adult learning strategies. Forty-eight percent of School A respondents had been invited to attend training of this kind, 31% of field educators from School B also had had access to this type of training, and 39% of respondents from School C noted they had been invited to training on adult learning. There was no statistically significant difference between schools on this item.

Thirdly, educators were asked if they used either a learning styles inventory or questionnaire to determine the students' preferred mode of learning. Responses to this question indicate low-level usage of learning styles questionnaires by field educators.

Twenty-five percent of School A educators noted they used a learning styles identification tool, 13% of School B educators used such a tool and 11% of educators from School C reported using a learning styles inventory of some kind. Using chi-square, it was determined that there were no statistically significant differences between the schools for this item. Given the emphasis placed on identifying the preferred learning style of the student in the literature on social work education (Kruzich & Van Soest, 1986; Van Soest & Kruzich, 1994; Rashick et al., 1998), the lack of recognition accorded this process by field educators suggests the rhetoric about using learning styles inventories is not reflected in field educator practice.

Fourthly, using a Likert-type 1-5 scale, field educators were asked to rate the extent to which they felt conversant with the principles of adult learning. The anchors were level 1, indicating 'Not at all', to level 5, indicating 'To a great extent'. The weighted mean scores and standard deviation for this question are reported in Table 6.5.

Field educators from all three schools considered that they felt reasonably conversant with principles of adult learning (Means 2.7 – 3.3). There was no one school where field educators clearly felt they were very conversant with these principles, and conversely, no school where educators felt they had no knowledge at all about adult learning. There were no statistically significant patterns to the distribution on this item ($\chi^2=13.4$, d.f.=8, $p>.05$).

Results from the four questions above suggest that across all schools, over half of the field educators had not accessed information and training on adult learning strategies, and few used learning styles inventories of any kind with students. However, educators from each school did feel reasonably conversant with principles of adult learning. It is not clear from the survey data, therefore, where this level awareness of adult learning may have come from.

Table 6.5 Mean and Standards Deviation of the Extent to which Field Educators felt Conversant with Principles of Adult Learning, within each School

	Weighted mean score on 1-5 scale	Standard deviation
School A	3.3	0.1
School B	2.7	0.2
School C	3.2	0.3

This theme of adult learning was pursued in the interviews with field educators. Two of the educators interviewed had had access to considerable training on adult teaching and learning. One had gained his knowledge about facilitating adult learning from a student placement that he had had in the training unit of the Children & Young Persons and their Families Service. This educator described working with students in a way that was closely aligned with Kolb's process of experiential learning as outlined in Chapters Two and Three (Kolb, 1993).

Yeah, OK we have touched on the fact that people have a variety of learning styles, some people will want to approach a task with lots of information to hand before they begin on it. They will want to be really prepared. I think for all adult students there are going to be some common factors. There's the need for a relevant placement, and preparation for the activity or task. There needs to be for that activity some reflection on how it went, what happened. And opportunity to go back and revisit or repeat the activity to consolidate that learning and it's a circular process, or I see it that way anyway. That continues going through the cycle, once might give an adult a taste and some insight into what's happened, going again is useful and every time they go around that cycle there will be continued learning. I don't think it ends. I still go around the same cycle and I'm still learning it! Yeah, yeah, I'm a beginner in this field work teacher game. I've only had one student but I'm aware too that different students will have different learning spirals and I think it's useful to explore those.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

A second educator had gained a Certificate in Adult Teaching and Learning from a course she had done at the College of Education. She was clear about what model she used for working with students.

I use an action reflection model. I mean there is some didactic teaching in there too and I've built that into the supervision contract because I feel there are lots of questions that students have during their time on placement. What I encourage students to do is write

things down, anything, and often they will come up with something, an issue or, they're pondering some particular event. . . My sense is this model provides the opportunity for practical hands on experience and then some opportunity to look back on the process and start making sense of it.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

Of the 13 educators interviewed, Alan and Lucille demonstrated the most clarity about how they worked with adult students in the practicum setting. However, neither of these educators referred to using a critical approach during the reflection process. The distinguishing characteristics of critical reflection were discussed in Chapter Three. Features such as the questioning assumptions and examining aspects of power and oppression, were absent from Alan and Lucille's descriptions of using an action-reflection model and were not discussed by other educators who were interviewed. The lack of reference to critical reflection suggests that even those field educators who had the most training in adult teaching and learning, did not adopt this approach to student supervision, despite it being so favoured in current social work education literature.

Most other field educator descriptions of adult teaching strategies acknowledged learner developmental considerations.

Clearly adults learn quite differently, I mean just the idea of building on people's experiences and to be able to blend theory and practice. Adults can also have some resistances to learning, where there's sometimes been some bad experiences along the life cycle.

(Bill, Field Educator, School A)

Adult teaching methods. It's about respecting their (the students') experiences and about drawing on that experience, recognising what they bring to placement, trying to get away from that didactic teaching stuff and actually using their abilities. . . from the resources that are made available to them to do that learning, active learning themselves, all of that.

(Gail, Field Educator, School A)

Both Bill and Gail highlighted the importance of drawing from the student biography to facilitate the learning. A number of other educators also acknowledged the significance of making connections with students' previous learning encounters and life experiences.

A few educators noted that they had little knowledge or experience in using adult teaching methods.

I guess for me the question of what I know about adult teaching methods underlines some of the anxieties, some of the unease that I have about being a field educator. . . I find that perhaps I am under qualified, under experienced as a field educator. I know there are

some realities there like, A. The University needs field work teachers and I guess you'd be a bit wary of who you got and B. I guess a lot of students aren't. . .you know they just want some guidance and some sort of opportunity and some sort of persona to impart some knowledge, rather than a masterful teacher. . .

(Michael, Field Educator, School A)

The same educator went on to say:

I don't know how you would label them in terms of models (adult teaching strategies) but I think I work on the principle of acknowledging the students being adult students. They know what they want, I think that's probably it.

(Michael, Field Educator, School A)

Other educators felt as ill-equipped as Michael in working with adult students.

(Interviewer): You've mentioned that the students you work with are adults, so how conversant do you feel about using adult teaching strategies?

I know very little about this. I have no formal training so for me it's just about role modelling and just being there on the spot.

(Hilary, Field Educator, School B)

Just one student commented on how the field educator helped her to develop new understandings about practice situations. This student noted that the field educator was trained in facilitating adult learning.

She (the educator) had a great deal of expertise on both adult learning and the whole training thing that I was involved in and in social work. She made me clear about what I was doing, and why I was doing it. Her expertise in drawing out, making things overt and supporting.

(Karen, Student., School A)

SUMMARY

Students from School C reported receiving less assistance with identifying their learning needs for placement than those from Schools A and B. Nevertheless, students across all schools rated placement allocations slightly above average in terms of actually meeting their learning needs. Field educators from all schools rated slightly above average the last two placement allocations, in terms of matching student learning needs with practice opportunities. Problems arose for both students and field educators when there was a mismatch of learning needs with learning opportunities available.

The methods of educational input that students reported they received during the interviews reflected the results from the questionnaires. Having an orientation period, observing others work, and having casework oriented discussions were used extensively. Student comments about their field learning suggest that extensive use of any one particular method raised the question of balancing teaching and learning opportunities. 'Hands on' work was favoured by both students and educators. However, for the students, having too much practical work resulted in a lack of opportunity to examine cases in a reflective way. No one method for teaching and learning appeared to be considered better than the rest, although both students and field educators acknowledged the importance of having 'hands on' experience during the placement.

Having no social work practitioner on site in the placement was a problem for a third of the students surveyed. Other main problems experienced were a lack of work to do, lack of theory/practice integration, lack of access to the field educator, and working in an unsupportive and unstructured environment. Students reported several instances when unexpected learning occurred in the field, and especially valued a learning environment where mistakes were tolerated. Field educators emphasised too the need to create a safe supervision environment in which mistakes could be openly discussed.

Across schools, there was little consistency in terms of training opportunities offered to field educators. However, there was a consistently low-level attendance by educators across all schools for training that was offered. Field educators cited workload pressure as the reason for not attending training. Field education was referred to as a 'sideline' to normal social work duties.

Field educators generally rated themselves as being reasonably conversant with adult teaching and learning strategies in the questionnaires. A few had attended in-depth training on adult learning; most had not. Few field educators appeared to use learning styles inventories with students. Several educators, when interviewed, noted that they were not at all conversant with adult teaching and learning methods. Hence, there was a discrepancy between questionnaire data where educators rated themselves as 'average' in terms of their acquired knowledge on adult teaching and learning, compared with the interview material, where educators mostly reported a low level of understanding about these matters.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RELATIONSHIPS IN FIELD EDUCATION

The central importance of the student and educator relationship in the learning encounter has been emphasised in the theory (Walker & Boud, 1994), literature (Shulman, 1993) and research (Fernandez, 1998) on social work supervision. Four specific aspects of relationship are reported in this chapter. Two categories pertaining to relationship emerged from the interview transcripts, and the remaining two were identified from the student and field educator questionnaire data, although interview and questionnaire data have been integrated to illuminate finding on all four categories. Chapter Seven begins with commentaries from both students and educators about their experiences of supervision. This first section is followed by a presentation of the findings on matching students with educators. Next, the possible 'person specifications' for a field educator are presented, along with possible 'specifications' for being a student of field education. Finally, the influence of both student and educator biographies are examined in terms of how these impact on the teaching and learning encounter.

STUDENT AND FIELD EDUCATOR EXPERIENCES OF SUPERVISION

Given the mixed nature of student experiences on placement, it was not surprising to find some students had good experiences of supervision, while others did not.

The literature and theory on reflective learning repeatedly identifies the need for supportive learning relationships to be developed in order for the student to feel a degree of safety in taking risks, exposing deficits in knowledge and disclosing personal viewpoints (Galbraith, 1991a). A number of students interviewed reported having problematic relationships with educators for differing reasons. In particular, Claire did not feel safe discussing issues with the educator. Measures taken by the school to remedy this situation by providing outside supervision proved inadequate.

I had in-house supervision with Stella (agency supervisor) and by the second session it became obvious that this wasn't very useful because I couldn't talk about personal stuff at all. . . as far as dealing with personal issues there was no safe place for that at all, but fortunately they (the school) set up fortnightly outside supervision for me and it was peer

supervision but it wasn't frequent enough or long enough because there were three of us in the group, and we only had an hour, so that was twenty minutes each a fortnight.

(Claire, Student, School C)

Several students raised the importance of trust, safety and clear boundaries in the learning relationship with their supervisor.

One thing that I would say to future students is "Watch out for the supervisor". One thing I really think you need to be aware of with the supervisor is that they need to know the set up, the policies in the place to protect you from anything that could go wrong and that they know the steps [...] they should be taking to protect you and if things go wrong they need to stand behind you, in fact take responsibility.

(Mary, Student, School B)

Because I knew her (the educator) before I went to the agency I guess we had some sort of friendship there and then I think she (the educator) treated me more like an equal than a student. Very much the same age, and knowing that I was a social worker she had already dealt with at CYPS we had this communication at times, prior to my being on placement. As a supervisor she didn't really give me terribly much to go on, to bite into. I don't know whether she was a little uncertain about doing that. A very nice person, we enjoyed each other's company, she was quite humorous at times, but in essence I would say our supervision didn't have anything of substance.

(Pani, Student, School B)

Some educators that were interviewed also noted the importance of creating a safe learning environment.

I think a good fieldwork teacher is committed to . . . allowing someone the room to make mistakes without. . . it's about creating a safe supportive working environment really.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

Two educators who were interviewed openly acknowledged that they didn't feel they had the knowledge or experience to supervise students (See Michael in Chapter Six, p. 166–67). Pauline from School B was also clear about her shortcomings as a supervisor.

I told the students straight out in front of the school liaison person that I didn't know much about supervision, however I would do my best with it.

(Pauline, Field Educator, School B)

Although two educators cited in Chapter Six (Lucille and Alan) used models of adult learning in their work with students, some critical elements of those models were not included in their descriptions of reflective learning. None of the educators interviewed identified a specific model of supervision that they used in work with students and generally, student supervision did not appear to be informed by any particular theory or

approach. The notion of 'luck' was referred to during a discussion about supervision with one student (See Mandy, Chapter Six, p. 162) considering herself lucky to have had a supervisor who had completed a course on providing supervision. Mandy's comment suggested that a culture exists in field education where students do not necessarily expect that educators will be trained to provide supervision. The notion of luck and its meaning in field education was first raised in Chapter Six and is discussed further in Chapter Eight.

One student specifically identified the empowering function of supervision posited by Rossiter (1993) and discussed in Chapter Four.

She (the supervisor) was very empowering and supportive. She had a real understanding of what I was trying to do and the context in which I was trying to do it. Rather than imposing supervision needs on me, she worked creatively with me in a way that felt like it was meeting my needs as a supervisee, not her needs as a supervisor.

(Karen, Student, School A)

Field educator motivations for being involved in teaching and learning were recorded in Chapter Five. Central to their motivation was enjoyment of work with students. Almost all educators interviewed enjoyed providing student supervision in the field. Nevertheless, some educators had had problematic situations to deal with in the supervision process.

I've had lots of difficulties with students, like learning difficulties, writing difficulties and difficulties of students being accountable to the agency, to the fieldwork teacher, not understanding about systems that need to be in place in the workplace, and that they need to be part of. The sense of time, difficulties in students expecting that I will have more time for them than I'm able to offer, not clearly negotiating that and understanding that. But in saying all that, like it's a very negative focus and fieldwork teaching has been far different from that overall.

(Gail, Field Educator, School A)

What went wrong was the student was not well placed in the setting that I was offering. One in particular was frightened of the clients that I worked with and so fearful that he just wouldn't see them. This meant his learning needs weren't met because client work was fundamental to that. He just didn't want anything to do with clients and so I'd say "Would you go and see this person?" and he wouldn't. And then I'd say "look, I'm expecting you to see this person" well it didn't happen.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

Educators commented on how they interpreted student use of supervision as providing a benchmark for competency in the placement.

I am also really interested in the students' use of supervision, because I think how the student uses supervision gives a real indication of their competency.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

Supervision has been another key to making the placement work, and Jan's used that quite well. She's been forthright about what she needs and what she's not sure about, so she's used it well.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

These comments imply that students will know how to use supervision before going out on placement. Given the mixed responses about student preparation reported in Chapter Five, it is not necessarily safe to assume this will be the case.

Although both students and educators had had mixed experiences throughout the supervision process, some clear indications were given by both parties as to what elements contributed favourably to the process. For students, it was important that the educator was accessible, supportive of student learning endeavours and knowledgeable about their field. For educators, the supervision process was enhanced by student preparation and constructive use of the supervision time, a willingness to be open and respond to new ideas, and student enthusiasm for learning in the field.

MATCHING STUDENTS WITH EDUCATORS

Field educators were asked to rate the extent to which they believed students should be matched with field educators on the basis of gender and ethnicity to enhance learning in the field. There was no statistically significant relationship between the schools field educators were associated with, and their views on either of these questions.

The weighted average of field educator ratings across all schools on the question of gender was 2.7. This rating indicates that field educators have less than average belief that matching students with educators on the basis of gender would enhance student learning. The weighted average for matching students on the basis of ethnicity, across all schools, was 3.4, indicating more support for this practice than matching on the basis of gender. However, a score of 3.4 suggests that field educators only believe to an 'average' extent that student learning is enhanced by matching on the basis of ethnicity. The disparity between educator beliefs about matching on the basis of gender and ethnicity, and other research on adult teaching and learning are discussed in Chapter Eight.

Student accounts of placement experiences endorse the notion that gender and ethnicity factors influence teaching and learning encounters. On gender:

I'm thinking of my first supervision session I had with Peter (the educator). We had the usual enter and then I said "Oh right well I've got some things I want to talk about" and I started to go through my list. Then he said "Are we feeling a bit sharp today?" and I said "What do you mean?" and he said "Oh it's just the way you're going through things" and I said "well, that's just what I have always done in supervision". . . At the end of the session I said "Well Peter, I'd like to say that maybe there will be some difficulties that come up in terms of different ways in supervision. . . maybe there will be some gender stuff that may well come up."

(Tanya, Student, School A)

I worked in a multi-cultural team and a mixed gender team, more male than female. I'd worked in a women only agency for the last three years and so feeling that I could actually work in a mixed gender team was very affirming for me because I kind of wondered whether I would struggle with that.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

In relation to ethnicity, one Maori student noted that being able to communicate with staff about things Maori aided her understanding (See Pani below, p. 188). However, the significance for this student of being placed within a Maori agency was greater than simply learning new practice skills. . .

I am Maori and some of that in my own self has been disconnected and I'm trying to find connections in things that are meaningful.

(Pani, Student, School B)

A great deal has been written about matching students and educators on the basis of learning styles. This material was discussed in Chapter Three. Accounts from both students and educators given in this research supported the notion that compatibility of teaching and learning styles impacted on the supervision relationship.

(Interviewer): Why didn't the placement work out?

We (educator and student) had different ways of. . . we had different expectations and we had different ways of . . . there was incongruency in our different models of learning.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

Her (the supervisor's) teaching style and her way of working suited me personally, but also was really appropriate for the piece of work that I was doing.

(Karen, Student, School A)

Although compatibility of learning styles was noted as impacting on the teaching and learning encounter, the presence of more subtle forms of difference appeared to have a significant influence in the supervision relationship. Other interview material suggested that matching was a more complex process than considering overt characteristics like gender and ethnicity, or the educational strategy of matching on the basis of learning styles. Commentaries below suggest the concept of matching may be more adequately explained with reference to the notion of the social construction of 'difference'. This is where competing ideologies, roles, expectations, as well as overt physical characteristics contribute to how we understand ourselves in relation to others (Saraga, 1998).

One older field educator who had supervised students for many years, raised the issue of age in terms of relating to students:

There's a big age gap between myself and lots of students and I feel that too. Not so much between the people in their forties but there are lots of students in their twenties and thirties.

(Interviewer): How does that manifest itself, do you think, that age gap?

Somebody I supervise in an agency said to me the other day that he noticed I have a very professional approach and that I don't get passionate in the way that. . . he worked alongside other people in the disability movement who get passionate about the rights of people. . . that's not to say I haven't ever, but I don't feel like that now.

(Pauline, Educator, School B)

A student identified differing ideological and theoretical perspectives as a barrier to the student and educator relationship:

We (the educator and student) were at loggerheads about certain theories and use of certain practices.

(Mary, Student, School B)

Another student noted how reassuring it was to be able to relate to her field educator on matters of style and dress.

I think in the beginning I had to giggle because she (the educator) was quite similar to me in that she couldn't dress very well. She had no colour sense, no sense of style like I don't and her hair was all over the place . . . That was really important for me to see because it's just part of me you know. I knew I had the skills but I don't know, you see these people in offices and you think that dress must be one of the most important things.

(Mandy, Student, School B)

A tall Pakeha male student with a big body frame noted he was very conscious of his size in comparison to that of his Cambodian female field educator, and of the need to overcome some language difficulties.

Having a Cambodian lady (as a field educator) who I took great care to understand, and quite some time to understand, she was probably three feet shorter than I was, so it was difficult for me initially to sort of be the student.

(Bill, Student, School A)

In these instances, questions of age, ideology, and personal presentation style and body image impacted on the teaching and learning dynamic. The current factors used to define characteristics for matching, like gender, ethnicity and learning styles, appear too simplistic to tackle the question of matching in a substantive way. If matching students with educators is to be given further serious consideration, theory development and model building is required that incorporates the notion and discourse of 'difference'.

PERSON SPECIFICATIONS FOR A FIELD EDUCATOR

Endeavouring to distil a set of attributes most suited for teaching students has been a task tackled by a number of educational researchers (Fernandez, 1998). However, defining the qualities needed to be a social work field educator has not been researched in New Zealand. With this in mind, a large section of the student and educator questionnaires was dedicated to the selection of attributes considered most important for educators to demonstrate.

Table 7.1 sets out the selection of attributes for field educators considered most important by educators and by social work students before and after their first placement. Attributes A-Q correspond to those outlined in Table 4.1 in Chapter Four. Each attribute shows the proportion of selection and whether it belonged in the Professional Competence (P.C.), Personal Quality (P.Q.) or Student-Centred Teaching (S.C.) domain. The two experimental attributes were not part of any domain. A Z-test was used to identify those attributes that have been selected by the respective parties significantly more often than others.

Table 7.1 The Proportion of Students Pre- and Post-placement, and Field Educators Who Selected Each Attribute

Attribute	Student Pre- placement N= 78	Student Post- placement N=73	Field Educator N=123	Domain
A	0.35	0.51** (3.99)	65** (8.67)	P.C.
B	14	0.11	0.02	Experimental
C	0.50** (3.99)	0.42* (2.45)	0.50 ** (5.11)	S.C.
D	0.15	0.18	0.09	P.Q.
E	0.26	0.26	0.20	P.C.
F	0.30	0.33	0.20	P.Q.
G	0.44* (2.75)	0.40 (1.93)	0.53 ** (5.70)	S.C.
H	0.19	0.25	0.33	P.C.
I	0.26	0.36	0.30	P.C.
J	0.21	0.23	0.15	P.C.
K	0.47** (3.49)	0.33	0.49** (4.71)	S.C.
L	0.26	0.32	0.32	P.C.
M	0.19	0.26	0.19	P.Q.
N	0.08	0.03	0.04	Experimental
O	0.28	0.22	0.19	P.Q.
P	0.35	0.36	0.30	S.C.
Q	0.51** (4.24)	0.42* (2.45)	0.41* (2.93)	S.C.

* p<.05; ** p<.01

In Table 7.1, the significant Z values are reported in brackets. There was consistency between what students regarded as the most important attributes for field educators to have, and the attributes selected by field educators themselves. The student groups and field educators agreed that, out of the list of 17 field educator attributes, the following four were most important to facilitate student learning in the field:

- A- Acts as a professional role model for students
- C- Plans placement experiences that match my learning needs
- G- Provides frequent feedback on my progress
- Q- Uses an empowerment model of supervision.

Of these attributes, three are situated in the Student-Centred Teaching Technique domain and one is identified under the Professional Competency domain.

Attribute K- '*Provides a fair and objective assessment of my work*' was also selected by a statistically significant proportion of field educators as one of the most important attributes ($Z=4.71$; $p<.05$). This attribute is sited in the Student-Centred Teaching Technique domain. While there was little difference in the 'Most Important' attributes selected by students before and after placement, K was the exception. Students selected this attribute significantly more often before they went out on placement than after they had had placement.

Attributes relating to Personal Qualities did not feature amongst those most frequently selected by either students or field educators. Only one Professional Competency attribute was amongst those most frequently cited.

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS RELATING TO THE MOST FREQUENTLY SELECTED ATTRIBUTES

Material drawn from student interviews concurred with the questionnaire findings where particular qualities were identified as being important for field educators to demonstrate.

On role modelling:

She (the educator) used a lot of role modelling and I think that was really important. . . even though my supervisor didn't have the Diploma she was into high standards and I guess I saw her challenge the social workers frequently on their level of competence, you know and what was acceptable and what was not.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

Well I think one of the fundamental things is the modelling she (the educator) did of empowerment. I know this sounds trite and social worky and all the rest of it, but thinking about it the role modelling for me as a supervisor and as a social worker, the way she modelled empowerment was very impressive.

(Karen, Student, School A)

On matching learning needs:

(Interviewer): *What really promoted your learning?*

Having a match between my learning needs and where I really wanted to be.

(Karen, Student, School A)

On giving feedback:

You need to be honest and realise the time you have with the student is very short and that they have a lot to learn in a very short time. The only way students are going to learn is by frank, honest feedback about how they're doing on placement. Feedback has to be constant. . . you have to be able to be a person that can create an environment that is safe, because at times it can be difficult, you're not always going to be saying "You did really well".

(Ilene, Field Educator, School C)

I was introduced to interviewing with my field teacher sitting in the background observing me, and then we discussed it afterwards and I would get the feedback. So my fieldwork teacher did an excellent job. . . being able to ask for honest feedback, "How did I do? Where could I improve? ".

(Marion, Student, School C)

On using an empowerment model of supervision

Karen from School A, quoted above, has described in several ways how her supervisor used an empowerment model in the supervision process (See also page 171). Although not specifically referring to empowerment, students and educators spoke about supervision processes that encouraged taking initiative and creating a supportive learning environment.

I had a supervisor that was so encouraging you know, and she insisted that they (the team) didn't just tell me what to do. They put things before me and let me figure it out. I think that was really good, it was good for my learning.

(Mary, Student, School B)

We need to inform people (the students) and empower them to report back and to criticise and to sort of have their own input (on agency practice).

(Jan, Field Educator, School C)

GENDER AND ATTRIBUTE SELECTION

The selection of attributes by males and females was, on the whole, very similar. One exception was for Attribute D- '*Approaches life with a positive attitude*', which was selected significantly more often by males than females ($\chi^2=8.46$, d.f.=1, $p<.005$).

The survey of field educators yielded one difference in selection between male and female respondents. A greater proportion of female field educators selected attribute K- '*Provides a fair and objective assessment of my work*' than male field educators ($\chi^2=5.10$, d.f.=1, $p<.05$). No patterns emerged from the interview material that might have helped explain this particular difference between male and female educator attribute selection.

ETHNICITY AND ATTRIBUTE SELECTION

Comparing post-placement student ethnicity with attribute selection revealed three significant differences. These were for attributes D- '*Approaches life with a positive attitude*'; I- '*Uses up to date knowledge and skills in practice*' and O- '*Has a sense of humour*'.

A greater proportion of Maori students than students of Pakeha and 'Other' ethnicity selected attribute D ($\chi^2=7.32$, d.f.=2, $p<.05$) and attribute O ($\chi^2=17.87$, d.f.=2, $p<.001$), whereas a significantly smaller proportion of Maori selected I. The two attributes more favoured by Maori students are situated in the Personal Qualities domain, while attribute I, less favoured by Maori students, is situated in the Professional Competency domain.

When comparing field educator selection of attributes with ethnicity there was a significant difference in selection of three attributes. These were B- '*Assesses my work in an intuitive subjective way*', N- '*Leaves student to make the links between theory and practice*' and O- '*Has a sense of humour*'. Pakeha field educators were less likely to select B and N than Maori. At the same time, Pakeha field educators have not rated 'humour' as being 'Most Important' as often as Maori and 'Other' ethnicities.

There was congruency between the questionnaire material and interview data on the issue of humour. Both Maori students and educators highlighted the importance of humour in their supervision relationship.

I loved the laughs. You know my supervisor, she was just really great. Every now and then she would just burst out with some silly thing and we'd all have a good laugh and I think that it's really important to forget about the heaviness of the kaupapa of the programme. I think the laughter made good for our relationship too.

(Pani, Student, School B)

(Interviewer): *So when you were feeling depleted, you know, like your basket was empty as you said, what did you do?*

I picked up the party of students and said "Come on, we're off". We used to go to a restaurant or do something, just sit down and laugh and have a good time, and then go back to work.

(Huia, Field Educator, School B)

In working with students I think we need to be quite practical, we need a sense of humour and we need to be humble.

(Tamara, Field Educator, School A)

Pani, who was placed in a Maori social service agency, related that she also liked to be left to have flexibility in her learning.

I was given the freedom to absorb what I could. . . and take my time about finding out things rather than sort of being made to learn.

(Pani, Student, School B)

This approach is in keeping with attribute N, where students make the links between theory and practice themselves.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIELD EDUCATOR AND ATTRIBUTE SELECTION

Of the 123 field educators in the survey, 101 held a recognised social work qualification and 22 did not. Using chi-square, Table 7.2 illustrates the differences in attribute selection based on field educator social work qualification status. It is apparent that there were significant differences between the social-work-qualified and non-social-work-qualified field educators in their selections of attributes D, F, H, and K. Social-work-qualified field educators selected '*Has enthusiasm for teaching*' and '*Provides a fair and objective assessment of work*' significantly more often than those without a social work qualification. Educators without a social work qualification selected '*Approaches life with a positive attitude*' and '*Demonstrates a commitment to consumers of the service*' significantly more often than those that held a qualification. These particular attributes reflect those that are necessary for effective work in a team and agency setting, where having a commitment to serve the client group and having good relations with co-workers are essential elements for continuing professional functioning.

Table 7.2 Chi-square Comparison of Selection of Attributes by Non-Social-Work-Qualified and Social-Work-Qualified Field Educators

Attribute	χ^2	p Value
A. Acts as a professional role model	2.65	N.S.
B. Assesses my work in an intuitive subjective way	0.49	N.S.
C. Plans placement experiences that match my learning needs	0.26	N.S.
D. Approaches life with a positive attitude	17.21	p<.001 ***
E. Demonstrates anti-discriminatory practice	0.58	N.S.
F. Has enthusiasm for teaching	6.83	p<.05*
G. Provides frequent feedback about progress	1.53	N.S.
H. Demonstrates a commitment to consumers of the service	5.92	p<.05*
I. Uses up to date knowledge and skills in practice	0.50	N.S.
J. Has a personal commitment to social justice	1.08	N.S.
K. Provides a fair and objective assessment of work	10.03	p<.005 **
L. Can articulate links between theory and practice	0.26	N.S.
M. Can be flexible when the need arises	1.29	N.S.
N. Leaves me to make the links between theory and practice	0.01	N.S.
O. Has a sense of humour	2.58	N.S.
P. Encourages the development of a social work identity	3.44	N.S.
Q. Uses an empowerment model of supervision	0.49	N.S.

In relation to their work with students, educators who had themselves been students, placed greater emphasis on attributes that reflected student-centred teaching and learning. Later in this chapter, the 'Journey from Student to Educator' is discussed, and within this section there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the experiences of having been a practicum student were formative to how educators currently approached their work with students.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTENDANCE AT FIELD EDUCATOR TRAINING AND SELECTION OF ATTRIBUTES

Of the 122 field educators who responded to both questions on attributes and training, 94 respondents had attended a training course on the provision of field education and 34 had not. Based on the variable of training, chi-square analyses revealed statistically significant differences in terms of the selection of 'Most Important' attributes. These are shown in Table 7.3 below.

Those field educators who had attended a course of training in providing clinical education selected attributes G and K as being 'Most Important' significantly more often than those who had not attended a course. These attributes are '*Provides frequent feedback on my progress*', and '*Provides a fair and objective assessment of my work*'. Both attributes are drawn from the Student-Centred Teaching domain. Field educators who had not attended training selected attributes D, H and O significantly more often than those who had. These attributes are '*Approaches life with a positive attitude*', '*Demonstrates a commitment to consumers of the service*' and '*Has a sense of humour*', respectively. Two of these attributes are from the Personal Quality domain and one is from the Professional Competency domain.

These results suggest that having access to field educator training impacts on the way educators approach the task of working with students. This confirms conclusions from earlier research, where exposure to training was found to influence the way educators worked with students in the field (Rogers & McDonald, 1992). Those educators who had not attended seminars on providing field instruction did not place emphasis on student-centred learning attributes. They gave greater weight to the qualities needed for functioning well in an agency and team environment, rather than focusing on the educative imperatives implicit in the student-centred teaching attributes.

Table 7.3 *Chi-square Analysis of Attribute Selection by Field Educators Who Had Attended Training vs. Selections by Field Educators Who Had Not Attended Training*

Attribute	χ^2	p Value
A. Acts as a professional role model	3.46	N.S.
B. Assesses my work in an intuitive subjective way	0.18	N.S.
C. Plans placement experiences that match my learning needs	0.18	N.S.
D. Approaches life with a positive attitude	4.50	p<.05*
E. Demonstrates anti-discriminatory practice	0.66	N.S.
F. Has enthusiasm for teaching	2.10	N.S.
G. Provides frequent feedback about progress	6.50	p<.05*
H. Demonstrates a commitment to consumers of the service	7.70	p<.01**
I. Uses up to date knowledge and skills in practice	0.05	N.S.
J. Has a personal commitment to social justice	0.94	N.S.
K. Provides a fair and objective assessment of work	4.22	p<.05*
L. Can articulate links between theory and practice	3.30	N.S.
M. Can be flexible when the need arises	2.24	N.S.
N. Leaves me to make the links between theory and practice	0.85	N.S.
O. Has a sense of humour	8.80	p<.005***
P. Encourages the development of a social work identity	0.01	N.S.
Q. Uses an empowerment model of supervision	0.00	N.S.

(critical values of chi-square =3.84, d.f.=1, p<.05) N.S.=Not Significant

The most surprising and arguably most contentious aspect of the attribute selections overall was that neither students nor educators selected the attributes unique to social work as being most important. The social-work-specific attributes were '*Demonstrates anti-discriminatory practice*' and '*Has a personal commitment to social justice*'. The lack of emphasis given to these particular qualities may well reflect the social and political context in which field education occurs. More discussion relating to the influence of context on field education appears in Chapters Three and Five.

During the interviews, educators put forward their own ideas about the personal qualities and resources that were needed to undertake the educator role. Lack of time to provide student supervision was a feature in several accounts. Although 'time' cannot be considered a personal attribute, it was invariably raised as an issue when educators were considering the qualities of a good field educator.

The qualities of a good field educator? Umm it probably helps to be more organised than I am. It takes some effort and organisation on my part to find the time available to supervise and teach in an already busy work situation. So making the time is an absolute prerequisite. Students need time and attention to succeed. Patience is definitely an attribute that helps and I think a degree of openness to a variety of practice styles and a willingness to recognise a student's attributes and to let them use what they bring rather than trying to impose on them a practice style that won't necessarily fit. I guess that's about recognising difference isn't it. . . I think a fieldwork teacher has to be able to confront and deal with any problems that are arising, the earlier the better.

(Alan, Field Educator, School A)

I think a good fieldwork teacher has to be able to be prepared to give time and I think that is dedicated time. . . I think a good fieldwork teacher is committed to I guess allowing somebody the room to make mistakes. . . I think clear contracts, because I don't think there should be any surprises. . . I think the role of broker is important too and that if a learning opportunity isn't available on placement, then use your extensive network of colleagues to access that.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

Well I think having respect for the student and an understanding of what it means working with adult students. I think having a commitment to social work education and being prepared to go the extra mile, like accepting that phone call out of hours and odd times, that's just how it is with students. . . I think having social work experience so you have credibility so that you actually know what a lot of the issues are.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

A supervisor has to have sufficient confidence and sufficient skills themselves to be able to share that with the students.

(Jan, Field Educator, School C)

Students also identified qualities that assisted their learning that were not included in the attribute items of the questionnaire. These included challenging and allowing for mistakes.

On challenging:

He (the educator) challenged me. I remember one example, I sat down and I said "I'll just tell you what happened with this client" and I was reading it out, and he said, "Why are you actually telling me this?" and I said, well I just thought you'd want to know. And he said, "So you actually haven't got an issue that you want to discuss about this?" No

actually I just thought that you'd want to know since I am your student. You know in a way he was fishing me to develop confidence, to know that I don't have to tell him everything any more. Only when the time comes when I need him specifically.

(Tanya, Student, School A)

Allowing for Mistakes:

I had a wonderful supervisor who was so encouraging, like if I made a mistake, if I did something wrong, it was not made into a big deal.

(Mandy, Student, School B)

IDENTIFYING 'STUDENT' SPECIFICATIONS

Initially this research was focused on defining the attributes needed by field educators to enhance the learning exchange during the practicum. However, as the research progressed it became clear that enhancement of the practicum could not be considered from the single dimension of what the educator brings to the learning encounter. The context in which the learning occurs creates a second dimension, and the qualities and experiences that students bring to the supervision process and the placement learning adds an equally important third dimension.

Recent research on social work student learning identified the ability to *take initiative* as being critically important for the enhancement of learning in the field and classroom (Taylor, 1997:160). During the interviews for this project, both educators and students noted the importance of student initiative in field learning.

(Interviewer): If you were giving advice to the next student to go on placement where you've just been, what would that advice be?

Be open to every experience because every experience is a learning experience, whether you're chatting to someone in the hallway or you're actually doing some direct work. I had experiences that came up just because I took the initiative. So be open and take the initiative.

(Tanya, Student, School A)

The biggest contributor to the success of a placement is the student themselves. . . the qualities of being flexible, of being able to work in an unstructured way, of being able to use initiative, of not being afraid to ask or make mistakes, and just having a healthy attitude to working with clients, non judgmental and client-focused way of working.

(Jan, Field Educator, School C)

Educators repeatedly emphasised that student attitude towards the field learning had a major bearing on how well placements progressed.

What contributed to the success was that the student was highly motivated and took responsibility for her own learning. She was keen as part of the contract to have critical comment about her work. . .She worked very hard and went to a lot of trouble. A real eager beaver. . .There were some other things too, she had the ability to, at appropriate times, to challenge me too, in the nicest possible way.

(Bill, Field Educator, School A)

A huge hinge is their (the students) attitude to the placement. Like I have had enthusiastic students who have come in prepared to learn. . .I honestly don't think it works unless that's there and the student comes with the right attitude, wanting to learn, wanting to make the most of the advantages and opportunities.

(Gail, Field Educator, School A)

I remember one student who was an absolute joy to work with. She was constantly taking every single learning opportunity that was offered and when it wasn't offered she went out looking for it. As a particular challenge was offered in terms of practice she would say "I'm just going to the library, I'd like to read about this". It was just so fantastic having a student who was so motivated to learn, we took every single opportunity and exploited it.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

I think the students that come here who are willing to do what they are asked to do and who are willing to be energetic and put a bit of energy into the job, will actually gain much more from the placement, and they're the ones that we enjoy having the most.

(Ilene, Field Educator, School C)

The student's ability to be *adaptable* appeared to be a further quality that enhanced practicum learning.

Like you don't know when you arrive there (the agency) at 9.00 what the day is going to hold, and I think that's the thing about being locked into expectations. If you go with a real open mind to experience everything the placement has to offer and to accommodate the unpredictability. . .being able to adjust.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

Theresa was really good at being able to slot into situations, she was quite adaptable. . .the ability to slot in with staff is really important. The more adaptable you are as a student the easier it is to fit in with a team, I think.

(Tamara, Field Educator, School A)

Although much of the focus for this research has been on how educators can work to enhance practicum learning, the commentaries above have implications for the way students are prepared to enter the field. Little attention has been given to addressing attitudinal factors during student placement preparation. It would appear, however, that the attitude the student brings to field learning could be a critical ingredient in achieving successful placement outcomes. The question of attitude and placement preparation will

be discussed further in Chapter Eight, where the implications of this research for field education practice are outlined.

THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENT AND EDUCATOR BIOGRAPHIES

The literature on adult education emphasises the importance of the life experiences that both student and educator brings to the learning encounter (Brookfield, 1986). Three emergent categories could be identified in the interview material, where aspects of student and educator biography influenced the supervision relationship and the approach taken to practicum teaching and learning. These categories were labelled *Making Connections*, *Acknowledging Previous Experiences*, and *The Journey from Student to Educator*. The first two categories pertain to engagement between the student and educator and between the student and placement setting. The third category documents two aspects of educator development. These are the influence of the educators' past practicum experiences on their work with current students and the role transition from social worker to educator.

Making Connections: The title of this category refers to a broad range of educator and student aspects of biography that appeared to impact on the connections made between both parties in the supervisory relationship, and the level of connectedness that the student felt with the placement setting. Several of these examples highlight the influence of developmental factors on the degree of connectedness between students and educators. Tamara's comment below hints at the impact of age and cognitive development on how she, as an educator, related to the student.

There was a time when I was working with a student who was quite young. I found it quite hard to tease out her ideas. She was in a quite descriptive mode.

(Tamara, Field Educator, School A)

Mandy found that engaging with her field supervisor was made easier by the educator's similarity of age and readiness to be open about aspects of her own biography.

Her willingness to talk about herself and her life and her family and her experiences at school and experiences in social work, her life experiences generally really helped. She wasn't much older than I was and some of her disasters, yeah it was really good to hear about people's disasters, it just makes you feel more human.

(Mandy, Student, School B)

Tanya echoed Mandy's sentiments, also describing how the process of the educator sharing his experiences had made the relationship between them more grounded in 'human' dimensions.

Peter (the educator) talked out the difficulties he had, he talked about his strengths, he talked about his conflicts, he shared with me, he treated me like a friend as well as keeping that supervisor role, but he showed me his human side.

(Tanya, Student, School A)

Identifying with the universal human qualities of the educator implies a willingness on the part of the educator to share vulnerabilities. The capacity to do this appeared to be an integral part of forging the connectedness between these students and their field supervisors.

On occasions, the placement setting impacted on how the student connected with the learning opportunities. Phillipa, a survivor of sexual abuse, on placement in the Youth Justice area, noted how the placement setting and the nature of work involved triggered reflection on her own feelings and experiences of abuse.

I know that some of the sexual abuse stuff kind of triggered. . . I mean it hit in a bit you know. It was a bit overwhelming actually, not necessarily my stuff was overwhelming but what I was dealing with was overwhelming. . . how do you not get emotionally torn up about it, like you're in court reading the summary of facts, so you read what this perpetrator did and I just found that a bit hard at times.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

Pani, a Maori student, expressed how working in a Maori agency with a Maori kaupapa helped her learning. The presence of the Kaumatua and Kuia ensured that the spiritual dimensions of addressing Maori health were not forgotten.

They (the agency) have a Kaumatua and a Kuia there and I believe that having that within a Maori mental health system does do quite a bit. . . it has meaning for how we operate and how we think if we have a Kuia and they are kind of soothing, a calming force in themselves and they are good, they are worth their salt, they are knowledgeable and wise and you know you're working in a Maori Kaupapa therefore you don't step out of that and they make sure of that so that things are also kept in the spiritual dimensions of things Maori and are kept on an even keel.

(Pani, Student, School B)

Acknowledging Life Experience: Several students interviewed had been practising as social workers in the field over a number of years. In the case of Karen, the educator's

acknowledgment of her life circumstances and previous social work experience appeared to contribute to the development of a good supervisory relationship.

She (the educator) acknowledged the fact that I had already done some learning, so there was no point in re-inventing all that. I felt she was really respectful about where I had been and what I had done and that she very respectfully looked at what would be useful learning for me rather than attempting to make me jump through hoops to meet needs that might not necessarily be my learning needs . . . but also her recognition of the difficulties in trying to work and do placement and do the University, and because she acknowledged that was difficult and allowed me some flexibility in fitting things in, then I felt my energy was going into what I was learning rather than just keeping people happy.

(Karen, Student, School A)

Phillipa identified that, without the acknowledgment of her skills, she would have become resistant to the learning available from the placement.

Because I am experienced . . . being treated as someone who had experience helped, having that skill and experience acknowledged . . . I wasn't a green kid on the block and they knew that . . . recognising that was extremely important to me as an older experienced social worker. If I had gone into a situation where I was treated as knowing nothing then I think that the resistance would stop my learning, and my need to prove myself would be higher than my need to learn.

(Phillipa, Student, School A)

THE JOURNEY FROM STUDENT TO EDUCATOR

Two specific aspects of the transition from student to educator were identified in the interview material. Firstly, educators' own experiences as social work students on placement impacted greatly on how they approached supervision. Secondly, some educators identified personal transitions in their approach to work with students, where they distinguished between the roles of social worker and educator. However, a small number of educators interviewed did not make a distinction between these roles.

Throughout the interviews were several instances where educators drew from their own experiences as a student to inform their work with current students. In Chapter Six Tamara identified that she did not observe students in their practice because as a student she had not liked that herself (See page 145). Later in this interview she commented:

I think field educators can be too nice. I think we are all guilty of not confronting people, you know dealing with conflicts about assessment. Most of us have been through this system in the past (social work course), so we don't want to fail anyone else.

(Tamara, Field Educator, School A)

I learnt from my own placement, which was a bloody disaster. I told the tutor and fieldwork teacher at the time but I don't think it really sank in how much that placement was a failure for me. So what I'm trying to say is that I learnt all about the things you don't do with students and have tried to turn that around positively and not make those sort of mistakes myself.

(Bill, Field Educator, School A)

Every morning we (student and educator) would have a little talk about what the plans were for the day, but this isn't really a setting where there was a great deal of structure for a student, it's really just take things as they come and talk about it then, and for me, when I was a student that's what worked.

(Hilary, Field Educator, School B)

A number of educators identified how their approach to working with students had changed. These changes usually were in response to confronting difficulties during student placements and involved the field supervisor consciously moving away from seeing themselves in a social work role with students.

(Interviewer): So your experience changed the way you approached fieldwork teaching?

Absolutely. In the beginning I desperately wanted the student to enjoy their placement and to go away saying "She was a great fieldwork teacher". At the end of the day that's not my biggest focus now. I'm not so bending over backwards now. . . in the early days I felt pressure. There were some very popular fieldwork teachers and I wanted to be in that bunch. I think I've matured in my role as a social worker and fieldwork teacher. I mean when we talk about time commitment. . . they (students) would have me at their beck and call, they could come in and go and do whatever. . . at the end of the day that was not realistic and what was I modelling to them?

(Gail, Field Educator, School A)

I have changed. I have stopped seeing my students as my clients. They're here to learn and I'm not here to spoon feed them or hold their hand or get them through a process if they don't necessarily have the skills or competence to get through.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

Some educators equated the roles of social worker and educator. In terms of there being transferable skills that the social worker could bring to the educator role:

I guess ...(being a field educator) is like an extension of being a social worker.

(Bill, Field Educator, School A)

I've had no formal preparation (for being an educator) and the preparation was basically what I brought from my practice experience. . . that I've been working in the field as a social worker for a number of years.

(Margaret, Field Educator, School B)

One educator identified the conflict of roles between that of social worker and educator:

I think I put up with a whole lot of stuff I shouldn't have put up with (during a student placement). I think there is a real role conflict for social workers, I mean our whole being is to be considerate, kind, able and empowering and all those wonderful M words.

(Interviewer): M words?

You know empowering, enabling and all that kind of stuff, and I just think there is a role conflict when a student is not performing.

(Lucille, Field Educator, School A)

Just one educator actively discarded the notion of a student/educator relationship on the basis that power differentials are inherent within this kind of teaching framework.

I just treat them (students) like my mates, like my colleagues. This is the how I would want to be taught and not with this power and control thing. I hate it.

(Huia, Field Educator, School B)

Gail did not feel that the power differential within the student/educator relationship could be avoided:

That power differential is there and there's no backing off from it, it's reality. They pass and fail on it, the tick of the box from us, and there has to be some ways of measuring in real life what's actually happening (in terms of student performance).

(Gail, Field Educator, School A)

How students and educators related, and how students identified with the environment in which they were placed, influenced the teaching and learning process in ways that are not always possible to quantify. The formative influence of childhood and growing up experiences, the significance of spirituality, the vulnerability of human exposure are not elements that can be readily tested and measured in relation to learning in the field, yet these factors were all present in the discussion on learning. It could, however, be argued that the personal backgrounds of each participant in the teaching and learning process contributed to the context in which the learning encounter occurred. In this way the biography of students and educators intersect with elements of context, creating a shared dimension where the personal meets the political. Further discussion on the development of this particular theoretical notion is incorporated in Chapter Eight where a contemporary model for field learning is presented in light of the research results.

SUMMARY

Students and educators both reported mixed views on their experiences of supervision. Problematic situations arose for students where there was an absence of trust and safety within the supervision partnership, and where there appeared to be unclear boundaries between the educator and student. Problems arose for educators in supervision when students expected the educator to spend more time than they were able to give on supervision and when the student was inappropriately placed in their agency setting. A number of educators interviewed noted that they were inexperienced at providing supervision. This reported lack of experience contradicted findings from the questionnaire data reported in Chapter Six, where educators rated they had an 'above average' knowledge in relation to adult teaching and learning processes.

Examining the compatibility between student and educator in the supervision relationship inevitably included consideration of matching these dyads on the basis of gender, ethnicity and learning style. Questionnaire data from educators signalled a non-committal approach to the notion of matching where they ranked its impact on teaching and learning as being average. However, interviews with students suggested subtle similarities and differences impacted on the compatibility students felt with their supervisors. Past investigations on matching students and educators have addressed overt characteristics such as ethnicity, gender and learning style. It would seem the notion of matching would benefit from further examination that included the more subtle forms of difference raised by students in this research, including aspects of personal dress and lifestyle, ideological thinking, and body image.

One way to consider the dimensions of the supervision relationship has been to examine ideal 'person specifications' for both educator and student. Interview and questionnaire data suggested that in order to enhance the teaching and learning relationships educators needed to be alert to the conscious use of self as a role model, provide detailed and frequent feedback to the student, plan placement experiences that meet student learning needs, and use an empowerment model of supervision. Students need to take initiative and responsibility for their learning during the placement, demonstrate adaptability in the workplace, and bring enthusiasm for practicum learning opportunities. Having exposure to training on field education had a marked influence on the selection of important attributes by educators, as did the qualification status of the educator.

It became clear from the interview material that the history, experiences and personal journeys of educators and students influenced how each related to the other. In much the same way as the notion of matching was found to be more complex than examining overt characteristics, student connections with field experiences and educators were influenced by a range of subtle factors that would not necessarily be predictable or obvious to a field co-ordinator allocating placements. Inconspicuous developmental considerations influenced how students connected with their placement and supervisor. The capacity of the educator to relate on a very human and vulnerable level increased the sense of connection students felt with their supervisors. In keeping with the literature on adult learning, the practice of acknowledging previous life and work experiences in the planning of placement learning was certainly important to students, without which there would have been some resistance to taking up learning opportunities. Finally, educators noted how their experiences in the role of field supervisor had nudged them toward making a distinction between themselves as social workers and educators in their work with students. This process appeared to be a developmental change in itself, informed by both good and bad experiences of supervising students in the past.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter brings together the ideas and constructs identified in the literature and theory on field education and discusses these in light of the research results. Using this integrative process, conclusions have been drawn that address each of the research propositions outlined in Chapter One of this thesis. Next, an alternative model for understanding social work field education is proposed based on the research findings, as well as student and educator accounts of teaching and learning. The final segment of the discussion focuses on the implications of this research for future practice, policy and research on field education in New Zealand.

CONTEXT: THE IMPORTANCE AND BENEFIT OF LEARNING ABOUT CONTEXT

Proposition One: The *context* in which the teaching and learning encounter takes place is influenced by both macro socio-economic considerations, and micro organisational and personal concerns.

Respondents provided clear evidence that social work field education was influenced by the prevailing economic-rationalist ideology. Although individual field educators reported gaining intrinsic rewards from being involved in practicum education, it was evident that intra-agency tensions arose from having students on placement. The agency culture in which educators operate was characterised by instability and turbulent change. Educators described providing field education in two ways. Most commonly, student placements were referred to as being a burden. However, there were a few notable exceptions where students were perceived as being 'free labour' for the agency. Ninety percent of the educators had no official mandate from their agency to work with students, and educators consistently reported that high caseloads and lack of time determined how they worked with students.

A range of practices in field education that can only be described as unsatisfactory were identified in the research. In particular, there were shortcomings reported in both the supervision offered to some students and the agency environment in which students were

expected to learn. Some students were not observed in their practice, others were placed in teams that were overtly hostile to the student being in the agency, or in agencies where there was not enough, or far too much work to do. Boud and Walker have argued that it is the role of the field educator “to create a micro-context . . . which does not reproduce those aspects of the dominant context which impose barriers to learning” (Boud & Walker, 1998:202). This is a tall order in view of the fact that supervision and learning cannot occur outside the milieu of the agency context. The learning is simultaneously of it and inside it.

A tension clearly existed between educators’ sense of professional responsibility to contribute to student learning, and agency work culture where doing ‘something for nothing’ was not perceived as being in the agency’s interests. Some educators spoke of hiding from managers the amount of work they do with students, indicating that field education occurs in an ‘underground’ fashion where work with students is covert, hidden and unrewarded by the agency.

On the question of bi-cultural practice, the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Work has actively promoted standards and ethics for bi-cultural social work, and these have been further endorsed by Te Kaiawhinua Ahumahi in their field education guidelines (1997). Nevertheless, the results indicate that overall, 65% of field educators did not work with Maori in their agency. This suggests a large portion of students were not exposed to bi-cultural practice. The situation was most acute in School A where only 25% of educators worked with Maori. In light of these findings, the question remains of how students can acquire practice and skills to work with Maori when they have limited access to practicum learning with this client group.

A commitment to bi-cultural practice standards has been readily accepted by school educators and students, with indigenous models fast becoming an integral part of social work delivery in this country (Marshall & Paul, 1999). However, the challenge for field educators and schools is to move beyond the rhetoric of bi-culturalism towards proactive involvement in this work. The extent to which there is real commitment to make these changes must be questioned in light of the fact that neither educators nor students selected the attributes of demonstrating ‘anti-discriminatory practice’ and ‘having a commitment

to social justice' as amongst the attributes 'Most Important' for educators to model to students.

Both of these attributes reflect qualities supposedly unique and *sine qua non* to social work, yet neither students nor educators rated them with priority. In light of the socio-economic context in which field education was operating in the period under review, it is perhaps not surprising that individual effort, competitive endeavours, and profit were valued over notions of social justice and collective responsibility. Nevertheless, this tendency signals a worrying trend for social work as a profession, if it remains the case that qualities reflecting the ideological foundations of the discipline are not considered essential for educators to pass on to students.

At the micro-context level, it was clear that the team in which the student was placed had a critical impact on student learning. This finding supports Brookfield's argument that adult students gain emotionally-sustaining support by being part of a 'learning community' (Brookfield, 1991:49). Student ratings for the item '*To be in a team that supports student learning*' were higher post-placement than pre-placement, and this rating was endorsed further by student accounts of the critical role agency team members played in facilitating learning. Educators also acknowledged how the team in which they worked provided integral input to the student placement and generally agreed that they needed the team's support before offering to take a student in the agency.

The role of the agency team in student learning is not an area that has received a great deal of attention in field education literature. 'The team' clearly has the potential to make or break a placement, and schools may wish to consider targeting training resources towards the development of agency team-teaching skills, rather than individual field educator training. This type of intervention would be in keeping with the growing discourse on creating learning organisations, which is increasingly being acknowledged as the way ahead for generating productivity and agency innovation (Senge, 1996; Dale, 1994; Casey, 1993).

Although field education occurred within a climate of scarcity, just one student referred to problems of accessing practical resources (a computer) within the agency. For the most part, students appeared to have access to the basics of a desk, chair and telephone. Educators were aware of the need for the student to create their own space, and on the

whole, made efforts to plan for this prior to the student arriving on placement. Thus, the practical details of the micro-context appeared to be well attended to for this group of students.

The nature of the communications between school and agency forms part of the context in which field education occurs, but also signals the nature of the relationships between the parties. Observations on this aspect of the research will be discussed under the final proposition.

Primarily, field educator availability and willingness to work with students were affected by workload and work-pressure considerations. The notion of 'doing more for less' was well embedded into the discourse of agency workers, who reported increased caseload numbers as a reflection of the political and economic climate in which social service agencies operated. The notion of 'the team' formed an integral part of the micro-context in which the student was placed, and next to the supervisor, played a critical role in facilitating the practicum learning. In summary, in response to Proposition One it is concluded that the *context* in which the teaching and learning encounter takes place was significantly influenced by both macro socio-economic considerations, micro organisational features and personal concerns.

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING TRANSACTION

Proposition Two: The methods used to facilitate learning, and the pedagogy that informs the *teaching and learning transaction*, deeply influence student and educator experiences of practicum education.

Students and educators were in solid agreement about teaching strategies that best facilitated learning on placement. It was clearly important to students to have accessible, supportive, individual supervision. Having a structured orientation, observing other workers, discussing case notes and co-working with the educator were also favoured methods. However, as noted in Chapter Six, there were consistent discrepancies between the effectiveness rating ascribed to these methods and the degree to which students reported them being used. Most notably, there was considerable ambivalence on the part of educators in relation to observing student practice. It was, therefore, not surprising to discover that over a third of students in the sample were either not observed at all in their

client work, or observed only once. These findings indicate a serious lack of oversight in relation to student work, and inevitably must raise questions about both student and client safety in the helping relationship.

Students reported powerful learning experiences from 'making mistakes' on placement, and from being exposed to poor agency practice. These findings bear out Ramsden's claim that even in problematic situations, productive learning can occur (Ramsden, 1996). Students in these situations noted that they gained personal insight, greater assertiveness skills and self-awareness. These qualities are not associated with assessed practice competencies, but are in keeping with the notion of life-long continuous learning in experiential education, where on-the-job experiences are integrated and acknowledged as part of the learning process.

The most memorable learning experiences for students were associated with points of insight they had about the impact of their actions on the lives of others. Mandy remembered how just being there had stopped the taxi driver from hurting a child. Harry remembered, with embarrassment, trying to shake the hand of the bi-lingual worker when male-female touch was not appropriate in this context. Mary recalled the moment in an FGC (Family Group Conference) when she realised her input had 'profoundly' affected a client's circumstances. Claire remembered the gift of fish from a client who lived in Spartan, humble surroundings. The gift underlined the special nature of the 'human' connection she and the client had made during their work together. While none of these moments can be categorised under the heading of any specific teaching and learning method, they emerged from the experiential nature of the placement format, where unexpected and incidental events make up a significant, yet immeasurable part of the learning.

Pedagogy: It was not possible in the research to identify one specific educational pedagogy that influenced field education. The emphasis each educator used depended on resources and time available, their own student experiences, and opportunities that presented during the placement. In contrast to Schön's argument that practitioners have a level of knowing that is difficult to articulate explicitly (Schön, 1987), this did not appear to be the case for educators in this research. Field educators openly spoke about lack of knowledge and understanding and, in some cases, lack of experience of supervising

students. The teaching enterprise was therefore characterised by a '*haphazard*' approach, which was largely reactive in nature.

Just two educators out of the thirteen interviewed alluded to using a model to inform their approach to student supervision. Both referred to using an action-reflection approach. However, their subsequent accounts of the supervision process did not include the notion of 'perspective transformation' where the student is encouraged, through the reflective process, to challenge personal values and behaviour. Thus, reflection appeared to be used by educators more in terms of encouraging students to recall specific events for discussion, rather than including critical analysis of power or ideological dimensions as part of the supervisory practice. Hence, although some of the language of experiential adult education was used in the interviews, educators appeared to have a limited understanding of what these educational principles meant in practice.

Similarly, students on the whole did not perceive the educational transaction as being informed by any specific pedagogical framework. Nevertheless, as noted above, students found some teaching and learning processes more helpful than others. In addition, students appeared to judge the success of their placement experiences on the degree to which the agency could meet their specified learning needs. As noted in Chapter Six, the notion of 'luck' was the student subtext in discussing field education. Students felt *lucky* to get a 'good' placement, *lucky* to have 'good' supervision, and frequently compared themselves with other less fortunate students who may have been 'unlucky'. This discourse suggests that the field education component of social work education was not perceived by students to be a managed process, subjected to measures of quality control. This view was further supported by the field educators who described field education as a 'sideline of what we do', and generally rated student supervision as a low priority compared to core agency business.

One author writing about social work field education in New Zealand made the following observation: "In this current era the literature abounds with references to educational theory. It is highly questionable how much of this theory filters through to the placement supervisor!" (Beddoe, 1999:24). Certainly, the results from this research suggest that explicitly identified pedagogy has had little impact on social work field education. Therefore, in response to Proposition Two, it is not possible to claim that systematic

teaching methods or pedagogy overtly influenced student and educator experiences of field education. Students derived significant learning more through coincidental opportunities and serendipity in relation to engaging in a series of unplanned events, than through any specific methodology or pedagogy.

RELATIONSHIPS IN THE PRACTICUM

Proposition Three: Social work field education is shaped and influenced by the complex nature of *relationships* that exist between the student, field educator, agency, school, and wider community.

The nature of associations that exist between the student, the school of social work, the faculty liaison, and the placement agency, can be explained through an examination of 'relationship' between the parties. A range of factors influences the complex communications and understandings between these groups. The level of goodwill and commitment to social work education, perceived lines of accountability for the delivery of social work education, and the power dynamics between parties, all contributed to the way each group related to the others.

As noted in the literature review, the notion of goodwill in field education has been degraded in recent years, with agencies becoming more focused on cost containment than professional development (Randel, 1994). It was, therefore, surprising to find that few placements were organised on the basis of formal contracts between schools and agencies. Educators conveyed mixed responses in terms of where their accountability lay for student education. This may be explained to a certain extent by the fact that some educators carried out student supervision as a surreptitious 'underground' activity, where the presence of a formal contract on student placements would draw attention from agency management. Nevertheless, given the increasingly litigious climate in which social services and student education operate, it was remarkable to find that the lines of accountability between schools, educators and agencies were vague, and in most cases not written down.

On the other hand, it was the norm for students and educators to have formal supervision contracts where the learning goals, objectives, lines of responsibility and accountability were clearly stated. These contracts formed the foundation of the placement, and were a

touchstone for both educators and students during the practicum. Although the contract spelt out the formal relationship between the student and educator, the nature of the informal relationship between the two parties was found to be the key factor in determining the success of the placement. Nevertheless, this finding then raised the question of whether the informal relationship between student and educator would have been developed and sustained had there not been a contracting period, resulting in the agreement of structures and procedures for the placement.

In those cases, when they liked and related well to their supervisors, students also liked their placements. Similarly, educators enjoyed supervising students they felt akin to. This is a truism that has been the subject of much research on matching students with educators (Raskin, 1989; Thyer et al., 1989; Behling et al., 1989; Fortune & Abramson, 1993; Vonk et al., 1996), as outlined in Chapter Two. What I discovered in this research, however, was that although factors of gender and ethnicity did to some extent influence the teaching and learning encounter, the actual relationship between student and educator was based on a sense of connection that was more subtle than one produced by simply matching overt characteristics. As outlined in Chapter Seven, questions of ideology, body image and personal style influenced the way students and educators related. These are more complex notions than those of simply matching on the basis of gender, ethnicity and learning style. If schools were able at all to afford the luxury of endeavouring to match students with educators, research on matching may need to be taken to another level of inquiry in order to address these more intangible characteristics.

The politics and process of placement allocation is not an area that has been investigated to any extent in field education. It emerged that the allocation and selection process was one of the factors that impacted on the initial relationship between students and educators. Students expressed significant emotional investment in the process of placement allocation, and there was evidence to suggest that they perceived the allocation and interview process as some measure of their professional worth. Without doubt, the initial allocation process was a factor that impacted on students during the beginning stages of placement negotiation. How those negotiations impacted on subsequent experiences is unknown, but it raises a potentially fertile line of inquiry. If first encounters in field education do affect learning later on in the practicum, then ways of building and sustaining them ought to be explored.

Supervisors also appeared to make a significant emotional investment in the role of being a field educator, where they described themselves as mentors, guides, and role models. The interview transcripts left no doubt about the level of commitment educators ascribed to the task of student supervision; most commented on the fact that they took a keen interest in the developing careers of the students they had had on placement. Field educators who had had to fail students, or had come close to it, spoke with passion about the dilemmas and stresses inherent in these situations. Predicaments arose due to the existence of a relationship. The student was not simply a name on a page, but a person who the educator had come to know well, and therefore the task of assessment could be fraught with interpersonal tangles.

As outlined in Chapter Seven, students and educators agreed that the most important functions that student supervisors needed to fulfil were to act as professional role models, plan placement experiences that match learning needs, provide frequent feedback on progress, and use an empowerment model of supervision. I sought to find an explanation as to why students and educators were so universally agreed that these attributes were the most important out of the 17 named. The only pattern that could be identified was that three of the four attributes selected most often belonged to the student-centred teaching domain. This suggests that both students and educators favour this approach to field education over both the demonstration of professional competencies, and the presence of certain personal qualities. Social workers who were trained to provide field education were more likely to focus on student-centred teaching techniques than those who had not been trained to work with students.

Although a major focus of this research was to discover the qualities and competencies educators needed to demonstrate in order to provide optimum learning conditions for the student, as the inquiry progressed it became apparent that this was only part of the equation for enhancing practicum learning. The manner in which the student approached field education was of equal importance to field educator performance in ensuring successful placement outcomes. Taking the initiative, being enthusiastic, flexible, and open to learning opportunities and receiving feedback, were qualities identified by both students and educators as critical to generating productive learning relationships with the educator and team with which the student was placed. While there have been many endeavours to identify 'best practice' amongst educators from a range of disciplines

(Galbraith, 1991b), the notion of 'best learner' attributes has remained in the background. Given that the art of 'noticing' is an integral part of practicum learning (Boud & Walker, 1990), schools may find some benefit in teaching students how to be curious, enthusiastic and responsive to experiential learning opportunities. This approach to preparing students for placement would focus more on how to learn in the field, rather than on what to learn.

A further feature that impacted on the way students and educators related was that both parties were in a parallel process of learning. Students were learning to be social workers, while social workers were learning to be educators. This parallel process was not overtly acknowledged but emerged as part of the educator discourse on providing student supervision. The formal power lay with the educator as the person who assesses student performance in the field. Nevertheless, educators were quick to acknowledge that they learnt a great deal from students, and at times floundered in their educator role. This was particularly the case when working with students who were not performing to standard. In these situations, the role confusion between being an educator and social worker was evident. The enabling, supportive functions integral to social work practice impacted on the educators' ability to present negative feedback to students. Not surprisingly, this tension presented particular difficulties when assessment of marginal students was required.

One strategy for working through this role confusion would be for supervisors to have access to ongoing field educator-training opportunities. All schools in the research offered such training. However, workload pressures often militated against educators availing themselves of these opportunities. Clearly, the current practice for training educators is not productive, since most educators in the research could only vaguely remember fragments of courses attended years back.

That lack of training provides an explanation as to why educators worked with students in a pedagogical void. There was a tendency for supervisors to equate being a good social worker with being a good educator, assuming that the set of skills for both teaching and social work are the same. The notion of teaching being perceived as a 'natural process for a person of good character' has been discussed elsewhere in the literature (Eraut, 1993), but it is an assumption that ignores the complexity of teaching and learning. We seem some distance from accepting that facilitating field learning is an educational endeavour

which requires a set of knowledge and skills. In some cases, students were aware that their educators were not trained to provide student supervision and this had an impact on how students regarded them. This was clearly illustrated in Harry's comments in Chapter Six (See page 161).

The literature on adult education emphasises the notion of *teacher credibility* in the eyes of the student (Brookfield, 1991). This was borne out in the research. Where students perceived that field educators were not adept at providing supervision, their credibility in the educator role was questioned. This in turn reflected badly on the agency and school. Although all schools endeavoured to support educators in the field through liaison visits, the data showed that both students and educators were non-committal about the worth of these visits. In contrast, when liaison visits were cancelled educators felt let down. The liaison visit appeared to serve more of a symbolic function than an educational function, where the connection between school, agency and field educator was endorsed. There was little evidence in the research that supported the notion of the liaison visit fulfilling an educational need for the student.

To summarise, in response to Proposition Three, it is concluded that social work field education is fundamentally influenced by the complex nature of *relationships* between the student, field educator, agency, and school. Some of these relationships are formalised, others are not, yet the nature of the understandings and connections between these parties shape and influence the teaching and learning encounter in the field. Field teaching and learning is influenced by a range of other relationships spanning a wider network than simply the educator, student, school, and agency. These were identified and discussed in Chapter Three. Although it was not possible within the scope of this research to exhaustively explore each of these in depth, they remain potent factors that must be included in the mix.

Thus far, the discussion has focused on drawing conclusions to each of the three research propositions outlined in Chapter One of this thesis. The second part of this discussion addresses the theoretical void in social work field education that was identified in Chapter Three. As a universal challenge, Benner argues that, in nursing, articulated innovative practice outstrips any theoretical account (Benner, 1992). However, from this research in social work I have had to conclude that the theory of adult teaching and experiential

learning is out of step with the practice in field education. Nevertheless, it was possible to glean two trends within the research findings that had implications for informing practice and theory development specific to social work field education.

TOWARDS ENHANCEMENT OF PRACTICUM TEACHING AND LEARNING

Firstly, both students and educators were part of an evolving process of redefining their identities through the activity of field education. Secondly, both students and educators equated quality of learning with the degree to which they felt immersed, excited and intrigued by the learning process. In light of these findings, I revisited the three constructs used to examine social work field education, and reconceptualised these in a model, shown graphically as Figure 8.1.

The notion of deep and surface approaches to learning is incorporated into this model to illustrate the differing levels of engagement with the learning process that students and educators can have. These approaches were first discussed in Chapter Three, and refer to the extent to which learners adopt a critical stance in relation to their learning, question and reflect upon their personal understandings and actively seek out new learning (Entwistle, 1997). Both students and educators in the research identified these attributes as making a significant contribution to the quality of the learning experience in the field. The notion of surface and deep approaches to learning was therefore incorporated into the model as it was found to have significant bearing on the teaching and learning outcome.

The resulting synthesis of these findings with established learning theory is illustrated in the three dimensional matrix below (Figure 8.1). This model shows how learning can be enhanced in the field, and helps explain why some students and educators are able to develop meaningful learning relationships, while others are not.

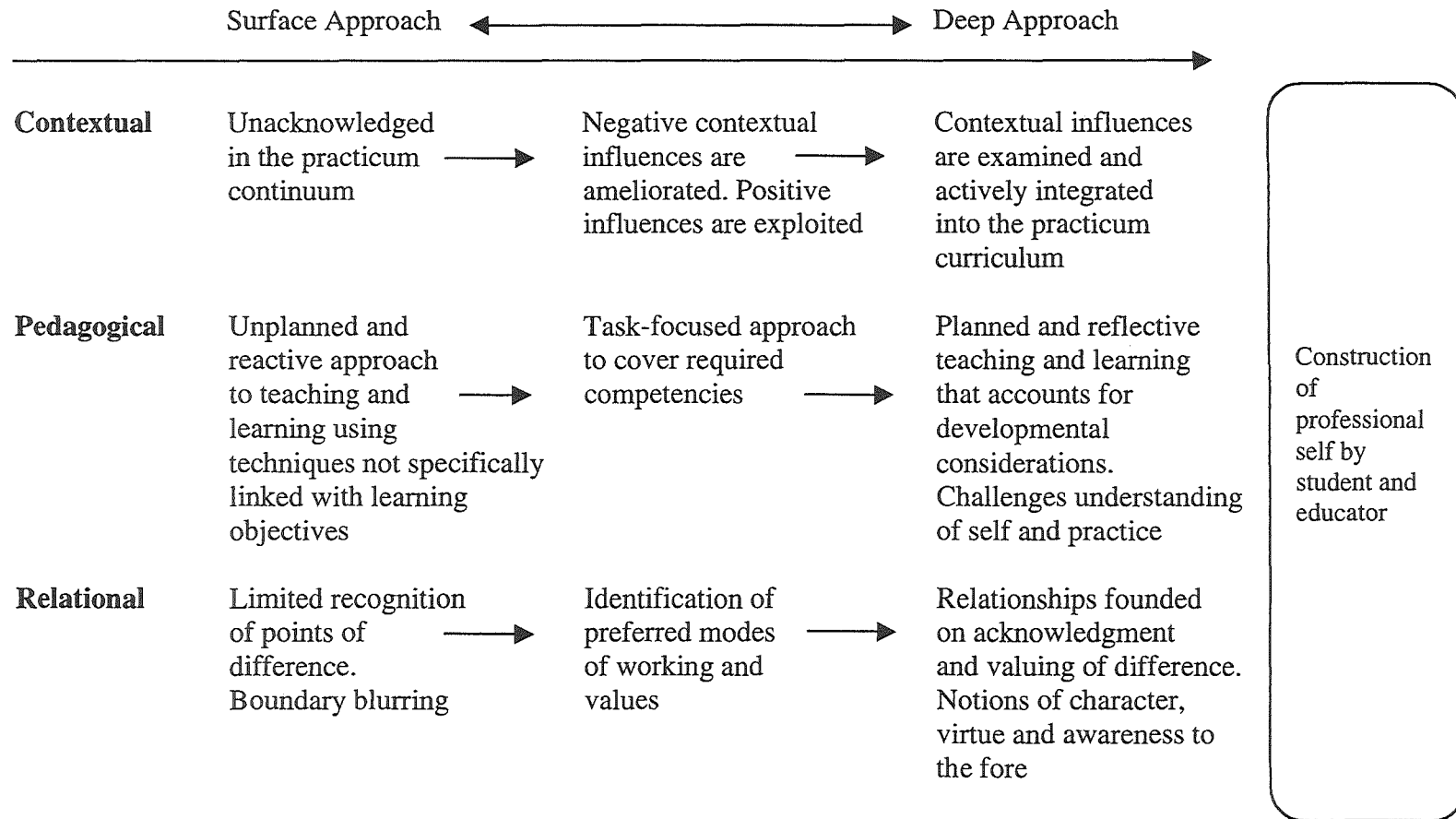


Figure 8.1 Towards Enhancement of Practicum Teaching and Learning

Context, the teaching and learning transaction (pedagogy), and relationships were the three constructs used to inform this research. In Figure 8.1, these constructs are illustrated on a continuum where the approach to field education is an amalgam of the three, spanning from surface to deep approaches of learning. From the research findings it was possible to identify individual students and educators who were positioned at different points of the continuum for each of these constructs. If we accept that both students and educators were engaged in a reciprocal learning process, there is no guarantee that both parties would be positioned at the same point of any continuum at the same time. For example, a student may neither acknowledge the contextual influences on practice, nor use a task-focused approach to learning yet acknowledge and value difference. This same student may have had a field educator who examined and integrated the contextual influences into the placement learning, but used a reactive approach to teaching and had a limited understanding of points of difference. In this way, the teaching and learning encounter between student and educator is significantly influenced by individual positioning on each continuum. Within the practicum, both student and educator are moving towards the construction of a new professional self: the student as social worker, and the social worker as educator. The interaction between student and educator is dynamic and fluid, and individuals may move backwards and forwards on each of the continua in response to stressors, feedback and incidental, unplanned events.

Ideally, to ensure quality practicum learning, students and educators would adopt a deep approach to field education on each of the three continua. However, this could only happen where both parties have experienced and integrated a reflexive approach to living and learning into their personal lives. The developmental process used to facilitate a deep learning approach is gained through the experiential transaction which is subjected to critical reflection. In this way, both students and educators gain new insights and understandings of their developing roles.

The model, 'Towards Enhancement of Practicum Teaching and Learning', has been proposed to explain the parallel learning process for both educators and students, and to show why and how supervisor and student dyads 'connect' better in some placements than in others. Its development is significant for social work in two ways. Firstly, it provides a model, specific to social work field education, that helps explain the teaching and learning process for both student and educator. In this way, its development goes

some way to addressing the theoretical void in practicum education identified in Chapter Three. Secondly, it is a model that both students and educators can actually use to trace their engagement in the educational encounter in order to identify specific areas that may need further development in the placement. 'Towards Enhancement of Practicum Teaching and Learning' therefore makes a contribution to understanding field education at both a theoretical and practical level. The next section of this discussion considers the implications of this research for future field education practice and policy. Recommendations for future research endeavours into field education are also made.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR FUTURE FIELD EDUCATION PRACTICE

The findings garnered a great deal of information about how students and educators experience the practicum. Of all this, three aspects of practicum education stood out as having a critical impact on the way in which field learning occurred. Firstly, the low level of direct observation of student practice in the field was one of the most critical findings to emerge. It is pedagogically self-evident that educators have to see at first hand how students work with clients, in order to make an informed assessment of practice competence. Student self-report, while necessary and valued, is only one tentative input to the process. Ideally, observations would be carried out at different times throughout the placement, and must include using audio or video technology, if sitting in on interviews is not possible. Structurally, in order to encourage educators to conduct observations, schools could include field educator observation reports as an integral part of the assessment protocol for each student.

Secondly, student learning was often inhibited by having either too much, or too little 'hands on' work to do. Striking the balance between the two extremes is an art that educators need to be aware of in their work with students. In relation to having too much work to do, several students made reference to being "thrown in the deep end". Walker and Boud pick up this analogy and note, "When thrown in the deep end, a person may learn to swim. However, it is possible that the person might never go near the water again, because of the bad experience" (Walker & Boud, 1994:9). Conversely, students who had little to do felt that their time on placement was wasted. These findings indicate that monitoring the pace of student workflow is a simple, yet critical strategy for

enhancing learning on placement. It is an area that has received little attention in the field education literature to date.

Thirdly, there was no consistency across schools in accessing placements where bi-cultural models of practice were used. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that graduating students will have knowledge and experience of working bi-culturally. This suggests that current providers of social work education may need to consider supplementing field placements with other forms of experiential learning where students have opportunities to learn about a range of cultural models for service delivery. This may include agency visits, incorporating considerable experiential input on cultural sensitivity, awareness and practice competence as part of in-course skills development (Nash, 1993), and providing volunteer student input to organisations that serve Maori, where this is appropriate.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR FUTURE FIELD EDUCATION POLICY

Two issues for field education emerged during the research that called for policy-driven responses. These were the general quality of student supervision and the field, and the degrees to which social workers were actually trained to provide practicum education. Significant numbers of students were supervised by educators who had little knowledge of educational paradigms, in environments that fell far short of ideal learning situations. These circumstances point to the need for monitored standards in student supervision. Although guidelines for social work educators have been documented by Te Kaiawhinua Ahumahi (1997), provision for student redress in the event of unsatisfactory field placements is required. Individual schools have a great deal invested in minimising problems in placement agencies. No school wishes to alienate an agency that may be the potential source of a future placement. Given this conflict of interest, individual schools are in a weak position to redress problems of student supervision and agency practice in field education. An independent monitoring body that can provide oversight and direction for field education in New Zealand is needed to fill this gap. As is the practice in Australia, the ANZASW is an existing organisation with a regional structure that is well positioned to have input into this role.

Ensuring that field educators not only have access to training but also meet competency standards is a second issue that needs addressing at a policy level. Currently, there are no national requirements for educators to attend training, or even be qualified social workers,

resulting in many being out of touch with current social work theory, skills for student supervision and placement assessment. A monitoring body such as the one suggested above would also be well placed to set some required standards for initial and ongoing training for educators. The exercise of setting up an accreditation process for field educators, similar to that in the United Kingdom, might prove too costly for the small discipline of social work in the small country of New Zealand. Nevertheless, as stated above, ANZASW has the infrastructure to facilitate a less formalised process of monitoring.

Thus far, the implications of the research for future policy and practice in New Zealand field education have been discussed. Next, recommendations for future research endeavours are made in light of the current findings. These recommendations have a dual focus. They address both the pragmatic concerns for field education, as well as the development of an original pedagogy for the social work practicum in keeping with the New Zealand context.

FUTURE RESEARCH INITIATIVES

Firstly, ways to overcome the current 'haphazard' approach to field education need to be found. This may entail the exploration of alternative approaches to learning, drawing from a range of paradigms including more extensive use of simulation, formalised industry partnerships, formal mentoring structures for students and new workers, and accessible systems of training for educators. The current discourse on developing learning organisations and using critical reflection in work and education may provide some clues about how to create and evaluate alternative approaches to field learning.

Secondly, in light of the commitment within New Zealand social work to promote bi-cultural practice against a backdrop of inconsistent student access to agencies that serve Maori, there is a need to discover ways in which schools and local iwi may work together to educate students. This type of research may utilise a case-study approach where the elements of successful models of co-working between schools and iwi are examined and articulated.

Thirdly, the values and ideals of field educators play a critical role in the socialisation of students into the profession. Research into the role of social justice and anti-

discriminatory practices in current social work practice would be timely. If these notions are what sets social work apart from a host of other 'helping professions', ways to recapture these ideals in the field must be found. If, however, these notions no longer have currency within the present socio-economic climate, then perhaps the discipline of social work itself requires radical reconceptualisation.

These three areas of research address current challenges to social work field education in New Zealand.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS IN INTERPRETING THE DATA

All research reports need to be read with a critical eye in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in their approach and analysis. Throughout this thesis I have endeavoured to be transparent about how and why methodological decisions and particular analyses were carried out. Nevertheless, it is possible that this research could be criticised on two accounts, and I would like to take this opportunity to address both possible limitations.

Firstly, the individual questionnaires from student participants were not tracked between their first and second placement. From the outset, the research was not designed to trace individual student experiences, but instead was focused on testing out the extent to which the three constructs developed in Chapter Three could be used to understand the process of teaching and learning in the field. A further development of this research may be to use a tracking process in a developmental way, in order to gauge how teaching and learning occurs throughout the professional career of a social worker, but such an investigation was beyond the scope of this inquiry.

Secondly, it could be argued that the results of this research may not be generalised beyond the New Zealand context. Once again, it was not intended that the results be generalised beyond New Zealand, and this intent has been conveyed from the beginning in the title of the thesis, *Social Work Field Education in New Zealand*. Careful attempts were made in selecting the three schools from different parts of the country to ensure that the range of local student and field educator constituents were adequately represented. Nevertheless, the highly contextualised nature of this research does not rule out the results from this inquiry being used to confirm or contrast with those research findings on field education from other parts of the world.

CONCLUSION

Simply put, the aim of conducting this research was to discover ways in which social work field education could be enhanced. In order to do this, it was necessary to find out how students and educators engaged together in the teaching and learning enterprise; how learning was shaped by the micro and macro contextual influences; and how the notion of relationships helped explain the levels of connectedness between students, educators, agencies and schools.

Throughout, the practicum was characterised by a 'haphazard' approach to learning. The contribution to learning made by unplanned, incidental events was acknowledged by both educators and students. Nevertheless, the activity of learning rested heavily upon these fortuitous opportunities, rather than being informed by conscious pedagogy. Lack of field educator training, agency environments characterised by uncertainty, change and work overload, and the feeling that student supervision was not core agency business, all contributed to ambivalence and uncertainty in the process of field education. However, even under these circumstances students did learn from the good and not-so-good practice they observed.

Throughout this project, attention was given to developing a model that would explain the process of field learning in social work. 'Towards Enhancement of Practicum Teaching and Learning' uses the constructs of context, the teaching and learning transaction, and relationships, to explain how the process of field learning is significantly influenced by these factors. This model explains why educators and students engage with teaching and learning at different levels, and provides a framework that may be used to enhance field education. Like most models for practice, it has included elements from earlier educational paradigms, including the notion of deep and surface approaches to learning (Entwistle, 1997), and the use of critical reflection in field education (Gould, 1996; Schön, 1983; 1987).

The findings had implications for future practice, policy and research in field education. Lack of direct observation of student work on placement, inconsistency in accessing placements that afford opportunities to learn about indigenous models of practice, and the need to monitor student workflow were identified as critical areas that impacted on the calibre of field education at a practice level. It was advocated that policy initiatives be

encouraged within ANZASW to address and monitor both the quality of field placements, and expected standards for field educator training. Three areas for future research on field education were identified. These were: the need to explore and evaluate a range of alternative approaches to practicum learning for social work; developing practice research on how collaborative working relationships between schools and iwi can be facilitated; and examining the role of social justice and anti-discrimination in current social work practice.

Clearly, there are challenges ahead for social work field education in New Zealand. The credibility of practicum learning, and social work as a discipline, is reliant on striking the balance between pedagogy and pragmatics in this educational enterprise.

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PERCEPTIONS OF FIELDWORK

FIRST STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is about what you think of the fieldwork component of social work training. You are reminded that it has absolutely no bearing on your progress in this course and your individual responses will remain confidential.

1. What is your gender?

Female

Male

2. What is your age?Years

3. What is your ethnic group?.....

4. Have you ever been employed in a social work position?

Yes

No

5. In what year were you last a student in an educational institution?.....

6. How confident do you feel about engaging in social work practice as a student?

Very Confident

Confident

Not Confident

7. Which client groups are you most interested in working with?

Children and Families

Adolescents

Children in Care

Mentally Ill

Physically Disabled

Offenders

Elderly

Maori

Refugee and Immigrant Groups

Other (Please specify).....

8. What type of work are you most interested in learning about?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Care and Protection Social Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Social Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hospital Social Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Work in Local Communities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Office-based Counselling | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Service Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare Rights Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) |

Your views on the following questions would be appreciated. Please try to respond to every question.

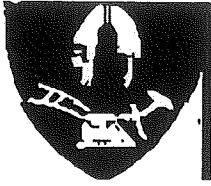
9. Field education is the component of the course where students are placed in social service agencies. How do you think that field education differs from being a practicing social worker?

10. Please list three tasks that you believe social workers commonly do in the course of their work with people.

11. What appeals to you most about the field education component of the course?

12. What appeals to you least about the field education component of the course?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.



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Information Sheet
Indicators for Effective Field Education: Pre-Placement Survey

Researcher: Jane Maidment Ph.D. Candidate

Supervisor: Dr. Dugald McDonald

Topic: Indicators for Effective Field Education

This questionnaire is the second in a series of three on field education that students undertaking fieldwork in 1996 will be asked to complete. I would appreciate your views and input on the fieldwork component of social work education.

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to find out how the fieldwork component of social work education can be enhanced. To this end, the views of students, field educators and staff of three social work courses in this country are being canvassed.

Process

Students are the only group being asked to complete more than one questionnaire. This is to gauge thoughts, feelings and knowledge of field education at different stages during your student career, that is, as you begin social work training, just prior to your first placement and after your first placement. In addition, a random sample of ten percent of your class will be invited to complete a semi-structured interview on field education.

This will be in September and October of 1996. Conditions regarding informed consent and extra information about the interviewing process will be given at that time.

Confidentiality

None of the individual questionnaire responses are coded. Each questionnaire does have a colour strip on top. This is to indicate the identity of the school of social work, so that response rates can be calculated from each of the three schools participating in the study. Responses from individual students cannot be tracked. You do not need to write your name on the questionnaire. The researcher is the only person who will have access to the data from the individual questionnaires. The completed questionnaires will be stored in a locked cabinet until they are no longer needed for data collection and then will be destroyed.

Use of the Data

The data from this research will be used for writing a Ph.D. dissertation and for publication of individual journal articles. A summary of results from the research will be made available to all participants in the research by sending copies to the three courses.

Questions and Information

If you have any questions about this research or require further information please contact: Jane Maidment, Department of Social Work, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch. Phone (03) 3642443.

Alternatively you may wish to contact Dr. Dugald McDonald, Supervisor for this research and Head of Department of Social Work at University of Canterbury.

Please keep this information sheet for your own reference. When you have completed the questionnaire please seal it in the addressed envelope provided and hand in to the person administering this survey.

Thank you

Jane Maidment

INDICATORS FOR EFFECTIVE FIELD EDUCATION

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE: PRE-PLACEMENT SURVEY

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. What gender are you?

Female Male

2. How old are you?Years

3. What is your ethnic group?

4. Please list the types of tertiary qualifications you have completed before entering this course.

Certificate of Social Work

Bachelor of Arts (Please specify your major subject)

Bachelor of Science (Please specify your major subject)

Masters Degree (Please specify your major subject)

Other (Please specify)

5. Which of the following employment descriptions best suits your past employment history?

Please tick the appropriate response for each question.

A. Mainly employment unrelated to social work or human service work

None Some A Lot

B. Mainly employment in the home

None Some A Lot

C. Mainly employment in human service work but NOT social work

None Some A Lot

D. Employment in a social work position

None Some A Lot

PREPARING FOR PLACEMENT

These next four questions are about preparing to go out on placement.

These questions use a scale measurement from 1 - 5. Selection of Category 3 on the scale implies a neutral position. Except where this truly represents your opinion please try to avoid using this selection.

6. You are about to go out on placement. How well prepared do you believe you are in the following areas: (Circle your response for each area).

A. Micro-skills Training

Not Prepared Very Prepared
 1----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

B. Contracting Procedures

Not Prepared Very Prepared
 1----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

C. Supervision Processes

Not Prepared Very Prepared
 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

D. Assessment Requirements

Not Prepared Very Prepared
 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

E. Knowledge of the Social Work Role

Not Prepared Very Prepared
 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

F. Reporting Harassment

Not Prepared Very Prepared
 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

G. Safety Issues: Practice Safety

Not Prepared

Very Prepared

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

H. Safety Issues: Physical Safety

Not Prepared

Very Prepared

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

I. Safety Issues: Emotional Safety

Not Prepared

Very Prepared

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

J. Safety Issues: Cultural Safety

Not Prepared

Very Prepared

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

7. To what extent has your course tutor assisted you with **identifying your learning needs for** your first placement?

Not at all

To a great extent

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

8. To what extent was this placement allocated to you in order to **match** your learning needs?

Not at all

To a great extent

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

9. To what extent do you feel your first placement allocation will meet your learning needs?

Not at all

To a great extent

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

BEING ON PLACEMENT

The next three questions relate to how you might best learn while on placement.

10. While on placement what **conditions** need to be in place to promote your learning? Please circle your response for each condition.

A. A clear set of learning objectives

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

B. A structured orientation to the service

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

C. To be in a team that supports student learning

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

D. A place to call ones own (desk & chair)

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

E. Regular uninterrupted supervision

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

F. Access to literature on agency policy

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

G. Acceptance from staff of student role

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

H. Access to agency resources; i.e. telephone; car; computer

Not important Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

I. Emphasis on experiential learning

Not important Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

J. Being challenged on: **Competency**

Not important Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

K. Being challenged: **Culturally**

Not important Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

L. Being challenged on: **Ethical Decision-Making Processes**

Not important Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

11. What methods of educational input from field educators do you believe are **effective** in promoting student learning on placement?

A. Orientation to field/agency

Not Effective Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

B. One to one supervision

Not Effective Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

C. Group supervision

Not Effective Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

D. Observing other workers practice

Not Effective Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

E. Field educator observing student practice

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

F. Reviewing video replays of interviews

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

G. Reviewing audio replays of interviews

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

H. Writing a case study

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

I. Compiling and writing an agency analysis

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

J. Role plays in supervision

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

K. Discussion of case notes

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

L. Use of one-way screen

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

M. Student-led presentations

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

N. Co-working with fieldwork educator

Not Effective

Very Effective

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

12. Fieldwork can be structured either **concurrently** with classroom work or using a full-time **block** placement structure.

Which structure do you feel is most conducive to student learning in the field?

- Concurrent Placement
- Block Placement
- Both Concurrent and Block Placement

13. Finally, rate how **important you** feel the following attributes are in a field educator supervising a student on placement. Please mark each attribute in terms of importance.

A. Acts as a professional role model for students

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

B. Assesses my work in an intuitive subjective way

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

C. Plans placement experiences that match my learning needs

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

D. Approaches life with a positive attitude

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

E. Demonstrates anti-discriminatory practice

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

F. Has enthusiasm for teaching

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

G. Provides frequent feedback on my progress

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

H. Demonstrates a commitment to consumers of the service

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

I. Uses up to date knowledge and skills in practice

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

J. Has a personal commitment to work for social justice

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

K. Provides a fair and objective assessment of my work

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

L. Can articulate links between theory and practice

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

M. Can be flexible when the need arises

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

N. Leaves me to make links between theory and practice

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

O. Has a sense of humour

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

P. Encourages the development of my social worker identity

Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Q. Uses an empowerment model of supervision

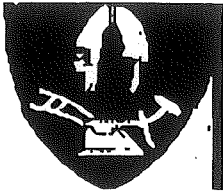
Not important

Very important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

14. Please now look over the attributes as listed in question 13 above and select FIVE that you believe are MOST IMPORTANT for a field educator to use with a student on placement. Please write the letter corresponding with your selections in the boxes provided below.

15. Please add any other comments about fieldwork that you wish to make.



Department of Social Work
University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800 Christchurch New Zealand
Telephone: 03-364 2443
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Information Sheet
Indicators For Effective Field Education: Post-Placement Survey

Researcher: Jane Maidment Ph.D. Candidate

Supervisor: Dr. Dugald McDonald

Topic: Indicators for Effective Field Education

This questionnaire is the final in a series of three on field education that students undertaking fieldwork in 1996 will be asked to complete. I would appreciate your views and input on the fieldwork component of social work education.

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to find out how the fieldwork component of social work education can be enhanced. To this end, the views of students, field educators and staff of three social work courses in this country are being canvassed.

Process

Students are the only group being asked to complete more than one questionnaire. This is to gauge thoughts, feelings and knowledge of field education at different stages during your student career, that is, as you begin social work training, just prior to your first placement and after your first placement.

In addition, a random sample of ten percent of your class will be invited to complete a semi-structured interview on field education. This will be in September and October of 1996. Conditions regarding informed consent and extra information about the interviewing process will be given at that time.

Confidentiality

None of the individual questionnaire responses are coded. Each questionnaire does have a colour strip on top. This is to indicate the identity of the school of social work, so that response rates can be calculated from each of the three schools participating in the study. Responses from individual students cannot be tracked. You do not need to write your name on the questionnaire. The researcher is the only person who will have access to the data from the individual questionnaires. The completed questionnaires will be stored in a locked cabinet until they are no longer needed for data collection and then will be destroyed.

Use of the Data

The data from this research will be used for writing a Ph.D. dissertation and for publication of individual journal articles. A summary of results from the research will be made available to all participants in the research by sending copies to the three courses.

Questions and Information

If you have any questions about this research or require further information please contact: Jane Maidment, Department of Social Work, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch. Phone (03) 3642443.

Alternatively you may wish to contact Dr. Dugald McDonald, Supervisor for this research and Head of Department of Social Work at University of Canterbury.

Please keep this information sheet for your own reference. When you have completed the questionnaire please seal it in the addressed envelope provided and hand in to the person administering this survey.

Thank you

Jane Maidment

**INDICATORS FOR EFFECTIVE FIELD EDUCATION
STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE: POST-PLACEMENT SURVEY**

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. What gender are you?

Female

Male

2. What is your age? Years

3. What is your ethnic group?

4. Please list the types of tertiary qualifications you have completed before entering this course.

Certificate in Social Work

Bachelor of Arts (Please specify your major subject)

Bachelor of Science (Please specify your major subject)

Masters Degree (Please specify your major subject)

Other (Please specify)

Being on Placement

5. To what extent were your **identified learning needs** met on your first placement? Please circle your response.

Not at all

To a great extent

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

6. **During your first placement:**

A. Did you have a written contract between yourself and the field educator?

Yes

No

B. Did you have weekly supervision?

Yes

No

C. Did you complete a learning styles inventory with your field educator at the beginning of the placement, to identify your preferred method of learning?

Yes

No

C. Did you get two or more liaison visits from your School of Social Work?

Yes No

D. Did you have enough meaningful work to do on placement?

Yes No

E. Did you get frequent feedback about your work?

Yes No

F. Did you know from the beginning of placement how your work would be assessed?

Yes No

G. Did your field educator observe your work on more than one occasion?

Yes No

H. Did your field educator assist you in identifying your learning goals for the next placement?

Yes No

The next **two** questions relate to what helped you learn while on placement, and what teaching methods you had access to on placement.

7. **Rate how important** the following conditions were for you in terms of enhancing your learning on placement? Please circle your response for each condition.

Please think about each item and make a considered assessment as to how important these conditions were to you, before circling your response.

A. A clear set of learning objectives

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

B. A structured orientation to the service

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

C. To be in a team that supported student learning

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

D. A place to call ones own (desk & chair)

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

E. Regular uninterrupted supervision

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

F. Access to literature on agency policy

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

G. Acceptance from staff of student role

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

H. Access to agency resources; i.e. telephone; car; computer

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

I. Emphasis on experiential learning

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

J. Being challenged on: **Competency**

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

K. Being challenged: **Culturally**

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

L. Being challenged on: **Ethical Decision Making Processes**

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

8. What methods of educational input did you experience on placement?

A. Structured orientation to field/agency

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

B. One to one supervision

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

C. Group supervision

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

D. Observing other workers practice

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

E. Field educator observing student practice

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

F. Reviewing video replays of interviews

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

G. Reviewing audio replays of interviews

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

H. Writing a case study

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

I. Compiling and writing an agency analysis

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

J. Role plays in supervision

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

K. Discussion of case notes

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

L. Use of one-way screen

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

M. Student-led presentations

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

N. Co-working with fieldwork educator

None

Extensive

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

9. Fieldwork can be structured either **concurrently** with classroom work or using a full-time **block placement** structure. Which structure do you feel is most conducive to student learning in the field?

- Concurrent Placement
 Block Placement
 Both Concurrent and Block Placement

10. To what extent did you enjoy your placement?

Not at all

To a great extent

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

11. In light of what you observed and experienced about being a social worker on placement, to what extent are you certain that you have made the right career choice?

Not at all

To a great extent

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

12. To what extent do you feel like you have **assimilated a social worker identity on placement?**

Not at all

To a great extent

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

13. What, if any, were problem areas in your last placement? Please tick the items that relate to your placement.

- A. Not enough work to do
- B. Too much work to allow for reflection
- C. Lack of access to field educator
- D. Conflict with field educator
- E. Not enough feedback about progress
- F. Disagreement about assessment
- G. No social work role model on site
- H. No integration of theory and practice
- I. Other (Please specify)
- J. No problems of any significance

14. Reflecting on your last placement, rate how **Important** you feel the following attributes are in a field educator supervising a student on placement. Please mark each attribute in terms of importance. **Consider each item carefully in light of your placement experience, before deciding how important you rate these attributes.**

A. Acts as a professional role model for students

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

B. Assesses my work in an intuitive subjective way

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

C. Plans placement experiences that match my learning needs

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

D. Approaches life with a positive attitude

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

E. Demonstrates anti-discriminatory practice

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

F. Has enthusiasm for teaching

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

G. Provides frequent feedback on my progress

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

H. Demonstrates a commitment to consumers of the service

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

I. Uses up to date knowledge and skills in practice

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

J. Has a personal commitment to work for social justice

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

K. Provides a fair and objective assessment of my work

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

L. Can articulate links between theory and practice

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

M. Can be flexible when the need arises

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

N. Leaves me to make links between theory and practice

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

O. Has a sense of humour

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

P. Encourages the development of my social worker identity

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Q. Uses an empowerment model of supervision

Not Important

Very Important

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

15. Finally, please now look over the attributes as listed in question 14 above and select FIVE that you believe are MOST IMPORTANT for a field educator to use with a student on placement. Please write the letter corresponding with your selections in the boxes provided below.

16. Please add any other comments about fieldwork that you wish to make.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.



Department of Social Work
University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800 Christchurch New Zealand
Telephone: 03-364 2443
Fax: 03-364 2498

Information Sheet **Indicators for Effective Field Education: Fieldwork Educator Survey**

Researcher: Jane Maidment Ph.D. Candidate

Supervisor: Dr. Dugald McDonald

Topic: Indicators for Effective Field Education

This questionnaire on fieldwork education is part of a Ph.D. research project examining field education in social work training in this country. As a fieldwork educator, I would appreciate your views and input on this important aspect of social work education.

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to find out how the fieldwork component of social work education can be enhanced. To this end, the views of students, field educators and staff of three social work courses in New Zealand are being canvassed.

Process

Students will be surveyed three times including at the beginning of their social work training, just prior to first placement and immediately after their first placement. This repeat process is being used to gauge any changes in attitude about learning methods during exposure to the practicum component of social work training. Fieldwork educators and school staff will be surveyed once during 1996 to gauge their views.

In addition, a random sample of ten percent of the total sample, including field educators, students and school staff will be invited to complete a semi-structured interview on field education. This will be in September and October of 1996. Conditions regarding informed consent and extra information about the interviewing process will be given at that time.

Confidentiality

None of the individual questionnaire responses are coded. Each questionnaire does have a colour strip on top. This is to indicate the identity of the school of social work, so that response rates can be calculated from each of the three schools participating in the study. Responses from individual fieldwork educators cannot be tracked. You do not need to write your name on the questionnaire. The researcher is the only person who will have access to the data from the individual questionnaires. The completed questionnaires will be stored in a locked cabinet until they are no longer needed for data collection and then will be destroyed.

Use of the Data

The data from this research will be used for writing a Ph.D. dissertation and for publication of individual journal articles. A summary of results from the research will be made available to all participants in the research by sending copies to the three schools of social work that are participating in the research.

Questions and Information

If you have any questions about this research or require further information please contact: Jane Maidment, Department of Social Work, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch. Phone (03) 3642443; Fax (03) 3642498

Alternatively you may wish to contact Dr. Dugald McDonald, Supervisor for this research and Head of Department of Social Work at University of Canterbury.

Please keep this information sheet for your own reference. When you have completed the questionnaire please post back to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided.

Thank you

Jane Maidment
Ph.D. Candidate

June 1996

Indicators for Effective Field Education
Field Educators Questionnaire

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. What is your gender?

 Female Male

2. How old are you? Years

3. What is your ethnic group?

4. How would you describe your current employment. Please mark the right response for you.

 Full-time Part-time Retired

5. How many years have you worked as a social worker?Years

6. Do you have:

Yes No

A. A Social Work qualification

If your answer to 6A is YES please answer 6B below.

6B. Do you have:

Yes No

Certificate in Social Work

Diploma in Social Work

Bachelors in Social Work

Masters degree in Social Work

Other

PROVIDING FIELDWORK EDUCATION

7. Please add up the number of years in which have had at least one student on placement with you?..... Years

8. Over that period how many students have you had on placement with you?
..... Students

9. Do you have a specific agreement with your employing agency to reduce your other workload during a student placement?

 Yes No Not Applicable

10. In the past have you decided not to take a student on placement because of agency workload pressure ?

- Yes No Not Applicable

11. To what extent do you feel your agency supports the practice of having students on placement? Please circle the appropriate number.

Not at all -----2-----3-----4-----5 To a great extent

12. With which client groups are you able to provide training opportunities for students on placement?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children and Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Adolescents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Children in Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentally Ill |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physically Disabled | <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maori | <input type="checkbox"/> Offenders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnic Minorities | <input type="checkbox"/> Others (Please specify) |

13. In which approaches and methods are you able to provide training opportunities to students?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Casework | <input type="checkbox"/> Groupwork |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Welfare Rights Work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Task-centred Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Crisis Intervention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counselling | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Skills Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Play and Play Therapy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Care Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Mediation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) | |

TRAINING TO BE A FIELD EDUCATOR

14A. Have you ever attended a specific course on being a fieldwork educator?

- Yes No

If your response to 14A is Yes please go on to answer 14B and 14C.

14B. Did the training course you attended on field education occur prior to having students on placement with you?

- Yes No

14C. What type of training did you have access to on becoming a field educator?

- In-depth graduate course related to clinical supervision of students
- Short introductory course to field education
- One session on field education
- Other (Please specify)

15. Now that you are practising as a field educator what ongoing training do you have access to, from the school of social work? Mark responses which apply to you.

- Invitations to hear relevant guest speakers
 Inservice training offered on a regular basis
 Field educator support group
 None

16. Have you attended **any** training event specifically related to field education of social work students during the last year?

- Yes Please specify topic
- No

ADULT LEARNING

The following four questions relate to field education and adult learning.

17. At the time of becoming a field educator were you supplied with information about **adult learning techniques**?

- Yes No

18. Have you ever been invited by any social work programme you work with to attend a lecture, seminar or workshop specifically on adult learning strategies?

- Yes No

19. During student supervision have you ever used either a learning style inventory or questionnaire to determine the students preferred mode of learning?

- Yes No

The next questions use a scale measurement from 1 - 5. Selection of Category 3 on the scale implies a neutral position. Except where this truly represents your opinion please try to avoid using this selection.

20. To what extent do you feel conversant with principles of adult learning? (Circle your response for each question.)

Not at all To a great extent
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

MATCHING STUDENTS WITH PLACEMENTS

The next three questions are about matching students with their field educators and placements.

21A. **Thinking back to the last student you supervised**, to what extent do you feel the learning objectives of that student had been **matched** with the learning opportunities you can offer in the field?

Not at all To a great extent
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

21B. **Thinking back to the the placement before the last one you supervised**, to what extent do you feel the learning objectives of the student had been **matched** with the learning opportunities you could offer?

Not at all To a great extent
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

22. To what extent do you believe student learning is enhanced if students are matched with a field educator of the **same gender**?

Not at all To a great extent
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

23. To what extent do you believe student learning is enhanced if students are matched with field educators of the **same ethnic background**?

Not at all To a great extent
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

LIAISON BETWEEN FIELD EDUCATORS AND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The next three questions relate to the communication between the school of social work and you as a field educator.

24. How **effective** would you rate the communication between the School of Social Work and you as a field educator on matters relating to student placements?

Not Effective Very Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

25. While the student is on placement with you how **frequently** will the liaison visits from the school of social work take place?

Not Frequently Very Frequently
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

26. **How beneficial** do find liaison visits from the School of Social Work during placements?

Not beneficial Very beneficial
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

BEING ON PLACEMENT

The next questions relate to how you feel students might best learn while on placement.

27. While on placement what **conditions** need to be in place to promote student learning? Please circle your response to each condition.

A. A clear set of learning objectives

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

B. A structured orientation to the service

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

C. To be part of a team that supports student learning

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

D. A place to call ones own (desk & chair)

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

E. Regular uninterrupted supervision

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

F. Access to literature on agency policy

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

G. Acceptance from staff of the students role

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

H. Access to agency resources; i.e. telephone; car; computer

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

I. Emphasis on experiential learning

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

J. Being challenged on: **Competency**

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

K. Being challenged: **Culturally**

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

L. Being challenged on: **Ethical Decision Making Processes**

Not Important Very Important
 1-----2-----3-----4-----5

28. What **methods** of educational input from field educators do you believe are effective in promoting student learning on placement?

A. Orientation to field/agency

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

B. One to one supervision

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

C. Group supervision

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

D. Observing other workers practice

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

E. Field educator observing student practice

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

F. Reviewing video replays from interviews

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

G. Reviewing audio replays of interviews

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

H. Writing a case study

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

I. Compiling and writing an agency analysis

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

J. Role plays in supervision

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

K. Discussion of case notes

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

L. Use of one-way screen

Not Effective
1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Very Effective

M. Student-led presentations

Not Effective 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Effective

N. Co-working with fieldwork educator

Not Effective 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Effective

29. Fieldwork can be structured either **concurrently** with classroom work or using a full-time **block** placement structure. Which structure do you feel is most conducive to student learning in the field?

- Concurrent Placement
- Block Placement
- Both Concurrent and Block Placement

30. Finally, how important are the following **attributes** for a field educator to use with a student on placement? Please mark each attribute in terms of importance.

A. Acts as a professional role model for students

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

B. Assesses my work in an intuitive subjective way

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

C. Plans placement experiences that match my learning needs

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

D. Approaches life with a positive attitude

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

E. Demonstrates anti-discriminatory practice

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

F. Has enthusiasm for teaching

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

G. Provides frequent feedback on my progress

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

H. Demonstrates a commitment to the consumers of the service

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

I. Uses up to date knowledge and skills in practice

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

J. Has a personal commitment to work for social justice

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

K. Provides a fair and objective assessment of my work

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

L. Can articulate the links between theory and practice

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

M. Can be flexible when the need arises

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

N. Leaves student to make the links between theory and practice

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

O. Has a sense of humour

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

P. Encourages the development of students social work identity

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

Q. Uses an empowerment model of supervision

Not Important 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 Very Important

31. Now please look back over the attributes as listed in question 30 above and select FIVE that you believe are MOST IMPORTANT for a field educator to use with a student on placement. Please write the letter corresponding with your selections in the boxes provided below.

32. Please add any other comments about fieldwork that you wish to make.

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.



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Consent Form

Indicators for Effective Field Education

I have read and understood the description of the above named project. On this basis I agree to participate as a subject in the project, and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved. I understand also that I may at any time withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided.

Signed..... Date.....

Initial Categories for Data Analysis

Accountability	Journey
Allocations	Learning Events
Analogies	Learning Experiences
Assessment	Learning Needs
Biography	Magic Moments
Communicator	Mistakes
Compromised Field Educators	Networking
Constraints	Personal Change
Context	Preparation
Development	Professionalism
Difference	Qualities of Field Educators
Educator Role	Quality Field Educators
Failing	Safety
Feelings	Supervision
Field Educator Training	Teaching Strategies
Integration	Team Input
Interviewees	Unexpected Learning

Abbreviations and Glossary

List of Abbreviations

AASW:	Australian Association of Social Workers
AASWWE:	Australian Association for Social Work and Welfare Education
ANZASW:	Aotearoa New Zealand School of Social Work
CCETSW:	Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work
FGC:	Family Group Conference
NZQF:	New Zealand Qualifications Framework

Glossary

Adult Learning:	Where the principles of teaching and learning in the field are cognisant with those outlined in <i>Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning</i> (Brookfield, 1986:9-11)
Clinical reasoning:	The internal thinking and decision-making process associated with clinical practice (Higgs, 1992:233)
Deconstruction:	Critical analysis and interpretation of prior studies and representation of the phenomenon in question (Denzin, 1989:140)
Hermeneutic circle:	All interpreters are caught in the circle of interpretation; it is impossible to be free of interpretations, or to conduct “purely” objective studies (Denzin, 1989:141).
Learning:	Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (Kolb, 1993:155).
Learning Style:	A person’s preferred way of processing information within specific learning situations (Caffarella & Barnett, 1994:29)
Praxis:	Where curricula are not studied in some kind of artificial isolation, but that ideas, skills, and insights learned in a classroom are tested and experienced actively in real contexts. Essential to praxis is the opportunity for reflection on practice (Brookfield, 1991:44).

- Reflection:** Reflection in the context of learning is a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations. It may take place in isolation or in association with others (Boud, et al., 1985:19).
- Reflective Practice:** The process of bringing past events to a conscious level and determining appropriate ways to think, feel, and behave in the future (Caffarella & Barnett, 1994:38).
- Perspective Transformation:** This term refers to “becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions about the world in which we operate have come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships” (Boud, et al., 1985:23).
- Te tino rangitiratanga:** Maori self-determination and authority over their own affairs (Cheyne et al. 1997:254)
- Text:** Any printed, visual, oral, or auditory statement that is available for reading, viewing, or hearing; readers create text as they read them, the meaning of a text is always indefinite; readers, writers and texts are shaped by the forces of language, ideology, myth, history, convention, and style (Denzin, 1989:144)
- Theory:** An interpretive structure that renders a set of experiences meaningful and understandable; may be lay or professional, always derives from cultural understandings of a group (Denzin, 1989:144)

Appendix H

Frequency Tables for Learning Needs Questions- See Table 6.1

Tutor assistance with identifying learning needs

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
School A	1	2	1	14	5	21
School B	3	5	5	11	10	34
School C	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>	26
	13	16	10	29	13	81

Extent to which allocation was made to match learning needs

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
School A	0	3	2	10	6	21
School B	5	7	3	9	10	34
School C	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	26
	11	17	9	24	20	81

Student views on extent to which placement allocation will meet learning needs

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
School A	0	0	3	9	9	21
School B	0	1	7	13	13	34
School C	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	26
	0	5	13	33	30	81

Student views on the extent to which placement did meet learning needs

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
School A	1	3	6	6	6	22
School B	1	8	11	13	3	36
School C	<u>0</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>	20
	2	16	19	29	12	78

Thinking back to the last student you supervised, to what extent do you feel the learning objectives of the student had been matched with learning opportunities you can offer

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
School A	0	8	13	48	10	79
School B	0	6	6	14	5	31
School C	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>5</u>	18
	1	16	20	71	20	128

Thinking back to the placement before the last one you supervised, to what extent do you feel the learning opportunities of the student had been matched with the learning opportunities you can offer

	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	
School A	0	10	10	37	10	67
School B	0	5	8	8	4	25
School C	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>3</u>	16
	1	17	19	54	17	108