Field Instructor Training

Module 3 - Effective Field Instruction: Learning Styles and Supervision Strategies

Purpose of Field Education

- Field education is the internship portion of the social work education curriculum. In the internship students are expected to demonstrate and develop their professional knowledge, skills, and abilities in real life situations under supervised instruction.
- A student is expected to integrate and apply classroom learning during the internship. For example, the learning agreement will stipulate specific assignments from the following areas: human behavior and the social environment, social policy, practice, and research.
- The student intern should have opportunities to observe and deliver social work practice with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities, as reflected in the mission of the Department of Social Work Education at California State University, Fresno.
- Field instruction is first and foremost an educational endeavor. The internship is considered an academic course and field instructors are the adjunct faculty teaching the course.

More on the Nature of Field Education

- The educational objective of field education is the personal and professional development of future social workers.
- Field instruction is the development of a teacher/student relationship which works towards preparing students for beginning level (BA) or autonomous social work practice (MSW) in a variety of fields.
- It is the relationship between the field instructor and student that is the most fundamental educational tool in the growth and development of professional social workers. (Navari & Mahan, 2002)
Stop and Check Your Learning Progress

Which of the following is NOT the purpose of field education:

1. to integrate and apply classroom learning during the internship.
2. to observe and participate in social work practice with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities,
3. To facilitate the personal and professional development of future social workers.
4. To provide social work students to agency field instructors for the purpose running errands, making coffee, and answering the office phone.

Field Instruction Phases
(Navari & Mahan, 2002)

- Preliminary: agency preparation
- Beginning: orientation to the agency and setting expectations
- Middle: mid-term, reflection (next module)
- End: evaluation of practice (next module)

Preliminary Phase

- Reflect on your own experience as a social work student and your relationship with your Field Instructor. If it was positive it can serve as a model for your own methods of teaching. If not, you learned what not to do. You should seek support from the faculty liaison in further developing ways in which to work positively with your student.
- Reflect on your own preferred learning style and that of your student. (More information in section 2). Do you learn best from observation, doing, thinking, or from your feelings? How will you develop all of those styles when working with your student? The answer is for you to be prepared to provide opportunities for your student to learn from a variety of methods.
- Identify the logistics of having a student such as: receptivity of the agency, work space, telephone and computer equipment, who the student will report to in your absence, and, agency support for your role as a Field Instructor.
- Develop a procedure for interviewing and selecting students at your agency. Be clear about the key characteristics you expect of students.
Suggested Key Characteristics and Major Responsibilities of Students

- Student must be motivated in the area of professional development.
- Student must be willing to think critically about their own biases, values, and ethics.
- Student must be willing to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Student will demonstrate professional work habits as delineated by the field instructor.
- As a Field Instructor, preparation during the preliminary phase will result in a more rewarding experience with fewer challenges to address after the student arrives.

Preliminary Phase Activities

The following activities must occur prior to accepting a student for placement:

- Prepare a physical work station for the student with phone and computer access.
- Talk with other agency staff about the role they will play in the student's field experience.
- Have an agency/department meeting to describe the role and purpose of a student intern.
- Develop a plan for the student’s first day. Students want to feel included and be treated like professionals when they arrive and staff should be prepared and aware of their arrival date.
- Prepare any necessary paperwork for the internship to avoid delays. For example, prepare orientation materials ahead of time. And, if your agency requires a background check have a procedure in place that will expedite this process in advance.

Stop and Check Your Learning Progress

Which of the following occurs during the preliminary phase of field instruction:

- Conduct an interview with the student.
- Evaluate student progress on learning objectives.
- Identify the logistics of having a student.
- Work with the student on developing his/her learning agreement.
Field Instruction Beginning Phase

- As a Field Instructor, you will be working harder than your student at this point. During this phase you are taking time to build rapport, establish a trusting relationship, and develop a learning agreement with your student.
- In order to complete the tasks of a Field Instructor you will need your agency’s support. Agencies often agree to provide field instruction as a way to contribute to the development of the future work force in human services. This can be a win-win situation if all parties are realistic about the demands of providing a quality learning experience for students.

Key Tasks

The key tasks during the beginning phase of field instruction are as follows:

- Agency Orientation
- Setting Expectations
- Assessing Student Learning Styles and Needs
- Developing a Learning Agreement

Orientation

The following activities are suggested during your agency orientation:

1. Conduct a tour of the agency.
2. Schedule a series of brief presentations with important staff members regarding their roles.
3. Develop an orientation packet

The following information should be provided at the agency orientation:

- A description of the agency.
- Agency policies and procedures.
  - Rules and regulations regarding confidentiality and HIPPA laws.
  - Policies for anticipated practice issues with legal/ethical implications (e.g., as abuse/neglect reporting, danger to self/others)
- Employee and/or intern handbook (to include dress code, parking information, the role of the student intern, and emergency contact information).
- Discuss with the student how they will identify themselves to clients and in written documents. (Students should always identify themselves as student interns)
- Safety and Security Issues
- Talk to your student about your style of supervision and begin a discussion on your vision, guidelines regarding your availability, whom the student should contact when you are not available and guidelines regarding assignments and submission deadlines.
- Suggested readings
Setting Expectations
In the beginning phase of field instruction it is essential that all involved parties be clear about their expectations and responsibilities.

The Agency and the Field Instructor
- The agency agrees to provide a Field Instructor who has been approved by DSWE.
- The Field Instructor agrees that it will prepare and execute the student learning agreement through the joint involvement of the student and faculty liaison.
- The agency Field Instructor is able to commit one hour a week to individual student supervision.
- The agency Field Instructor agrees to provide appropriate learning assignments which foster and reflect critical thinking and the development of a professional sense of self.
- The agency Field Instructor agrees to provide on-going evaluation of the student intern through weekly supervisory meetings and as situations require.
- The agency Field Instructor agrees to complete and submit all required performance evaluations as described in the field manual.

The Student
- The student intern agrees to take responsibility for self-directed learning including the preparation of a weekly agenda for supervision.
- The student intern agrees to follow all guidelines and policies of the agency as outlined in the agency orientation.
- The student intern agrees to participate in the preparation of the learning agreement prior to the final approval by the Faculty Liaison and Field Coordinator.
- The student intern agrees to actively participate in fulfilling the requirements set forth in the learning agreement.
- The student intern agrees to make up any hours missed.
The University and the Faculty Liaison

- The university Field Coordinator agrees to assist the student intern in identifying agency field placement opportunities.
- The university classroom faculty agree to provide a body of social work knowledge to prepare students for social work practice.
- The university Field Liaison agrees to assist the student in finalizing his/her learning plan.
- The university Field Liaison agrees to meet with the Field Instructor and the student two times during the semester:
  - At the beginning of the semester to assist with the development of the learning plan
  - At the end of the semester to process final evaluations and review the learning agreement prior to making final grade recommendations to the field coordinator.
  - Providing support and consultation as needed throughout the semester.

Stop and Check Your Learning Progress

Which activity is NOT a key task during the beginning phase of field instruction:
1. Conduct an agency orientation
2. Assist student in developing his/her learning agreement
3. Identify the logistics of having a student.
4. Set expectations
5. Assess student learning styles and needs.

Assessing Student Learning Styles and Needs

The field instruction process “works” so long as the field instructor “starts where the student is …” (Navari and Mahan, 2002, p. 7).
Principles of Adult Learning

- Adults have a need to be self-directed in learning activities.
- Will evidence a greater or lesser degree of self directedness depending upon maturity level and familiarity with content.
- Adults prefer to learn from experience rather than passive learning mechanisms.
- Facilitates connecting content with existing structures and meaning.
- Adult learners are motivated to learn what they view as having value and applicability for their lives/needs.
- The adult’s sense of self has a significant influence on the meaning of the learning situation.
- Differing degrees of knowledge and awareness of own learning style.
- Adult learners need immediate opportunities to practice the information they learn.

Learning Styles

Three primary learning modalities:

- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinesthetic

Visual Learners

- Visual learners learn best from information that is seen or read.
- Visual learners prefer written instructions; facilitates remembering.
- Visual learners prefer visual aids to accompany verbal instructions.
- Visual learners learn by observing others.
- Visual learners prefer information that is presented visually.

Auditory

- Auditory learners need to hear information in order to remember it.
- Auditory learners prefer verbal instructions rather than written materials.
- Auditory learners remember information via verbal repetition.
- Auditory learners prefer discussion as a means to process information.
- Auditory learners enjoy group discussions and activities.

Kinesthetic Learners

- prefer to learn from direct experience.
- remember information that they experience themselves.
- enjoy acting out or re-creating situation, i.e., role playing.
- enjoy hands-on activities that include active and practical participation.
Teaching Strategies for Different Learning Styles

- Identify the learning style of your intern(s) by utilizing the learning style quiz available from your assigned faculty liaison.
- Become responsive to learning style differences by adapting learning activities to meet the needs of students. For example, create opportunities for a variety of learning situations using different learning styles.
- Note that while it may help to match the student’s learning style, the student also needs to develop the ability to accommodate to instruction presented in styles that may differ from the student’s.

Examples of Teaching Activities Incorporating a Variety of Learning Styles

- Provide opportunities for hands-on experience.
- Utilize the learning agreement to identify progress made on specific assignments.
- Utilize demonstrations, diagrams, and workbooks to facilitate learning.
- Provide opportunities for self-directed learning and problem-solving activities.
- Recommend reading and multi-media assignments.
- Utilize audio-visual equipment to review videos and for taping and reviewing role play situations.
- Utilize writing assignments and reflection activities that integrate theoretical and conceptual ideas.
- Utilize group supervision to facilitate peer discussions and cooperative learning activities.
- Connect feelings with concepts.
Stop and Check Your Learning Progress

Case Example:
During individual field instruction, your student complains to you that he has not had an opportunity to observe you and others at the agency. He feels as if he is expected to jump right in, and does not feel that the role play activities have helped to prepare him to meet with his first client. The student is complaining that he is not receiving directives in writing and that he is having difficulty retaining verbal directives.
What type of learner is this student?
1. Auditory
2. Kinesthetic
3. Visual

Developmental Stages of an Internship

Stage 1 – Anticipation: The intern is excited and anxious about beginning practice.
Stage 2 – Disillusionment: The intern realizes the placement and practice are not exactly what s/he thought it would be.
Stage 3 – Confrontation: The intern faces the internal conflict between expectations and reality.
Stage 4 – Competence: The intern gains confidence in his/her practice.
Stage 5 – Culmination: Integration of practice skills and professional identity.

What Students Want in a Field Placement

- Planned supervision and access to the Field Instructor
- Opportunities to observe other professionals
- Opportunities to build linkages with other professionals in the agency and in the community.
- Clear expectations of roles and purpose
- Clearly defined learning assignments
- A variety of challenging learning opportunities
- A “safe place” to learn new skills
- Flexible teaching approaches
- Team atmosphere
- Clear learning agreement linked to evaluation
What Do Students Want to Discuss in Supervision?

- Students want direct, practical information to help them become effective social workers.
- Students want an opportunity to discuss concerns and issues that arise during the academic year.
- Students desire time to focus on the development of skills related to practice issues.
- Students want to discuss clear links between the classroom and the "real world".
- Students want feedback on areas that need improvement.
- Students expect time to reflect upon the broad implications of their assignments from a macro, mezzo, and micro perspective.
- Students want to feel safe discussing issues that are of concern to them.

Topics that are not Appropriate for Supervision

- The Field Instructor’s personal issues
- Extensive discussion of student’s personal issues
- Office gossip

In sum, stay focused on the educational aspect of any topic in supervision.

Content for the Supervision Hour

(Navari & Mahan, 2002)

- Ethics/values questions
- Collegial behavior
- Group dynamics and organizational culture of the agency
- Review of documentation (case notes, process recordings and other assignments)
- Identify and discuss self-directed learning projects
- Community resources and linkage
- History and philosophy of agency
- Integrating theories of intervention and practice
- Role-playing to assist in preparing for first or difficult interviews
- Learning agreement review and reflection on progress
Elements of Effective Supervision Related to the Agency

- Making the student feel welcome
- Including the student in agency functions
- Treating the student like a professional
- Helping the student learn about the agency

Elements of Effective Supervision Related to Assignments

- Providing detailed directions and instructions, including the purpose of the assignment and a theoretical rationale
- Working with student to complete tasks
- Regularly reviewing student workload
- Providing a variety of learning assignments
- Clarifying performance expectations
- Providing early opportunities for client contact for graduate students working toward autonomous practice

Elements of Effective Supervision Related to Supervisory Skills

- Explaining roles of Field Instructor and student
- Encouraging discussion of student concerns, including taboo subjects
- Helping student integrate theory and practice
- Providing clear and consistent feedback
- Validating student feelings
- Reassuring student that s/he can succeed
- Demonstrating that student is valued
Elements of Effective Supervision
Related to Supervision Meetings

- Holding regularly scheduled supervision meetings
- Being available outside of regular supervision times
- Thoroughly discussing student needs
- Reviewing and assessing student work
- Providing consistent supervision throughout the placement
- Confront student on issues related to over-identification with clients/agency, disillusionment, triangulation, transference/counter-transference, boundary issues, and desire to change their field placement site

Stop and Check Your Learning Progress

Which is not a topic for the individual supervision hour?
1. Organizational culture of the agency
2. History and philosophy of the agency
3. Theories of Intervention and practice
4. Your divorce

Community resources and linkages

Team Supervision

Team Supervision involves two or more individuals interacting with each other to provide a didactic/experiential learning environment essential to the professional development of student interns.

Sound reasons for team supervision include the following:
- To further develop multiple practice perspectives
- To further develop a students’ group process skills
- To assist students in developing skills in collaboration
- To assist students in their ability to solve problems
Preparing for Team Supervision

- Develop clear roles and guidelines for effective team supervision:
- Communicate with the university about expectations of the agency when utilizing a team approach to supervision. (The university may require that your agency receive additional on-site training on team supervision prior to utilizing this approach to supervision)
- Provide training on team supervision
- Clarify roles: Who will be responsible for what? How will communication occur? Who will be responsible for evaluating student progress? What role will the faculty liaison play in monitoring this arrangement? How often will the team meet?
- Develop a plan for reciprocal teaching and learning

Effective Team Supervisors…

1. have developed a mechanism for shared decision-making in the supervision and evaluation of student interns
2. are flexible and student centered
3. do not allow triangulation
4. monitor student activity
5. utilize student interns appropriately and are focused on student learning
6. establish a schedule for ongoing supervision contact.
7. seek information and knowledge that will assist in his/her role as a supervisor/teacher
8. do not allow task conflict (healthy) to lead to emotional conflict
9. are knowledgeable regarding other professionals' roles
10. monitor power and authority issues and maintain boundaries
11. have strong interpersonal skills
12. have an understanding of group dynamics
13. confront turf issues
14. are up front about agency needs and priorities
15. clearly and accurately identify the resources needed and what each supervisor can bring to the table
16. clarify roles and “get to know” each other
17. do not avoid conflict
18. make it fun!!!!
Supervision and the Learning Agreement

As a Field Instructor you will be responsible for supervising and evaluating student progress. You will evaluate the following:

- Whether or not students have satisfactorily met the requirements of their learning agreement.
- Skills, strengths, interests, and readiness.

The learning agreement is a written understanding among the student, the Field Instructor, the Faculty Liaison, and the Field Coordinator about the nature and content of the student’s field experience. The written agreement provides a focus for mutual planning in the development of learning experiences and serves as a reference point for on-going evaluation of the learning progress.

The Learning Agreement

- The Field Manual provides a detailed description for implementing the learning agreement and workshops are available for students to attend.
- The learning agreement is aligned with concurrent practice classes and provides for a range of learning assignments that vary for both the BA and MSW students.
- Faculty liaisons are available for consultation.
- The learning agreement should include student needs and interests.
- The field instructor may need to provide additional learning opportunities for the student that is outside the realm of a field instructor’s area of interest or role at the agency.
- Beginning in fall, 2007 the learning agreement for MSW1s delineates specific assignments that all students must complete during their first year of practicum. This is a minimum; additional assignments specific to the student’s learning needs and interests should also be included.

_The interpersonal work is the critical aspect of any internship—graduate, undergraduate, student and field instructor. It is also the most difficult for most people, but the most rewarding._ - Student Reflection

This completes Module 3

Module 4 will focus on the middle and end phases of field instruction: the feedback and evaluation process. To take the Module 3 quiz, please close this tab/window and return to the main DSWE training site.