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EDITORIAL

This edition of *Advances* represents a second round of papers which were initially presented at the fourth National Australian Association for Social Work and Welfare Education Conference in October 1996 in Melbourne. An earlier issue of papers from this conference was published in 1997.

The title of this editorial reflects the critical nature of the position in which the human service professions currently find themselves. The papers in this issue continue the theme of contending with the current challenges in higher education and the public sector. With increased cuts in public spending and a more managerial and competitive cultures, how are principles of social justice maintained? Do we need to revisit old debates in order to ensure a just world for the future? How does this climate affect the education of social and welfare workers? What new models of practice and teaching need to evolve to meet these challenges?

Although there has been a burgeoning amount of material debating the nature of the current crisis, there is a need to continue the debate, since the crisis is so far reaching, that many of our traditionally-held notions of social work, welfare provision, models of practice are now questionable. But how far can these be changed, without losing the original vision for our professions, of justice, reform and a fairer world? Does fitting in with a managerial agenda necessarily sacrifice the needs of service users? Does competitive tendering automatically reduce the quality of services? Is it possible to create 'microclimates' relatively free from the depravations of the macrosystem? Must we be content with trying to reform the system from within employed positions, and is this still possible? Can we as academics, researchers and educators play an increased role as spokespeople for our colleagues working in increasingly repressive environments? As managerial power is increasingly centralised, and organisational and governmental cultures become less democratic, how do we as workers and educators influence decision-making, and create climates in which communities participate? Is structural change possible without structural power? Do our notions of power need to change?

More importantly, how do we begin to educate budding workers with the optimism which is needed to survive and begin to influence these broad trends?

This editorial has been framed mainly as a series of questions - although they are hard questions, without hard and fast answers, it is important that in a time of change we continue to ask the kinds of questions which at least promise the sorts of answers which might point the way.

Jan Fook

Constructive Community and Academic Collaboration via the Medium of the Student Fieldwork Placement

Margaret Brooks

1. Introduction

The Bachelor of Social Work at Victoria University of Technology (VUT) incorporates field education to enable students to effectively practice social work skills and learning in a professional practice environment students, as beginner practitioners, have the opportunity to both observe and participate in an environment that reflects the contradictions and dilemmas of professional social work practice. This is valuable from the perspective of the student as it allows exposure to practice issues whilst also providing the opportunity for close supervision and support. This is not always available to new graduates in the workplace, decreasingly so in a climate of economic rationalism, where the focus is on increased accountability for workers in terms of contact hours and output-based views of social work practice.

Human service organisation are in a state of change with issues such as centralised decision-making, the introduction of market systems, restructuring and budgetary constraints impacting on the delivery of services. The emphasis is increasingly on the achievement of greater efficiency and being able to provide more for less in terms of resources. An adjunct to this is the availability of social work practitioners being able to provide consistent and sustainable supervision to students within the framework of agency-based practice. Therefore within these constraints, agencies and practitioners need to continue to be convinced of the tangible benefits of providing fieldwork opportunities for students.

This paper will discuss an example of a successful fieldwork placement which involved collaboration between the academic institution, the agency and the student. This was in terms of effectively meeting the course academic requirements, the agency's needs and the special interests of the student. The medium of the student placement provided an avenue for the student to gain valuable experience in the field, whilst undertaking a research project which was closely linked to relevant policy and practice issues within the agency.

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The research report 'Views from Within' discussed in this article, was written as a course requirement in 1995 in the final year of her Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) at VUT. This report was the 1996 co-winner of the AASW (Victorian Branch) BSW Practice Research Award.

2. Background to the Research: The Collaborative Process

This section will explore the background and the relevance of the research and the subsequent research design to the academic institution, the agency where the research took place and the student. The collaborative process involved discussions between the supervising social worker at the agency, the university supervisor and the student.

3. Victoria University of Technology (VUT) - Academic Requirements

All students are requirement to undertake fieldwork placements as a requirement for the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and registration with the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW). The BSW at VUT is a relatively recently established course with the first group of students graduating in 1994. The structure of the course is of either two or three years duration, depending on the student's previous study and experience, but all students are expected to undertake a specific research project in their final year[1]. This occurs as a fieldwork placement if a student has been accepted for the two year student program.

For all students, however, the field education components are interlinked and are concurrent with class-based learning. This 'co-partnership model' of learning strengthens the link between class-based and field-based learning and allows the student to develop practice skills that are closely linked to the theoretical learning (Starbuck and Egan 1995, p.16). The overall emphasis of the research project is to allow students to used practice-based research as a means of reflecting on and analysing social work practice. The student research project is also seen as being useful as a medium for agencies to explore their areas of practice.

The VUT social work course was developed in response to the educational and professional practice needs of workers and residents of the western suburbs of Melbourne, therefore it draws upon the strengths and diversity of the regional community and the local practitioners (Starbuck and Egan 1995). Following from this, many of the student placements occur in the western region and although they are generally organised by the academic staff, students do have a veto over the location and nature of their fieldwork placement and research project.

The salient principles of the VUT field education model include:

- an active partnership between the BSW course and the field which involves a collaborative approach to the planning and organisation of fieldwork placements;
- a commitment to high quality field education through resourcing, preparation, liaising and support to students on placement and field educators;
- field education opportunities which reflect the practice context with a commitment to the western region.

4. Agency

The research and field education under discussion took place at South West Area Community Mental Health Service, which is a community-based adult psychiatric service located in the western suburbs of Melbourne. It services a large geographic area in the south-west metropolitan region of Melbourne and is mandated to care for persons with a serious mental illness. Adult psychiatric services provide for people aged between 16-64 years and the legislative framework is provided by the *Mental Health Act* (Victoria) 1986, the *Mental Health State of Rights and Responsibilities* (Commonwealth) 1991 and the *National Mental Health Policy* (Commonwealth) 1992. These documents provide the goals, objectives and standards the underlie mental health care in Australia. In recent years there has been more focus on the rights of consumers and the need for services to be responsive to consumers' views. These concepts are increasingly being incorporated into policy documentation. Policies endorse concepts of consumer information, participation in decisions regarding treatment and rehabilitation and access to mechanisms of complaint and redress.

Mental health policy documents increasingly allude to the need for monitoring, accountability, evaluation and quality assurance to ensure high standards of care within effective and efficient mental health services (Australian Health Ministers Conference 1992). Quality assurance is similar to an evaluative process in that it is a method of assessing the efficacy of the goals and objectives of a program (Owen 1993). One method of ensuring the rights of consumers is by assessing the quality of the processes and outcomes of current mental health practices and their relevance to the needs of consumers. This is outlined in the *National Mental Health Policy* (1992) as it states 'progress in achieving better consumer outcomes in mental health depends on...evaluation of the effectiveness of various service interventions' (Australian Health Ministers Conference 1992, p.28).

5. Student Interests

As a student, I had particular interests in women and mental health issues as women have traditionally fared badly in mental health care. Burdekin, in his *Report of the National Inquiry into Human Rights and Mental Illness*, raised concerns about the treatment of women in mental health services (1993). Issues that were identified included inadequate information given to service users, over-use of drug treatments for women and the lack of consumer input into treatment types and alternatives. Women are the major mental health service users and the focus of the research study became women who experienced clinical episodes of depression as twice as many women as men are diagnosed with depression (Tippet, Elvy, Hardy and Raphael 1993). I was interested in understanding how the women in these circumstances viewed their experiences of care and I wished to incorporate their views into my research report.

Before the placement began, a student learning contract was negotiated between the student, the agency social work supervisor and the university liaison. The goals of this learning contract included:

- to undertake a research project which would enable the development of specific research skills including identification of relevant theory, location of literature, planning and time management, development of research techniques, an understanding of ethical issues in

social research, relevant policy directives (agency and broader), working with the legal and organisational framework, methodology, data collection and analysis, report writing, practice implications and presentation of research findings;

- to develop skills in linking social work practice in a social research context;

- to develop skills in understanding and conceptualising practice issues and their relationship to theoretical knowledge, in particular, feminist research and participatory action research;

- to reflect on the socio-political context of mental health policy, social justice strategies and structural issues which impact on service users within the mental health sector. To develop skills in linking particular situations to broader agency and political issues;

- to develop skills in clearly articulating the project, sharing information, consulting, advocating and negotiating with the supervisor, staff and other relevant persons whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the primary data.

Negotiations for the research project were based on considerations of all the relevant issues, such as the academic requirements, the needs of the agency and the interests of the student. Following from this it was decided that the focus of the research would be a quality assurance study of South West Area Community Mental Health Service from the perspective of women who experienced clinical depression. This provided the opportunity for linking in with the student's specific interest of understanding how women, as consumers, regarded their experiences of care within the community mental health service. The subsequent literature search found a paucity of consumer-focused research and evaluation in psychiatric areas as few studies had been done from this perspective.

6. The Research Report

The literature search provided a macro picture of mental health services as it was found that even though mental health policies were developed within a social justice framework, the resourcing for services had been overshadowed by concurrent policies of economic rationalism. The mental health sector has traditionally been poorly funded and comprised only a small proportion of the total health budget (Eisen and Wolfenden 1988). Spending cuts limited this further. In Victoria, which has the highest per capita spending on mental health care, the government reduced the spending on mental health services by 4.5% in the 1993-1994 period (Commonwealth of Australia 1995).

A further issue is the distribution of funds between community and hospital-based care. The bulk of mental health expenditure, almost 70% is disproportionately spent on psychiatric hospitals, yet over 90% of people with a chronic mental illness live in the community (Commonwealth of Australia 1994). Furthermore, 'most staff are employed in in-patient services, with only 27% working in community-based settings' (Commonwealth of Australia 1995, p.29).

This broad view of mental health services provided a framework for understanding the practice of mental health care and the level and nature of service provision. It also gave insight into the potential impact of limited resourcing on workers and consumers, and facilitated a greater depth of understanding of the data collected from the research.

The methodology for the research was a qualitative research model based on a grounded or naturalistic approach. Interviews were conducted with a small group of women who experienced clinical depression[2]. The data was gathered by semi-structured, indepth interviewing which facilitated a broad discussion of the women's individual experiences as they related to mental health policy guidelines. The interviews were exploratory and the discussion of experiences was encouraged. This approach enabled greater spontaneity and responsiveness between the researcher and the participants. An interview guide was used to provide a semi-structure to the areas of discussion, however, the emphasis was placed on collating the experiences and perceptions of the women.

The framework for the consumer interviews and the presentation of the findings was informed by the *Mental Health Statement of Rights and Responsibilities* (1991) and the *National Mental Health Policy* (1992). These documents outline consumer rights and standards of care which are intended to ensure quality service provision within mental health services. The findings were grouped according to sections of these policies and included: Information and Choice, Safety, Access, Quality Care, Complaints Procedures, Impact of Care and the women identified areas of improvement for the Service.

Common themes that were raised were:

1. *Information and Choice*. The women felt they had been given insufficient information about their illness, care and medications, and all of the women expressed a need for more information in all aspects of their care. The limited information sharing impacted on the women's rights to participate in decision making regarding their care. The themes which the women identified as impacting on the limited information included:

    (i) the women feeling that staff were not taking sufficient time to listen to their issues;

    (ii) the use of professional or jargonistic language which limited the understanding of the women and their participation in their treatment;

    (iii) the women's awareness of the power differential between themselves and medical staff which limited their ability to question staff;

    (iv) the limited information restricted the opportunity for the women to make informed choices regarding their care;

    (v) the difference in language and accent between the medical staff and the women, which limited a shared understanding.[3]

2. *Safety*. The women expressed concerns about their safety in the waiting area at the Service. They discussed feeling uncomfortable and distressed because of the actions of other clients in this area. It was found that this related to the physical environment of the waiting area

which is a large open area and staff are not visible. This environment resulted in the women feeling isolated and unsupported by staff.

3. *Access*. The findings in this section demonstrated a range of access issues from actual worker contact time to broader structural issues where the barriers are geographical and financial. These issues were linked to the broader political arena where issues of fiscal restraint and budgetary cuts impact on the level of service provision.

4. *Quality Care*. All of the women spoke of the importance of the rapport that they had developed with their case manager. They reported this as a relationship of trust and support, where they felt they had been listened to and their experiences and feelings understood. It was found that this captured the essence of the program of care for the women and they felt that the establishment of this relationship was the core of their treatment program.

5. *Complaints Procedure*. None of the women had any awareness of any complaints procedures or advocacy groups. This finding implied that there was some distance between the policy objectives of consumers having the right to advocacy information and mechanisms of complaint and redress, and the actual practice within the Service. This raised issues for the service users in terms of being able to exercise their rights.

6. *Impact of Care*. The women spoke of a range of factors that had been useful for them in terms of promoting their health and minimising their difficulties. Some of these were provided by the Service and others by various sections of the community. This finding coincided with sections of the literature which refers to the importance of the exploration of alternatives to the medical model of care and the necessity of an eclectic approach which is tailored to the individual's needs (Tippet, Elvy, Hardy and Raphael 1993).

7. *Areas for Improvement*. The women identified areas where the contact had been unhelpful and where changes could assist themselves and other consumers. These included: reception staff being more helpful, synchronising appointments between case managers and doctors, the need for more information around all aspects of their care and communication issues within the agency which impacted on the continuity of care for the women.

7. Conclusions of the Research Report

It was found that a complexity of issues impact upon the attainment of standards, and two major factors in this are, the level of resourcing and the provision of services. If services are inadequately resourced then the process of standard setting becomes self-defeating. Optimum care for consumers is difficult to achieve within a political framework of fiscal restraint.

Changes in mental health care have been overshadowed by criticisms of the economic rationalist agenda that guides the level of service provision, rather than consumer need (Soloman 1991). Economic rhetoric has become imperative rather than the original social justice objectives in mental health care. The level of financing for community care hinders the provision of adequate services.

This is the macro picture that provides the umbrella for mental health care which leaves many workers disaffected and disempowered because they are unable to provide optimum care. The operation of services is a consequence of 'political, policy, economic and social influences which make up the planning context' (Western Region Commission 1992). This was the context for the findings in the report.

However, on the micro level, the findings imply that the consumers in the study were not able to participate actively in aspects of their care. Issues which impacted on this for the women included insufficient information which limited their participation and choice. The study identified areas which influenced this, including, staff not taking the time to listen, difficulties in communication, the power differential between staff and consumers and insufficient shared information with the women.

Safety issues and restrictions in access influence the quality of care provided at the Service but the model of case management used for the care of the women in this study provided high quality care under difficult circumstances. Minimal information on complaints procedures or changes to service provision influenced the degree of participation for the consumer. However, the women reported positively on the impact of care provided by the Service.

These findings imply that there is a dissonance between the level of care provided at the Service and the policy objectives but this must be seen within the broader political context of resourcing inadequacies. A complexity of issues affected the mental health care for the women in this study but they considered that their treatments had been beneficial to them and the contact had positively affected the quality of life.

8. Discussion and Outcome

The conducting of a quality assurance study as a student research project was an example of a constructive field-university collaboration. For the Agency, it enabled them to act within policy guidelines regarding the need for monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance and it was resource-efficient to have this activity done by a student on placement. The methodology of the research allowed consumers to be actively involved in the quality assurance process, and this was consistent with policy directions outlining consumer rights and the need for consumers to be involved in the evaluative process. This was constructive for the student in that it correlated with the special interest group and the wish to listen to and explore the voices and experiences of women within mental health care.

The findings and conclusions of the research report were useful to the agency as it combined both the macro and micro picture of mental health care for the consumers in the study, and for the Agency. This analysis provided a framework for understanding the level of consumer care at the Service and enabled this to be related to limited resourcing and the broader political and economic context of mental health care. At the same time though, it drew attention to practices within the agency which needed to be discussed and improved upon and, as such, it was a valuable means for staff to assess the nature and efficacy of their practices. For the student, this analysis facilitated a greater depth of understanding of practice constraints. The research findings also provided the Agency with a tool for exploring funding possibilities for additional programs and services.

The research facilitated the learning process for the student and allowed the development of specific research skills within a practice context. This resulted in the student meeting the academic requirements for the completion of the research project and the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) course. There was also satisfaction for the student in having combined specific areas of interest with both academic and agency requirements. For VUT the benefits were that the research was grounded in the practice context of the western region, and the successful outcome of the placement meant that the Agency may remain open to the possibility of future student placements.

The medium of the student placement is a valuable component of the BSW course in enabling the learning process for students, and as a useful tool for agencies. The collaboration between the practice field and universities ensures the grounding of student learning in the context of their future practices.

Notes

1. The fieldwork components are separated according to the level of entry of the student, although all students are required to complete the required numbers of hours as outlined by the AASW. At VUT a student entering at first year level is required to complete their hours in two fieldwork components, whilst those entering at second year are required to complete three separate fieldwork placements. As a student accepted to complete two years of study with the university, I was required to undertake three placements, the final of which was a specific research-based project.
2. The findings in the research report are related to the experiences of the women in the study only and cannot be generalised for all consumers in mental health service.
3. Public mental health services need to recruit overseas doctors to provide care for mental health clients (Health and Community Services, March 1994). The women related difficulties which arose due to crosscultural differences between the doctor and the consumer. The differences related to linguistic and communication difficulties and not to any questioning of the abilities or qualifications of the medical staff.

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Start Where the Client is or Where the Money is? A Teaching Dilemma

Prue Brown, Fiona Lindsay, Ivan Hochberg, Cynthia Koutsoukis, Ann Thornton, Sue De Bono, Debra Simons, Melissa Petrakis, Fiona Lamshead, Caroline Lambert, Elizabeth Baird, Nicole Stanes

1. Introduction

This paper addresses the challenges to field education for social work students resulting from recent changes in the human service field in Victoria during the last four years. The paper addresses the particular challenges of working in a hospital environment which is constantly changing as a result of fiscal and policy changes within the sector.

The paper is a result of the collaboration between the Field Education Coordinators within the School of Social Work at the University of Melbourne and Ivan Hochberg, as Coordinator at the Social Work Service Student Unit in the Alfred Healthcare Group of Hospitals. In addition, a valuable contribution was made by individual field educators and students. A model of field education was developed which was considered pertinent to the needs of social work students in an organisational setting which is experiencing significant changes.

The paper has been written using three voices - school, agency and students, so as to provide a sense of the experiences from three perspectives. It is interesting to note that the voice of the students was actually five voices and each student had a different experience on placement although all were placed within the Alfred Healthcare Group of Hospitals.

2. Part 1 - The School

The education of students for social work practice has been challenged by recent changes in the human services over the last four years. Changes in funding arrangements for health care, changes in employment practices and political emphasis on individualism rather than social justice have produced practices which have a direct impact on the nature and practice of hospital social work.

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***Ivan Hochberg, Cynthia Koutsoukis, Ann Thornton, Sue De Bono** and **Debra Simons** are social workers in the Social Work Services Student Unit in the Alfred Healthcare Group in Melbourne.*
***Melissa Petrakis, Fiona Lamshead, Caroline Lambert, Elizabeth Baird** and **Nicole Stanes** were, at the time of the AASWWE Conference in 1996, social work students on placement at the Alfred Healthcare Group of Hospitals in Melbourne.*

This paper describes an educational process by which students can be introduced to current social work practice in hospital in a way which will assist them to move into the workface.

The model of field education endeavours to address the conflicts experienced by students when there is a discrepancy between course content as taught in the classroom and their experience as social work students within an agency.

Experience in the US has shown that good field education programs are those where there is close collaboration between the school and the agency (Rehr, 1990). In New York a project was established which required the collaboration of the social work school at Colombia University and Hunter College and campuses of Mt Sinai Hospital.

The student unit at the Alfred Hospital and the School of Social Work at The University of Melbourne have formed a similar alliance and developed a program which is situated on two campuses within the Alfred Healthcare Group. This program enables students to develop their practice skills and to become informed about the current challenges in hospital social work.

The purpose of the Mt Sinai project was to identify the multiple roles and functions of social workers in health care. Of the many roles and functions identified two in particular concern us today. These are:

- the knowledge, skills and responsibilities of the social worker in the health care system;
- a knowledge of how services are delivered, financed and made available.

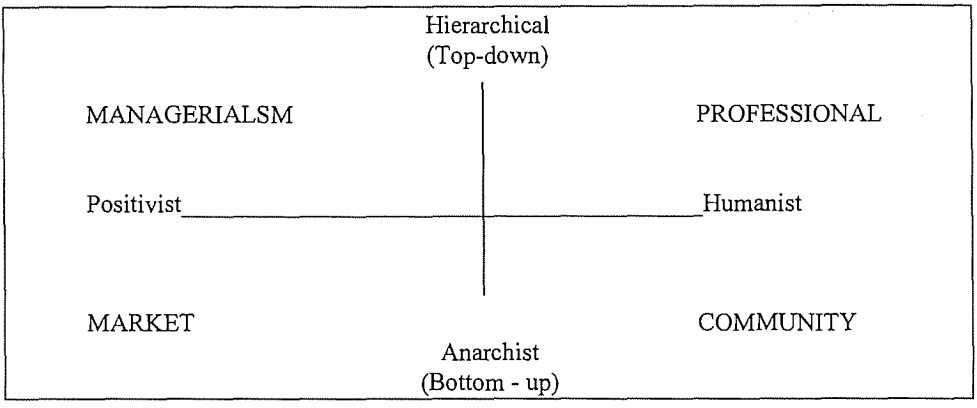
The broader, social context in which Victorian hospital social workers function today is one dominated by the ideology of economic rationalism and by the practices of deregulation and market forces. For practitioners who identify with a humanist model of social work practice and health care delivery, the emphasis on corporatisation, managerialism and the doctrine of user pays present a professional and personal challenge.

But first, to understand the difference between teaching for practice in the 1990s and in previous decades we need to explain the context of how social work practice has changed.

At the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) conference in 1995, Jim Ife presented an illustration of the practice paradigm shift in his paper entitled 'Paradise Lost: the Dysjunction between Analysis and Practice'.

In his paper, Ife says that during the last 15 years social workers have moved away from a positivist model of social work back to a more humanistic paradigm of Charlotte Towle and Bertha Reynolds. Yet in the mid-1990s practitioners are being asked to 'embrace a scientific paradigm as never before'. This has resulted in a dysjunction between analysis and practice. Whereas universities have moved toward a critique of positivism, practitioners are being asked to measure and count to an extent previously unknown. Social work is now adapting to the managerial mode of service which fits into a positivist paradigm rather than the professional mode which has a humanist paradigm.

Ife (1995) has developed a two-dimensional model to explain the paradigm shift,



Managerial: Hierarchical (top-down) and Positivist
Professional: Hierarchical (top-down) and Humanist
Market: Anarchist (bottom-up) and Positivist
Community: Anarchist (bottom-up) and Humanist

Ife says that the four modes of human service provision represent four competing models and therefore a 'map' to guide social workers as they seek to define their roles.

In this paper, some of Ife's concepts have been selected which have particular relevance to social work practice in the health care system. The managerial mode has introduced new terminology and 'processes' into the delivery of health care, this in turn has required social workers to become case managers. Underpinning both of these changes is the way in which financial accountability by health care workers to the organisation has changed:

(i) In the managerial mode, which is the mode that many health and welfare services operate in today, the service delivery is a product. The client or patient is referred to as a customer. In some of the literature a distinction is made between the external and the internal customer of health care services. The internal customers are the physicians and nurses and hospital personnel, the external customer is the patient (Labovitz and Lowenhaupt,1993). These new concepts of service delivery have resulted in the introduction of critical pathways and benchmarking as a means of controlling and ensuring the 'right' processes are being followed by workers and that the 'best' outcome is being achieved (Spath, 1993).

Critical pathways in health care are derived from the quality assurance movement. This movement:

> brought to the forefront the need for organisations to manage their quality through a strategy of continuous improvement. The goal of quality improvement is process efficiency and elimination of process variations, or defects through the removal of non-value added steps (Spath, 1993, p.48)

Process management refers to:

- defining work as a process with inputs, outputs, customers and suppliers;
- describing how a process really works;
- tracking and analysing the performance of a process;
- redesigning a process to improve its performance.

Benchmarking is the practice of evaluating practice against the world's best practice in health care delivery. It is a consequence of the development of critical pathways (Compton, Robinson, O'Hara and The Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health, 1995).

(ii)The social work role in the managerial mode is seen as case management, the principal task of which is the management of people (patients) and their interaction with various helping systems. Hepworth and Larsen (1995) say that the allocation of a case manager 'affixes responsibility for planning and orchestrating the delivery of services in a systematic and timely manner' (p.490). As such, the case manager must be effective in his or her ability to make assessments and have a wide network of resources available to ensure that the patient is provided with the services he or she needs.

(iii) Financial accountability is illustrated by the term 'casemix'. Casemix is a system of funding that is tied to the diagnostic category of the patient. The hospital is funded on the basis of the throughput for each of these categories. As part of this equation, the number of bed days, the types and cost of each intervention and the discharge plan are indicated for each patient category.

These three aspects of health service delivery - the critical pathways and benchmarking, case management and casemix funding are examples from the context of social work in organisations where the dominant paradigm is that of managerialism and the prevailing ideology is economic rationalism.

During 1995 social workers at the Alfred Group of Hospitals devised a different approach to service delivery. The collection of a number of campuses under one umbrella has enabled social workers to follow their patients through - from admission to an acute ward, from an acute ward to a rehabilitation ward and from this ward back into the community or to long-term care.

This section of the paper has introduced the reader to a theoretical model which helps us to identify the context of social work practice in the 1990s. Some of the new processes and terminology which workers are being asked to understand have been identified. The paper continues with the voices of the practitioners and the students, who discuss how they experience working in the current climate and the educational program which has been developed to ensure that students are empowered to work with new concepts.

3. Part 2 - The Field

The Alfred Healthcare Group was formed in 1994. It is a conglomeration of health care services in the inner-south area of metropolitan Melbourne. The impetus for the formation of this group was the changing political and economic environment driving the delivery of health care services.

The Alfred Healthcare Group has recently been incorporated into the newly established Inner and Eastern Healthcare network, one of seven networks recently created by the State Liberal Government in Victoria.

The Social Work Service is managed by the Department of Patient and Family Services. It employs more than 60 social workers across a variety of health settings.

The philosophy of the Social Work Service reflects the patient care philosophy of the Group which includes four key components:

- development of a patient centred culture;
- a customer focus;
- continuous improvement;
- competitive service delivery.

In order to meet its philosophical objectives, the Social Work Service is organised into the following teams:

- Aged care;
- Cardiac Care;
- Acute Care;
- Cancer/Chronic Care;
- HIV/AIDS and Infectious Diseases;
- Trauma Services/Psychiatric Services.

It is at this point that the dilemma, as identified by Ife (1995), becomes evident. The Service, in order to survive, has largely adopted a 'positivist' approach, yet it employs people largely grounded in a humanist tradition.

On average, the Student Unit of the Service accepts between 13 to 17 students in an academic year from the various schools of social work in metropolitan Melbourne.

The unit aims to provide a professionally comprehensive, enriching and rewarding experience with its goals being:

- contributing to social work education;
- advancing professional and ethical social work practice;
- integrating social work theory and practice;
- introducing students to the depth and breadth of social work activity in a health setting;
- offering an innovative approach to fieldwork placements;

There is an emphasis on respecting the individuality of each student and their particular learning needs.

The major concepts driving the delivery of health care services in Victoria in 1996 have their origins in 'positivist' thinking. The words most commonly associated with health care include casemix, critical pathways, best practice, case management, continuity of care, quality improvement, total quality management, outcomes etc. These concepts are not isolated to health care. They are evident in other fields of practice including family and child welfare, disability services, local government and other settings where social workers are employed.

It was our view that since these concepts were so central in defining practice it was important that we deal with them in the context of fieldwork placement. Where social work students were exposed to the humanist perspective in the academic setting, the fieldwork setting would complement their training with an introduction to 'positivist' approach which is currently defining the nature of practice in the field. This would enable students to address Ife's notion of critical humanism ie., a capacity to integrate 'vision with analysis', to be able to articulate both and then, 'make possible the development of a genuine alternative' to the current 'positivist' paradigms shaping human service delivery.

It is our view that to do this effectively there needs to be a collaborative effort between the school of social work and the field. It is a powerful combination where such model of education provides the base knowledge and skill for change and ensures the viability of the social work profession.

Student are accepted on placement following a pre-placement process which matches students to supervisors and settings.

In the first week there is an intensive orientation program to social work practice in the health care field. Its intent is to give students the prerequisite skills in order that they can take on casework responsibilities. The orientation program is provided by the staff as a whole in the service. In addition, key agencies outside of the Healthcare Group, its catchment area, provide exposure to their services (eg., hospice, local council, migrant services, etc.). Students as practitioners will need to be familiar with these services. They are also provided with an orientation reading kit.

Additional reading is also provided on key concepts driving service delivery such as casemix, critical pathways, case management etc. The students meet with various staff in the Group who have expertise in these concepts. They are provided with an introductory talk on these concepts. These people are not necessarily social workers, for instance the Manager of Physiotherapy Services is dealing with 'Critical Pathways and Best Practice' and a doctor with 'Quality Improvement'.

Each student has a primary fieldwork supervisor, however, where they follow a client pathway (ie., continuum of care) across the various settings in the health care group, a secondary supervisor can be allocated.

Group supervision is an adjunct to individual supervision. These supervision sessions are offered on a weekly basis. It is in this context that social work theory, the language and concepts defining health care delivery and practice issues are integrated. It is here that the

synthesis between learning at Schools of Social Work and training within the fieldwork placement occurs. The integrity and confidentiality of group sessions is maintained, these sessions are not included in the final assessment.

Fieldwork supervisors meet at regular intervals throughout the placement to provide each other with professional peer support and reflect on how well we are meeting our objectives.

There is a guiding philosophy of recognising the student as a self-directed learner. Students are encouraged to critically evaluate the Student Unit through our maintaining a commitment to an ongoing dialogue. The learning experience is structured is such a way that many aspects of social work practice are modelled with the Unit itself.

In 1996, the School of Social Work at The University of Melbourne and the Social Work Service of the Alfred Healthcare Group, combined to provide a model of placement which gave the students an opportunity to experience the 'positivist' practice of social work. The students were introduced to Ife's theories in their classes at the University. The hospital provided experience of working in the environment of critical pathways, casemix and quality improvement etc.

As this is a pilot project with the School of Social Work at The University of Melbourne, a dialogue of regular communication has been established in which our performance as a unit can be evaluated by the School.

At this stage the project is limited to those settings offering acute, rehabilitative and aged care. We plan to expand it to include child, adolescent, adult and aged psychiatric care. This particular model of social work education is suitable to any area of human service delivery where there is a sufficient critical mass of social work practitioners.

The collaboration between the school of social work and the field is a very powerful tool in the education of students. It is central in addressing issues where the academic arena and the field diverge. In this particular instance it deals with the conflicting philosophies between the humanist and 'positivist' schools of thought. It allows for the beginning of the resolution of issues that confront the social work profession through dealing with core concepts in a training milieu rather than as a qualified practitioner trying to establish her or himself as he or she enters the field.

It also provides one mechanism of addressing Ife's challenge to the profession to develop a concept around critical humanism and thereby secure its future place in human service delivery.

4. Part 3 - The Students

The location of our practicum experience which is within a sizeable professional social work department, amongst other workers who share similar values and a common language and theory base, has afforded us as beginning practitioners with an abundance and multiplicity of role models. Near at hand are workers with whom we share ideas, on which to model practice, to 'try out' different styles and approaches while enjoying the luxury and relative security of readily available supervision - to confirm, disconfirm or reaffirm our practice - and

against which to measure differences in our own outlook, ideologies and approach. Having numerous yardsticks and comparative professional agents we are, over time, growing to understand and see the complexity of practice in this organisational context.

For each of the five of us placed within the Alfred Healthcare Group, our practice has involved negotiating an individual role. It is hard, indeed, to speak of the 'student' experience. In comparing notes nothing has been so obvious as how differently our responsibilities and requirements of our work have been.

Our placements have shown much heterogeneity. We are located in three different units, with four different supervisors, across two campuses which encompass the different expectations and demands of both acute and rehabilitation settings. Our patients span an age range of some 70 years and an all but infinite range of problems, symptoms, conditions, issues and needs. It has been hard to synthesise a clear or single experience for any one of us, let alone for all five of us, let alone for social work!

In discussion at staff meetings, allied health conference sessions and professional development opportunities, the need to clarify what social workers do seem paramount. In the face of contracting budgets, staffing freezes or reductions, role impingement or competition, a united front appears crucial. There is a need to quantify and justify our assessments and intervention approach in the face of the current focus and residual bent of the predominant, reductive, rationalist measures permeating the health sector, as across so many organisations and fields of practice, we must be very clear on the 'hows', 'whats' and 'whys' of our role. We must be articulate. We must be professionally self-valuing. We need to be clear on our purpose.

We are 'case managers' and 'discharge planners' we have heard it said. Certainly this is very true in Aged Care. Yet in Cardiology we would argue we are more 'lifestyle educators' and counsellors. Perhaps in Accident and Emergency we are 'crisis interventionists'.

In trying to define a role we have battled intense frustration at the ill-defined nature of our work, the ambiguities and multitudinous expectations that exist. In discussions with various staff it would appear that these frustrations are not only ours as students. Perhaps the difference for staff is that they are comfortable enough in their competency that the need to 'get a handle' on what they do is felt less acutely. They seem to be more accepting, or perhaps resigned, to working in the grey areas. Perhaps they know what we, now halfway through our placement, are starting to sense that by narrowly defining what it is we do we fail to recognise the breadth or extent of our practice; that by unquestioningly using the language and classification systems of another discipline, or passively accepting terms and inherent viewpoints borrowed from a management context, we fail to acknowledge the proud history of the philosophies and principles of our practice and, the professional high standing of its worth and validity as experienced through the quality of life of those we serve - our clients.

It is the role of the university to provide us with the frameworks and the skills to make this journey and to manage the role contradictions we meet. We want the university to provide not only a map for our journey but also answers to the practical dilemmas we meet on the way . We need some protection from the rigours of the workplace - we need raincoats and gumboots as well as map - as we move into professional practice.

The field component of social work courses has historically aimed to enable students to wet their feet and whet their appetites gaining micro-level skills in direct casework practice The School of Social Work at The University of Melbourne, in conjunction with the Alfred Healthcare Group's Social Work Services Department, has extended on that baseline educational opportunity. With the aim of effectively integrating and synthesising theory and practice both the school and our field educators have accepted the challenge.

The challenge is to make social work teaching relevant and responsive to the realities students will face in practice upon completion of training. On the one hand there is a need to help students gain an understanding of the shorthand of practice, the economic pressures, the crucial part of practice that is funding submissions, budget projections and the tendering and contracting of services which are becoming the norm in health care and community-based service organisations. On the other hand, this needs to be achieved without compromising a full grasp and appreciation of underlying rationales, philosophies and ideal models, to ensure work is infused with a sense of significance, direction and purpose.

The collaboration on this pilot project facilitates the potential realisation of an alternative vision to the schism currently apparent between the humanist-sensitive academic realm and the positivist-managerial mode of the hospital setting. It presents an opportunity to meld and mesh ideas and knowledge with experiential work reality in a way that is not presently being done. Perhaps simply through lecture-based theory subjects, on social policy or organisational structure and context of practice, such goals will remain unachievable.

On paper alone, many practice dilemmas and constraints do not emerge or can seem readily resolvable. In reality, however, as students move from the classroom to an agency setting, theoretical frameworks do not always 'fit' the social work practice we experience. While the issue of critical care pathways for example, and the imperative of continuity of care in service delivery, was covered in placement orientation and relevant reading material for the field, these concepts prove at best to be hazily reified in practice.

Time constraints, yet high expectations, be they personal, professional or organisational, coupled with at times poor role definition and cooperation, or boundary conflict between staff across different disciplines, clearly do nothing to 'de-fog' this circumstance. An expectation to work closely with a patient in a 'case management' capacity as the patient progresses from an acute care admission through rehabilitation has been difficult for us to realise effectively in practice. At times we have been left wondering if we have done enough.

The hospital culture, with its predominant overriding medical model and its strongly ingrained hierarchical tone, is not perhaps the most conducive or enhancing for 'effective' social work practice at the best of times. Certainly at a time of high instability, insecurity, conflictual demands and change, individual workers have coped in very different ways.

For some workers across various disciplines within the hospital and at various levels, the need to retain a sense of self-control, competence and efficacy can result in an individual digging in his or her heels and refusing to budge, holding on to what little stability or familiarity is left. We, as students who are inherently low in the hierarchy, have at times experienced those heels as digging into us.

Sometimes students' work is criticised yet, as students we may see the 'fault' as a 'passing on' to the student, of the of lack of clarity and direction experienced by the supervisor or caseworker. The positives of experiencing organisational change, conflict and conflict management first hand may, on occasions seem little consolation.

Integrating theory with practice offers an opportunity for an empowering and dynamic experience for and between all the concerned parties. Students are enthusiastic yet vulnerable. They need support and guidance to help them manage this integration as they work with real people. Burnout, exhaustion and high stress do not help the learning process. As students at the Alfred Hospital we are part of a unit. We share a room, we share our experiences. The Student Unit provides us with a peer group who support each other in this process of learning to integrate theory with practice. We listen to each other, we talk out our fears, hurt and confusion, and also our successes , modes of resilience, triumphs and critical moments of perception and clarity. A well-prepared, researched, structured, cohesive and supportive approach to our preparation for practice can only make us strong and capable practitioners, practitioners of whom our industry can be proud.

In conclusion we suggest that an approach to field education, such as has been offered in this pilot project, merits the close attention of all coordinators of university subjects. The dilemmas and confusion experienced by students on placement have relevance to all social work subjects, not only field education. We acknowledge that this project illustrates an awareness of the many challenges students experience in placement in organisational climate of managerialism. It focuses educators on the importance and challenge of an integrated approach to social work education which requires an ongoing dialogue between field and academics.

5. Conclusion

This paper has described a pilot field education project from the perspectives of the school, field and the students participating in the project. The three parts of the paper illustrate the perspective of each group. The school introduces the reader to the theoretical framework, the field introduces the educational process and the students describe how it 'felt'.

The students' contribution is enlightening. Despite the efforts of the university and field staff to develop a program which was cohesive, educational and practical, the students experienced considerable 'angst' during their placement. In the main this was an outcome of the organisational changes being experienced by the workers. It provides a salutary lesson to educators that theory and planning, whilst essential, are not sufficient in themselves to accommodate the 'felt' experiences of students. Perhaps this paper finishes with a question: how can we introduce students to social work practice in an organisational climate of change and disruption when this change and disruption is reflected in the work and communication of those around them?

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Overcoming Language Barriers in Cross-Cultural Practice: Training Social Work Students to Work with Interpreters

Kimba Chu, Cammy Wong

1. Introduction

Eight years ago, a study was undertaken by Anagnostou and Cox (1988) which investigated Australia's welfare education response to multiculturalism. Sixteen tertiary institutions, providing a total of twenty-three social work and welfare courses, participated in the study. Despite the difficulties involved, respondents generally agreed that multicultural content ought to be included in the core subjects of their courses (Anagnostou and Cox 1988, p.49). The provision of information about interpreting services and training in working with interpreters was considered to be very important in preparing social and welfare workers for practice in our ethno-linguistically diverse society (Anagnostou and Cox 1988, p.42).

Based on our observation, there has been limited progress in incorporating multicultural content into the curriculum of individual courses (the lack of a systematic approach to curriculum development seems to be the major obstacle here). In most courses, such important developments are left to the initiative of a few interested staff. However, there has been more success in the provision of training in the use of interpreters. The inclusion of interpreter training in the curriculum would seem to involve less change to the standard curriculum and therefore elicits a better response from staff members.

According to Anagnostou and Cox's study, less than half of the courses they examined (11 out of 23) offered specific training in working with interpreters. A recent inquiry by the authors of this paper has revealed that all but one of the social work schools in Victoria (5 out of 6) have provided such training. There are more similarities than differences in the structure, content and method of training between the five schools. Indeed, the emphasis on skill development through experiential learning would seem to be universal.

Literature in the area of working with interpreters has been scarce, and most of what has been published has been written by the interpreting profession rather than social work educators or practitioners (National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters 1992, Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs 1991; Roberts-Smith, Frey and Bessell-Browne 1990; Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1987). In fact, only one article has been published on the subject in a professional journal of social work in the last few decades. This article pointed out that the use of interpreters in interviewing non-

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English speaking clients was an area of neglect in social work practice and education (Baker and Briggs 1975, p.31). The need for training was further promoted by Cox (1989, pp.253-263), who examined the issues and strategies in the effective use of interpreters. His critique has proven to be a useful reference for social work practitioners. What has not yet been examined, however, is the student experience of working with interpreters, or their problems and fears when approaching such a task. This paper examines both the need for, and the benefits of such training from a student's perspective. It is hoped that acting upon student feedback as to the design and content of the training will maximise its future effectiveness.

2. The Study

The authors have run workshops at Monash University for the last few years in training social work students to work with interpreters. During June to August 1996, four workshops were run for a total of seventy Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students, including thirty-seven distance education students and thirty-three on-campus students. Distance education students came from all over Australia and were mostly from rural areas. Each workshop was comprised of ten to twenty students and was of two to three hours duration. Students completed a questionnaire at the end of the workshop. Although some personal details were solicited in the questionnaire such as age, gender and work experience, students remained anonymous. The workshops are part of the compulsory skills program that students are required to attend.

The study sought qualitative data from students pertaining to the following four research questions:

(i) How important to students was their training in working with interpreters?
(ii) In what ways could such training contribute towards their social work practice?
(iii) Was the training effective and if so, in what ways?
(iv) What were the problems and fears they had, or could expect to have, when working with non-English speaking clients through an interpreter?

3. Design and Content of Workshop

The overall goal of the workshops was to train students to work effectively with interpreters. They were structured around Hokenstad's framework (1984, p.40) and therefore encompassed the specific educational objectives of raising awareness, broadening knowledge and developing skills. The workshops were divided into four general components, each designed to achieve one of these objectives. The workshops were experiential in nature and a combination of simulation exercises, case studies and roleplays were used. Students were led to explore issues and to develop coping strategies through class discussions. Consequently, didactic teaching was minimised.

The first component of each workshop as a simulation game aimed at raising student awareness. More specifically, it was designed to give participants the opportunity to experience the feelings a non-English speaker might have when seeking help in the Australian system. The game was entitled 'Going to Hospital', and was adopted (with modifications) from the training manual compiled by the Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission (1988, pp.68-

70). Two to three students were asked to play the game and each participant was given a written instruction about their role as follows:

> You are a migrant who has been in this country for one a few weeks and you cannot speak the local language. Your five-year-old daughter is in great pain. Her gums are very swollen and she is crying constantly. You have decided to take her to the local dental hospital casualty department for medical assistance. Your child is allergic to penicillin. Before getting medical treatment, you have to complete a form and sign it.

The authors acted out the role of the counter staff in the hospital. They were courteous and tried to be helpful, despite the fact that they did not speak or understand any English. Their duty was to ensure that forms were completely filled in and signed prior to treatment. They conveyed this message to the participants in Cantonese. The form, and a notice advertising interpreter services, were written in Chinese.

Other students observed the anxiety, frustration and confusion experienced by the participants. Some participants, after several attempts to communicate with the counter staff, became agitated and angry. Some raised their voice in desperation and others just gave in and signed the form without knowing what it was about. A debriefing followed the exercise. Feedback from participants was sought and issues such as the implications of filling out forms incorrectly were discussed. Students were reminded that up until the early 1970s, the situation enacted was a far too common one in many human services organisations across Australia.

The second part of the workshop was directed towards knowledge building, and involved discussions around four major topics. These were:

(i) Australia – A Multicultural Society.
(ii) Why Don't They Learn English?
(iii) Why Do We Need Interpreters?
(iv) Professional and Non-Professional Interpreters.

Students were made aware of recent estimates by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (June 1994), which stated that about four million Australians were born overseas, or almost one in every four of our total population of 17.8 million (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs 1994). These overseas-born Australians come from more than 160 countries with different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Among them, a substantial number lack fluency in English. Based on the 1986 census results, this number is estimated at 350,000 (Roberts-Smith, Frey and Bessel-Browne 1990, p.4).

Case studies were used to examine some of the common reasons for not learning English. In fact, students drew the conclusion that in most cases, it was a matter of 'can't' rather than 'don't'. Attention was drawn to the issue of age in the learning of a second language. It was pointed out that older migrants found it difficult, if not impossible, to become fluent in English. Studies have shown that knowledge of a second language learned when a person is already an adult, will fade with age (Department of Social Security 1983, cited in Victorian Ethnic Affairs Commission 1988, pp.75-77). It is possible that a person who has learned and become fluent in English at the age of 35, might be unable to cope with English at all at age

75, especially with an illness such as stroke, knowledge of the second language can be completely lost.

The commitment of the social work profession to social justice and the principle of access and equity were highlighted when examining the need for interpreters. the importance of using qualified interpreters and the role of the interpreter were discussed. The discussion of the ethical issues and implications of using non-qualified interpreters such as BYO (Bring Your Own) interpreters (eg. friends and family members - particularly children - brought along by the client) and bilingual staff at the agency raised lots of interest. Information on interpreting services available for the use of social work practitioners and general public was provided for future reference.

The objective of the third workshop component was skills development, and involved learning about 'Interpreting Face-to-Face'. It began with a roleplay demonstration of an interpreted interview in a language other than English. The purpose of the demonstration was to draw the student's attention to the common mistakes workers tended to make in such an interview. From the problems they identified, students were encouraged to suggest appropriate interviewing skills and techniques. For example, students suggested that when booking an interpreter for an interview, the language/dialect spoken, the gender, religion and political belief of the interpreter would need to be considered in accordance with the client's preference. If time allowed, the roleplay would be repeated incorporating the student's suggestions.

Students were then divided into groups of four in order to roleplay the worker, the client, the interpreter and the observer in an interpreted interview. To overcome the lack of community language skills in the class, the client was not allowed any verbal communication with the worker and relied only on written messages to and from the interpreter. The worker and the interpreter could communicate with each other in English. Roleplay scenarios involved services such as 'meals on wheels' and 'foster care', to give students the opportunity to practise conveying these types of concepts and to avoid causing misunderstanding and confusion.

The last part of the workshop was knowledge-based, and was about 'Telephone Interpreting'. The skills learned from the third segment were adjusted to suit the telephone situation. Some general guidelines and practical tips were covered. This segment was particularly useful for distance education students in remote areas.

4. Major Findings of the Study

Student Profiles

The following table (Table 1) summarises the personal details of both the Distance Education (DE) and On Campus (OC) students. Distance education students are generally older and have more work and welfare experience than on-campus students. On average, distance education students have twice as much experience as their on-campus counterparts in work and welfare. Some younger on-campus students have had limited welfare experience outside that gained from their fieldwork placement.

Table 1 - Student Profiles

	DE (Distance Education)	OC (On-Campus)
Age	33.59	29.03
Gender	3 males/34 females	3 males/30 females
Work Experience	12.89 years	6.19 years
Welfare Experience	4.2 years	2.03 years

Experiences with Non-English Speaking Clients and with Interpreters

A substantial proportion (46 out of 70, or 65.71% of the students in our study have worked with non-English speaking clients. Among these 46 students, 32 (69.57%) have used an interpreter to communicate with their non-English speaking clients and 14 (30.43%) have not. It is noteworthy that on-campus students, despite their lack of welfare experience, have had more exposure to non-English speaking clients (72.73% on-campus students as compared to 59.46% distance education students). One explanation could be that there is a higher concentration of migrant population in cities such as Melbourne that in country areas.

Table 2 - Experiences with Non-English Speaking (NES) Clients and with Interpreters

	Experience with NES Clients	NES Clients & Interpreters	NES Clients & No Interpreters
DE	22/37 (59.46%)	15/22 (68.18%)	7/22 (31.81%)
OC	24/33 (72.73%)	17/24 (70.83%)	7/24 (29.17%)
Total	46/70 (65.71%)	32/46 (69.57%)	14/46 (30.43%)

Problems and Fears When Working with Interpreters

As Table 3 below indicates, three-quarters (75%) of the students who used interpreters in the past have experienced problems. This figure is of concern as these problems may affect the worker's ability to help the client. Students who have had no experience with interpreters also expressed worries and fears about the prospect of working with one. The list of problems and fears compiled by these inexperienced students is in fact very similar to the list of problems encountered by those students with some experience.

Table 3 - Have You Encountered any Problems when Working with Interpreters?

	Yes	No
DE	11/15 (73.33%)	4/15 (26.67%)
OC	13/17 (76.47%)	4/17 (23.53%)
Total	24/32 (75%)	8/32 (25%)

The most commonly mentioned problem, both anticipated and encountered, related to the accuracy of translation. Nearly half (11 out of 24, or 45.83%) of the students who had problems with interpreters felt that the interpreter had failed their expectation to translate word for word. One student substantiated her claim with the observation that 'the content of conversation had not been acted upon'. Some students even suspected that their messages had been distorted. As one said, 'the interpreter did not translate what I said but rather what he thought should be said'. 25 out of the 38 students (65.79%), who had no experience with interpreters, had the fear that information might be lost during translation. Comments such as, 'correct verbatim interpretation may not be done', 'the interpreter does not convey the exact message', '(the interpreter) does not relay my question exactly', 'I am not told fully what is being said', and the possibility of being unable to 'get complex messages across' were common.

The concern about the working relationship between the worker, the client and the interpreter was the next most frequently mentioned problem. The lack of trust and the lack of clarity of roles were identified as major difficulties which could adversely affect the relationship of the worker and the interpreter. In addition to the worries about the accuracy of translation, many students had doubts about the impartiality of the interpreter and the confidentiality of interpretation. Several examples from the student's own experience were used to illustrate how an interview had been and could be 'sabotaged' by the 'influence', 'prejudice' and 'conflicting personal views and values' of the interpreter. The breach of confidentiality was 'a real worry' when the interpreter and the client were from a small community. Two incidents involving unprofessional behaviour on the part of the interpreter were also mentioned. In one case, the interpreter walked out on a difficult and potentially dangerous interview with a mentally ill person. In the other, the interpreter talked on her mobile phone during the interview to negotiate the next assignment for herself. Problems with client engagement and rapport building were seen to be of major concern in the worker-client relationship. The problem involving the collusive relationship between the client and the interpreter was also identified.

Nearly one-third of the students (30%) talked about the impact an interpreted interview had, or might have, on them as workers. Difficulties arose when students were unfamiliar with three-way communication via an interpreter. One student frankly admitted that she was 'uncomfortable with the presence of the interpreter'. Several others described their experience as 'frustrating'. Problems, either anticipated or actually experienced, included losing control of the interview and of the time, failure to utilise communication skills and to adjust the interviewing style, getting impatient and losing interest in the interview, feeling inadequate, and overcoming the fear of using interpreters, particularly telephone interpreters. A final problem mentioned was gaining access to the interpreting service. As one student put it, 'getting an appropriate interpreter for and at the time needed is an achievement in itself'.

An Essential Skill for Social Workers

Students unanimously agreed that social workers ought to develop their skills in working with interpreters. Many students gave more than one reason to support this view. The multicultural nature of Australia's population and of the client population was emphasised by nearly three-quarters of the respondents (74.29%). One student said, 'demography makes it imperative'.

Another commented, 'we cannot neglect a large, valuable section of our society'. The third elaborated on this theme by saying, 'due to the possibility of coming across non-English speaking clients, it is absolutely essential that (social workers) feel comfortable and confident in working with interpreters'.

The principle of access and equity was mentioned by nearly half of the respondents (44.29%). Responses primarily revolved around the rights of the client and the duty of the worker. The rights of the client to 'gain access to services', 'to use the language of their choice' and to 'equality of treatment' were considered important. One student asserted, 'to fight discrimination in our society, we need to have the ability to work effectively with *all* clients - not just those who happen to speak English'. Her comment summed up similar views from many other students. Another response reminded social workers of their duty as service providers and of the dangers of shifting such responsibility to ethnospecific services. 'As service providers, it is our responsibility to provide the best possible service to non-English speaking clients. Alternatives for referral may not be appropriate or may not exist!'. Other responses included the belief that skill in working with an interpreter was a crucial component of cross-cultural practice as well as being useful in its own right.

Effectiveness of the Workshop

Without exception, respondents said that the workshop had helped them to develop the necessary skill in working with interpreters. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Students found the workshop 'useful', 'valuable', 'beneficial', 'well presented', 'interesting', 'enjoyable' and 'relevant to (their) work in a multicultural society'.

Whilst 37 respondents (52.86%) felt the workshop to be useful in all aspects, others were more specific in their comments. The format of the workshop was most frequently commented on and students found the small group setting, interactive nature and relaxing atmosphere to be conducive to their learning. One student found the 'relaxing format and small group setting comfortable for roleplaying'. Another valued the opportunity to hear 'other members of the group talk'. A third student was particularly keen on the interactive nature which 'allowed for confidence building'.

Another commonly mentioned aspect of the workshops was the roleplays. According to students, the roleplay demonstrations were effective in 'illustrating the dos and don'ts' and in providing realistic representations of worker-client relationships. The roleplay exercises provided 'opportunities for practice' and 'hands-on experience'. One student commented that, 'Although the roleplay in writing down messages was tedious, it has brought home to me the slow and lengthy interpreting process and many other issues'. Other students said that the exercises had made them re-think their 'questioning techniques', 'attending' and 'listening skills', 'communication style' and their 'latent cultural assumptions'.

The simulation game was successful in raising the student's awareness of the situation non-English speaking clients faced. This was confirmed by responses such as, 'the game where you spoke in Cantonese brought the message across effectively'. One student added, 'It is daunting being put in the situation of not comprehending what was being said'. Her comment represented the overall experience of students who participated in the game. An observer said,

'Having seen what it's like not understanding a language and not able to communicate with people around you, I am more aware of the needs of non-English speaking clients'.

The selection of content material and the method of delivery were considered to be important factors in determining the effectiveness of the workshop. Students generally found the workshop content 'informative' and class discussion 'insightful' and 'thought provoking'. 'The knowledge and the first hand experience of lecturers' was much appreciated. Areas identified as particularly useful included 'the process of working through interpreters and issues involved in the different stages of interview', 'common problems encountered and ways to deal with them', 'the practical tips drawn from practice wisdom', 'information on interpreting services' and 'homework about various cultural differences'.

When asked which aspects of the workshop students wished to see improved, 27 students (38.57%) said no improvement was needed. The rest of the sample group came up with some valuable suggestions. Some students suggested that they be given the chance to roleplay with professional interpreters and non-English speaking people. This could bring more 'reality' to the roleplay situation. A second suggestion related to additional input from the interpreting profession. The inclusion of a guest speaker from the interpreting services was suggested. Some students felt they needed more training in working with telephone interpreters, and more information about telephone interpreting services. Other suggestions included longer training sessions, more time for roleplay exercises, more roleplay demonstrations and training in the use of deaf interpreters.

Benefits of the Training

Overall, students thought the training had contributed to their social work practice in five different areas. Those areas were improved awareness, increased confidence, broadened knowledge, increased cultural understanding and sensitivity and enriched skills.

Questionnaire responses revealed that the students' awareness has grown as to the needs of non-English speaking clients and the importance of using interpreting services. As one student put it, '[The workshop] made me aware of issues facing non-English speaking clients and how using an interpreter is a way of showing respect for the client, and developing a good working relationship'. Some students also pointed out that they had become more aware of the 'hidden issues' involved in an interpreted interview. The importance of raising student awareness was summed up succinctly by a student's comment, 'Awareness is preparedness'.

Students expressed the belief that they felt more confident in assisting ethnic minorities in general, and in communicating with non-English speaking individuals in particular. This more general benefit of the training was summed up by the student who said, 'I feel I can help a wider range of clients and offer services across a wider community'. Another said, with optimism, 'I feel I can provide service of high quality to non-English speaking clients'. Other students focused more on the use of interpreters. One said, 'I would feel less apprehensive about accessing interpreting services'. Another said, 'If faced with a situation of interviewing a non-English speaking person, I will use an interpreter and will not hide away from it any more'.

5. Conclusions

Students from our study have fully supported the views expressed in the earlier literature - that the acquisition of skills in working with interpreters is essential, and that training for such a purpose is necessary. In fact, the entire student sample was unanimous as to the importance of skill and to the need for training.

The findings of the study clearly indicate that three out of every four untrained students have experienced problems when communicating with a non-English speaking client through an interpreter. The problems they encountered have been detrimental to the working relationship between the worker, the client and the interpreter, and have adversely affected the worker's ability to help the client.

On completion of the training, all students expressed the view that they had mastered the skill in the effective use of interpreters. They were more aware of the issues involved in an interpreted interview, and were also more attuned to the needs of non-English speaking clients. In addition, they were more sensitive to cultural differences and the impact of these differences on communication. Consequently, they felt more confident in their ability to assist ethnic minorities and to overcome the language barrier in cross-cultural practice. Two students from remote country areas indicated that they would share their knowledge and skills with other workers in their agency and in their region. The benefits of the training are obviously far-reaching. This sends a clear message to those tertiary institutions which have not yet offered the interpreter training.

The emphasis on experiential learning by the five Victorian Schools of Social Work and the practice laboratory context as suggested by Cox (1989, p.254) in the provision of training were fully endorsed by the students. Our findings (see *Effectiveness of the Workshop*) show that students need to develop and refine their skills through practice. Roleplay exercises with professional interpreters and non-English speaking people would provide opportunities for practice in a close-to-reality situation. Students also find the small group setting, which maximises the interaction between the trainer and the trainees, and between trainees, to be conducive to their learning. Class discussions, rather than didactic teaching, is preferred. In short, training which is interactive, participatory and experiential in nature is considered by students to be most effective.

The study also indicates that there is an urgent need for a much closer working relationship between the social work and interpreting professions, including a collaborative approach to training. A better cross-understanding of the professional ethics and discipline, the professional roles and practice orientation of the two professions ought to be fostered. The Deakin University School of Social Work has reported success in their collaborative approach to training by involving the educators and trainees of an interpreting course. Further cooperation in the training of social workers and interpreters is to be encouraged, as it will benefit both the future practitioners and the service recipients.

There is no significant relationship to be found between the variables of age, gender, and work and welfare experiences, and the need for training. For example, students from non-English speaking backgrounds in the sample emphasised that their background has not 'automatically' equipped them with the skill in the use of interpreters. In other words, all social work students, despite their age, gender, work and welfare experience, or ethno-

linguistic background, require training to become competent in working through the language barrier with the assistance of interpreters.

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Not in the Classroom: Teaching Social Work Research to Off Campus Students

Beth R Crisp

1. Social Work Education and Off Campus Students

In a profession which highly values human interaction, the introduction of off campus teaching is considered by many to be an anathema (Callahan and Wharf, 1989). Yet, although critics have questioned the ability of off campus social work programs to adequately socialise students into the profession, there is no evidence that the educational experiences of off campus students are inferior to those studying on campus (Bush and Williams, 1989; Callahan and Wharf, 1989). Nevertheless, it has been argued that

> ... those aspects of learning which rely solely on face-to-face encounters may suffer. The informal, unpredictable factors which affect student learning may not be as easily addressed, such as students' personal and emotional crises. (Fook, Carew, Ryan and Van Den Berk, 1991, p.171)

Whether in fact social work educators in the late 1990s can offer such personalised service to more than a small proportion of the 80-100 or more students they teach each semester is questionable. Furthermore, unlike on campus students who often turn to each other for support, distance educators may be the first port of call when an off campus student's personal crises affect their studies. It is somewhat ironic that those who have sought to denigrate social work education in off campus mode have often unwittingly exposed their unsubstantiated assumptions as to the superiority of on campus study (Bush and Williams, 1989; Callahan and Wharf, 1989). Moreover, educators who teach only in on campus mode are typically able to avoid the degree of public accountability which off campus educators cannot avoid (Callahan and Wharf, 1989; Fook et al., 1991).

There are, nevertheless, significant challenges which educators must confront to ensure that their off campus courses are not merely pale imitations of what is taught to on campus students. The teaching of practice skills is intrinsic to social work education but less readily lends itself to off campus teaching than courses which have more descriptive or concrete content (Kleinkauf and Robinson, 1987). However with considerable creativity, along with a willingness to explore the potential of both new and existing technologies, even the task of teaching interpersonal skills, to off campus students, is not insurmountable (Fook et al., 1991; Purches, 1993).

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One practice method which has received scant attention in the development of off campus social work programs, is the teaching of research methods, which was, even prior to the development of off campus teaching, already a minefield of unresolved dilemmas. This paper reflects on these dilemmas in light of the author's experience of developing research courses for off campus social work students at Deakin University during 1995 and 1996 and questions the assumption that active classroom involvement is essential for effective learning.

2. Issues for Teachers of Social Work Research Methods

While 'the central purpose of all professions is to practice—that is to apply knowledge and utilise skills to carry out their defined missions' (Meyer, 1992, p.301), the ability to critique and continually develop the knowledge base is essential. Consequently, social workers without strong research skills may find it not only difficult to critically engage in debates about social welfare practice but are also at risk of becoming merely skilled technocrats who provide a service (Crane, 1978). For this reason, the teaching of research skills has come to be regarded as an essential element of social work education (Australian Association of Social Workers, 1990).

Despite recognition as to the necessity of teaching research methods, there is little agreement about the purpose of research units (Smith, De Weaver and Kilpatrick, 1986). A survey of the directors of American BSW courses found that respondents were almost evenly divided between those who believed that their courses should prepare students to be consumers of research, and those who were in favour of graduates being able to also produce research (Poulin, 1989). An alternate viewpoint is that these goals are less important than contributing to the development of reflective practitioners who can evaluate their practice (Hudson, 1978) and identify issues which warrant further investigation (Reinherz, Grob and Berkman, 1983a).

Although research skills are potentially crucial in their subsequent practice, social work students typically have little enthusiasm for courses in research methods (Wainstock, 1994; Yegidis, 1980) which they view as a hurdle requirement to obtaining their qualification. As Irwin Epstein once observed:

> No other part of the social work qualification has been so consistently received by students with as much groaning, moaning, eye-rolling, bad-mouthing, hyperventilation and waiver-strategizing, as the research courses. (Epstein, 1987, p.71)

In light of this attitude, it is perhaps not surprising that once students have met their course requirements their subsequent practice suggests that they have seemingly forgotten what they have learnt about research (Epstein, 1987; Tolson and Kopp, 1988). Approximately half (48 percent) of a sample of Welsh social workers interviewed approximately 18 months after graduation considered research to have been one of the least helpful subjects in relation to their careers as a social worker.

Moreover, less than one-quarter (22 percent) of this sample utilised social work literature in the assessment of a recent case in which they had required additional knowledge before coming to a decision (Shaw and Walton, 1978). Other studies have also found that most social workers neither conduct or consult research (eg. Kirk, Osmalov and Fischer, 1976; Kirk and Kolevzon, 1978).

Given the disdain of both current students and graduate social workers, it is understandable why it has been argued that research is 'perhaps the most troubled and troubling sequence in a social work curriculum' (Smith *et al.*, 1986, p.61), with the solution being 'one of the most perplexing problems facing social work educators' (Nelson, 1983, p.77). In response to these difficulties, strategies which focus on the classroom have emerged on the basis that students' ability to critically analyse research materials is maximised when there is both structured input from staff and other students (Seidl, 1973). Hence class discussions and exercises are considered essential (Kraybill, Iacono-Harris and Basom, 1982; Reinherz, Regan and Anastas, 1983b), as is a positive atmosphere in the classroom (Schact and Stewart, 1990).

While enhancing the learning environment may be beyond the scope of the off campus educator, like the classroom teacher they may improve the attractiveness of research methods courses by making the content seemingly relevant to the student audience. Research courses are potentially 'a forum in which students are able to think through the dynamics and nature of social work knowledge' (Reinherz et al., 1983b, p.37).

However, those which fail to take account of the nature of social work are unlikely to facilitate student ability to integrate research with their practice (Lawson and Berleman, 1982; Downs and Robertson, 1983). For example, some research courses with a heavy emphasis on statistical methods have produced social workers who are adept at producing population estimates in light of legislative changes in relation to abortion (Taylor, 1990) but with few skills in assessing their own practice.

An oft advocated method for teaching research is to actively involve students in a research project. This has the dual advantages of demystifying an abstract process and forcing students to overcome any phobias they may have in relation to conducting research (Wainstock, 1994). While this approach is not dissimilar to the process which Honours and postgraduate research students are subjected to, the applicability of this model for undergraduate semester length courses is limited. As it requires intense staff involvement this approach may only be feasible when there are relatively small numbers of students involved (Camilleri and Kennedy, 1994; Kane, 1978).

Attempts to involve students in research without adequate supervision may result in student learning which is less than optimal. Moreover, the goals of teaching and producing research are not always compatible (Oktay, 1983). Research projects are not renowned for fitting neatly within semester dates and researcher-teachers may be forced to limit students' exposure students to specific aspects of a project.

Consequently,

> The typical student completes the course with the knowledge of some new terms, a few specific research procedures and a vague idea of the scientific process in research. The average undergraduate student is not able to read scientific literature, let alone understand and critically evaluate a professional research report. (Kraybill et al., 1982, p.57)

In an attempt to overcome these difficulties, a critical consumer approach has been proposed which focuses entirely on enabling students to critically read the existing research literature.

This approach is premised on the fact that social workers with undergraduate qualifications are much more likely to be consumers rather than generators of research (Nelson, 1983). Students are exposed to a wide range of methodologies both in theory and by reading examples of research which has utilised these methods (Reinherz et al., 1983b) such that the

> ... objective is to train the students to consume research materials and incorporate them into their methodology. Specifically, the student should be able to read and understand the content of a research report, assessing its assets and liabilities and integrating the report into their own methodologies insofar as this is possible. (Seidl, 1973, p.71)

3. The Deakin Experience

Since its inception in the late 1970s, the delivery of high quality courses to off campus students has been one of the key objectives of Deakin University. Therefore when the introduction of a social work course was first mooted in the early 1990s, there was an unquestionable assumption that this program would be made available to both on and off campus students. Consistent with Blakely's (1992) proposed model for distance education in social work, the only concession made to off campus students is that they are exempted from class attendance:

> The objectives of a distance education program should not vary from the objectives of a face-to-face program. Rather, in the planning of a distance education the program should simulate the regular program. In addition, the school's mission would be the same; the organisation of the school in terms of its particular curriculum or tracks would be unaltered. Likewise, the admissions process, course requirements, and faculty would remain the same. What would change would be the frequency of faculty face-to-face meetings with students. (Blakely, 1992, p.215)

At Deakin, all social work students are required to complete two semester units of research methods (unless they are granted recognition for prior learning in this area). The first of these units is taught in the second year of the four year full-time (or equivalent number of part-time years) undergraduate Bachelor of Social Work degree and aims to introduce students to the range of issues they may encounter when conducting research. After examining the relationship between research and social work practice, the unit considers the development of research questions, possible sources of data, research designs and samples, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, ethical issues for researchers, and the reporting of research (Crisp, 1996).

The teaching of this unit is primarily consistent with a critical consumer approach, in that in addition to theoretical input on each of the topics, students are provided with recent examples of research reports from the social work literature which demonstrate one or more aspects of the theory. To demonstrate their understanding of the various theories, students are required to select a research report and write a critique of the methodology described therein. The report selected may be one of those which they have been provided with.

On the basis that a critical consumer approach provides the theoretical knowledge for involvement in research projects (Reinherz et al., 1983b), a subsequent assignment requires

students to develop a research proposal. It could be argued that off campus students have some advantage over on campus students when completing this assignment. Like others (eg Callahan and Wharf, 1989; Fook et al., 1991) the Deakin experience has been that our off campus students are far more likely to be employed in the social welfare or related sectors. These students seem to find it easier to identify a practice problem which needs further investigation. In fact, many develop research proposals which emerge from existing issues in their workplaces.

While both on and off campus students are both able to write a critique and develop a research proposal, the requirement that on campus students present a class paper was not an option for off campus students. While class papers are frequently used in the classroom situation as a way of generating tutorial discussions, this objective is irrelevant in the realm of off campus education and highlights the fact that off campus educators must 'be clear about their specific teaching aims' (Fook et al., 1991, p.177). However, if tutorial papers are reconceptualised as an opportunity for students to demonstrate their oral skills in relation to some aspect of research methods, there is justification for developing an equivalent assessment task for off campus students. For 1996, the oral task for off campus students was to develop a ten minute audio presentation with the target audience being other students enrolled in the unit. Not only did this result in presentations which were often of a much higher standard than those of on campus students, but there was considerable positive feedback from students in relation to this assignment.

The second research methods unit for Deakin BSW students was developed in 1996 which was intended to be taught in the second half of the third (full-time) year of study, after students have completed their first placement. The specific emphases of this unit are program evaluation, statistical analysis and information technology (Crisp, 1997). While a critical consumer approach can be readily adopted for teaching program evaluation and the uses of information technology in social work research and practice, there are specific concerns which must be addressed in relation to the teaching of statistical analyses.

Social work educators who embark on the teaching of statistical analyses may have their efforts greeted with a degree of ideological resistance. As Christine Marlow notes in an address to her fellow social workers:

> ... we may be unenthusiastic to apply what is perceived as a cold, impersonal technique to human needs and problem solving. After all, most of us in the field of social work want to work with people, not numbers. (Marlow, 1993, p.3)

While the initial resistance of many students can be overcome by demonstrating how statistical analyses may be applied to practice situations, a further, a potentially more difficult problem for the social work educator is that students may be enrolled in social sciences courses such as social work, rather than sciences or engineering, due to actual or perceived lack of mathematical aptitude (Schacht and Stewart, 1990).

Contemporary texts recognise this and suggest, that with the development of computerised statistical packages, there is little need for social workers to know how to calculate statistical formulae (Weinbach and Grinnell, 1995). In this context, the selection of the correct test and the ability to interpret the results is what is crucial. Having demystified the process for on campus students by teaching statistical analyses experientially in a computer laboratory where there is access to software such as SPSS for Windows, an assessment option for these

overwhelming advice received from other research methods teachers in the Faculty of Arts at Deakin was to take another approach to teaching off campus students. The documentation required to inform students which options to select in which order is not only extensive, but likely to be outdated at any moment. Given that the aim is actually teach statistical analyses, rather than a computer package, the compromise option for off campus students is that they are taught the theory of statistical analyses and required to demonstrate their understanding by making recommendations as how they might analyse a particular questionnaire.

One of Michael Leunig's cartoons shows a man at the intersection of two streets named: 'The life you lead' and 'The life you could have lead' (1991: 73). For the developer of off campus research units for social work students the intersection between the course one writes and the course one could have written is a place at which one arrives quite frequently, and will continue to do so in the quest for quality learning experiences for one's students. The journey into off campus teaching is potentially a troubling one as it may reveal the finiteness of one's capabilities far more starkly than when one is teaching on campus students. Nevertheless, it is a path that deserves some exploration, albeit with the assistance of supportive colleagues and friends along the way.

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Enlightening Supervision in a Cold and Cramped Workplace

Heather Fraser

1. The Changing Global World

Tick tock fast change. We gallop forward into the fierce winds of global capitalism. Industries cross national borders and capital becomes more mobile. The mantra of international economic competitiveness echoes in the ears of workers who are expected to become not only multiskilled but 'flexible'. Production processes are re-organised. Manufacturing is relocated to low(er) waged countries (Probert, 1995). Failing wholesale relocation, industries are broken into pieces and carried out in Vietnamese women's backrooms for $2 an hour. Jag, Country Road, Esprit, Sportsgirl are their employers. Such style, such taste, such embarrassing outwork.

The appetite for deregulation grows ever stronger (at least from the men in the dark suits). Productivity, competence and efficiency (narrowly defined) become the cornerstone of the argument for massive job losses, even when profits are soaring. Casual labour is now sought. The casual*ties* seem immaterial, perhaps because there is no market to sell them? The polarisation of income ever widens, with some growth in high income jobs, a major loss of middle income jobs and a far greater growth in low income jobs (Probert, 1995, p.21).

The *Workplace Relations Act* (1996) amongst other 'reforms', reflects the giddy success of the employers' lobby as the more progressive goals of the Industrial Commission are thrown aside like its an old Duran Duran album. To talk of arbitration, of awards, of fairness, of universality, of poverty, is to evoke the bleary eyed yawns from those on the cutting edge as they order more wine and pull credit cards out of their wallets made from the fabric of monetary policy. State involvement, even with profit making enterprises, seems passe. The word 'public' now seems to connotate the old and the dowdy, something akin to the 1980's fashion of wearing shoulder pads under t-shirts. Individual success is only a matter of effort we are told, despite the national unemployment rate levelling out at 8.5% (the Age, 1996, p.1).

The Australian Prime Minister, John Howard insists the word chairman replace chairperson in Parliament. No doubt, more than a few think that at last, sense and order have returned. Meanwhile, Dr. Catherine Hakim tells us that, 'Many women are perfectly happy in part time jobs, even when they are badly paid, because what they care about most is their families' (Freely, 1996, A15). (One might ask who these 'happy' women are and what their state of bliss might be compared to?) Increasingly it becomes unfashionable to believe in the small crumbs of hope Native Title legislation might offer Australia's indigenous people. A uniform national identity seems to emerge in mainstream media accounts just when post modern thinkers are espousing difference.

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When the Federal Government in Australia handed down its first budget on August 20th, 1996 $575 million is cut from labour market programs, $187 million is cut from the Public Service, $399 million is taken from the next four years of spending on public dentistry, $479 million is cut from nursing home care, $133 million is extracted from tertiary students in the form of fees, $66 million is cut from the Australian Broadcasting Commission, $40 million is cut from Aboriginal Affairs (Tingle, 1996, p.1). Along with all the other cuts, one might wonder how the arguments for a 'fair go' (for all) have been so successfully derailed and dismissed over the last decade.

2. Practising Social Work in the Context of Economic Rationalism

This collage of images and effects of economic rationalism has been presented to contextualise the current political environment in which social work takes place. With a work environment increasingly dominated by new managerialism, Jones (1996) describes how a high degree of reactiveness providers is being generated, with services pressured to respond more punitively to the needs of its users. Like Jones, Dominelli fears the winds of the New Right change, arguing that, '...market forces have no morality, no concern for the underdog, no real regard for social justice. Such feelings are a drain on profits' (1996, p.168). Dominelli (1996) explains that criticisms to social work's overall 'effectiveness' have been responded to by the use of 'reductionist competencies' with professionals becoming more focused on time-limited, task-centred interventions which incrementally undermine the profession's concern with self-examination and time consuming relationship building (Dominelli, 1996).

This article then, provides one explanation of how social work supervision can be conducted in a progressive manner. After identifying the three key functions of social work supervision, I will provide a definition of 'enlightening supervision'. The political analysis of practice, critical self reflection and attention to relationship building constitute the key features of enlightening supervision. Readers will see that the practice of 'enlightening supervision' attempts to integrate ideas generated by both structuralism and post structuralism. Aspects of Fook's (1996) model of reflective practice have been used to assist with this theoretical framework of analysis. The narration of two of my own supervisory experiences with social work students have been included for illustratory purposes.

3. The Social Work Supervisory Process

The supervisory process is one of the central means through which the invisible nature of social work practice can be understood and overseen (Pithouse, 1987). Taking up this point, Camilleri (1996) explains that social workers use oral communication (or talk) as their primary mode for understanding how they are constructing the practice worlds they inhabit. Such a process is complex, as supervisors are expected to ensure that this talk covers all three of the functions of social work supervision. The three functions include,

(a) the 'educative function', where workers try to understand themselves and their clients better, particularly through the exploration of chosen intervention strategies;

(b) the 'supportive/ restorative function', where workers are able to deal with their personal responses to working in emotional and often distressing situations so as to avoid burnout; and

(c) the 'managerial function', where the supervisor concentrates on issues of 'quality control' and ethical conduct (Hawkins and Shohet, 1994).

3.1 Managing the potentially irreconcilable tensions within the supervisory role

Many social work practitioners know that supporting, educating and overseeing another's work for quality control, can be at times, an extremely difficult task as the three threads of supervision do not always sit neatly together. Experienced supervisors are usually aware of the potential for the relationship to become locked into attending to one or two of the three functions, at the expense of the other/s. For instance, if the supervisee is coping with a chronic personal issue, the relationship may slip into a repeated overemphasis on the supportive/ restorative function. On the other hand, if the supervisee's level of practice knowledge is assessed as inadequate, supervision may start to concentrate on the educative function of supervision, with little time spared for the supportive or restorative function. Further to this, personalities and personal preferences for particular aspects of the supervisory process may also determine which areas obtain the greatest coverage.

Against this already complex interpersonal backdrop exists an even more pressing challenge to the foci of supervision. For within this political climate, there appears to be an increasing temptation for supervisors, (particularly supervisors impressed with/ or coerced by new managerialist ideologies within this era of budgetary cuts) to focus on the more pragmatic dimensions of the supervisory role (Ife, 1997). Arguably, the most pragmatic dimension of supervision is the managerial function, as this is the part where the practitioner's or student's work performance will be primarily judged. Such judgements on the supervisors' part make the managerial dimension of supervision that which assumes the greatest asymmetry in relationship because it is predicated on one party assuming a superordinate status and the other party assuming a subordinate status.

The power of the supervisor to assess work performance is accompanied by the power to regulate workers' operationalisation of personal, organisational and professional codes of conduct. Often as a result of external pressures generated by this new work environment, supervisors are expected to ensure the job is done with maximum 'results' (in terms of throughput) with the minimum waves or disturbances being created for the organisation. The organisational imperative to 'get the job done' in such a way as to placate bosses and funders, can manifest in greater expectations of workers' conformity, particularly to instrumental and technically reductionist funding criteria. Encouraging uncritical worker conformity to bureaucratic procedures and processes, has the potential to greatly undermine the creative and politically progressive opportunities for practice.

3.2 An explanation of 'enlightening supervision'

Enlightening supervision can be defined as supervision which ensures all three aspects of the supervisory process are attended to. Most importantly, enlightening supervision seeks to

challenge existing forms of inequality, whether that inequality be located within the distribution of material resources, social status and prestige and the inscription of inferiority based on class, sex, ethnicity, age and ability. Implicit to enlightening supervision is an exploration of how macro, mezzo and micro systems within late capitalist societies, construct human beings, their actions, motives, aspirations, access to resources and perceptions of living within inequality, oppression and marginalisation. Yet it is also a mode of supervision which does not rigidly adhere to dogma, with participants aware of the fluid ways in which these intersecting variables might insinuate themselves in people's lives. It is, as Friere (1993) would put it, 'problem posing', where people demonstrate an openness to understanding situations in multiple and fluid ways, rather than based on formulas and the strict adherence to particular ideologies.

Fook's (1996) model for reflective practice is useful here. It can be used during supervision sessions to affirm and consolidate critical thinking. I have summarised it as follows

(a) Identify and describe the practice/ experience and its context in concrete and specific ways, contemplating why that particular practice/ experience was chosen;

(b) Reflect on the account, identifying : key themes, patterns, assumptions, biases, contradictions, language used, emergent reactions and feelings;

(c) Develop practice and theory by contemplating how the situation eventuated as compared to the initial views and expectations held; how one's language might be used differently to more accurately capture what has happened and how further questions of praxis might now emerge (Fook, 1996).

Enlightening supervision is therefore, a process driven by interrogating how social problems are viewed, how people experiencing these difficulties are constructed and how social work practitioners, working within resource depleted (and often highly regulated) organisations, respond to these demands. Through earnest inquiry, the position of expert 'knower' is cast away and a level of humility is adopted so that multiple frames of understanding may be generated. In doing so, legitimated and conventional explanations which are often classified as 'common sense', do not gain automatic authority.

In contrast to supervision which seeks to maximise worker conformity, enlightening supervision is often wave creating. Through critical discourse, participants try to extend their cognitive and existential understanding of contestable concepts such as need, fairness, self determination, liberation, self-fulfilment, individuality, collectivity and community. So too, do participants of the supervisory process strive to extend their understanding of concepts such as, injustice, alienation, abuse, discrimination, deprivation and dislocation.

3.3 Re-affirming the centrality of the supervisory relationship in social work practice

Enlightening supervision is achieved primarily through the development of a respectful and sensitive supervisory relationship, where both parties feel comfortable and safe enough to seriously examine the aforementioned concepts with one another. And I use the term 'supervisory relationship' purposefully, to emphasise the reciprocity of the relationship exchange in social work supervision. For in the final conclusion, if there is not some level of

growth and development between supervisor and supervisee, the relationship is at greater risk of slipping into a linear, reductive and somewhat autocratic experience.

3.4 Working with the power disparities within the supervisory relationship

The question of the power disparity between the supervisee and supervisor now requires some attention, for it is the case that the relationship is fundamentally unequal, given the greater level of responsibility and status conferred to the supervisor. Yet such a power disparity does not have to point to a guru-disciple relationship. The potentially dominating nature of the process can be constrained if one conceives of power as a dynamic exchange rather than a possession to be captured and/ or maintained (Featherstone and Fawcett, 1995).

Rabinow's ideas are useful here. Rabinow refers to the work of Foucault when he talks about truths being understood as, '...a system of ordered procedures of the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements' (1987, p.74). Truth is conceptualised here as plural rather than unitary, where more than one 'truth' can legitimately exist in any given situation. The 'battle for truth' thus relates to investigating the ensemble of rules used to rank and prioritise 'true' and 'false' statements, according to positions of power. The battle for truth in the supervisory exchange may be obscured if a rigidly authoritarian approach is used and/or if both parties fail to acknowledge the formal power differential operating between them. It is also likely to be obscured if participants refuse to consider ideas outside mainstream paradigms which structure social problems in particular ways. A practice story might help illustrate these points.

3.5 Working with multiple truths in the supervisory relationship

While working with a student on field placement with a material relief organisation, I first asked the student to tell me about the kind of work she had done that day, in a concrete and specific way. She started by describing how a middle aged woman, known to be receiving a social security benefit and to be using illicit narcotics, had arrived at the agency requesting money and other forms of material aid. The student proceeded to talk about the woman 'conning' her and distorting 'the truth' so that she could receive aid. Infused through the student's narrative was a perception that she, the student social worker, had some personal ownership over the resources; that she had helped this woman who claimed not to have enough money to eat but was able to afford a taxi fare home. The student was particularly anxious about being mocked by the other staff at a later point as they had seen the service user get into the taxi.

I mused over what the student was saying, resisting the temptation to assert my well rehearsed rhetoric of how clients are coerced into behaving in such a manner. I resisted this not only because I could see on the student's face that such a response would be neither illuminating or helpful but also because I wanted to create the space for us to contemplate the scenario without pre-fixing the analytical lens. With this aim in mind, I asked the student through roleplay, to take up the position of the client and for her to tell me about her experience with the organisation to me, who was now acting as the client's friend. As the roleplay unfolded our postures and language changed as we both attempted to enter the vortex of chronic poverty and survival. Different textures of what 'truth' means started to emerge. While

laughing about some of the points in the debriefing phase, we could feel a sense of trust and safety building in the relationship. Temporarily, we could also suspend the reality of my power of assessment over her, freeing us up to explore how the situation could be reframed in a non pathologising way.

This same student then informed me of the organisational edict coming from above which stipulated that Muslims and Russians are not to be assisted 'because they had their own agencies' from which they could seek support. At first glance one might simply assert that such a position is contrary to national Anti-Discrimination legislation; that it contravenes concepts of Equal Opportunity and that it is simply unfair. But for the person handing down the edict, this statement is 'true'. Moreover, in my attempts to provide a useful forum for discussion, I believed that I needed to recognise the potential magnitude of subverting such an unwritten rule. I knew that I needed to facilitate a discussion which went beyond a mechanistic regurgitation of the principle that all clients (irrespective of birth place or religion) had the right to be assisted by that agency. Simply stating my commitment to such a principle seemed likely to entrench the student's feeling of being caught between two dogmas; one purporting anti-discrimination and the other, presenting itself as a 'real life' management of resource scarcity.

I asked the student to enter a second roleplay with me playing the edict giving boss and her assuming student status. I was initially briefed for personal characteristics of the boss (as perceived by the student) before acting out a projected scenario of the student being chastised for breaking 'the rule'. As the boss, I articulately defended my position while the student stood, hands behind her back, listening to my justifications. Ironically, I started to feel some attachment to the position, convincing myself more and more that the albeit indefensible principle should still hold. While standing, the student had to decide how she would respond to my justifications, deliberating over the strategy she would employ to continue to assist the two contraband groups in such a way that the least level of hostility would be elicited by the boss. The student offered tentative and gentle criticisms to my enacted position, explaining how the various families had no other forms of support. As she stood her ground (and swallowed her anger), she attempted to renegotiate the legitimated 'truth' through the discourse.

While it is profoundly disturbing to me that any senior official in the 1990s could hold such a 'truth', I discovered by accident that our rehearsal of the likely disciplinary was again engendering an energy and trust in our relationship that would advance the supervisory relationship. As we debriefed from the roleplay, I also started to *feel* her quandary more closely. So too, did I then discover the host of other features of the organisational life which I and the student framed as abusive. It struck me that the student was again trying to hold two polarised versions of 'reality' in her head: clients as conniving malingerers and clients as impoverished and oppressed citizens. More and more, I could feel the tide of potential helplessness rising from the cognitive dissonance. Fortunately, the space afforded in the discussion enabled us to negotiate our different versions of truth which were not being validated within the organisation and not simply decide that the agency was a poor placement that should never be used again.

As a result of this discussion, I believe that we were able to avoid the fatalism and pessimism that can be produced from scrutinising such organisational practices. Validating different frames of understanding helped us both reaffirm the belief that changing this all too common

form of informal discrimination was possible, reaffirming the view that small changes in practices can produce much greater changes to the service delivery. So too, did the discussions attempt to resist the binary opposition of powerless workers within an all powerful organisation.

3.6 Building trust through the enactment of subversion

Trying to change oppressive features of organisational life is difficult enough for qualified and employed practitioners, let alone for students who are trying to satisfy the managerial requirements for the agency and university. I fear sometimes that as a supervisor, I underestimate the arduousness of subversion for students; the well patterned punishing responses one anticipates will be received for transgressions to organisational procedures and protocols. Underestimating the intensity of the pressures placed on students can lead me into providing forms of automated supervision, where my responses are ostensibly helpful to the supervisee (at least from my vantage point) but responses that are ultimately unnourishing. It is apparent to me that students are very able to detect when I am struggling *with* them, as they try to make sense of their work. Such a struggle can be evidenced by me occasionally disclosing my own sense of trepidation, as I speak of the acts of subversion or resistance within which I am engaged.

3.7 Esteeming the process of critical thinking in the supervisory exchange

Having said that even within the most incalcitrant systems of domination and submission there is some degree of space through which the contestation of entrenched institutional practices can occur, the pursuit of change may be far from easy. Attempts to challenge, subvert or overthrow established and reinforced modes of operating requires, amongst other things, a base of support from others, a tenacity of spirit, and what Chomsky describes as developing one's own native intelligence through the strengthening of one's intellectual self defence (Rai, 1995). Developing one's intellectual self defence is largely achieved by resisting passivity and inaction; accessing different sources of information (particularly reports of events and practices critical of mainstream accounts); and appreciating that any system, even those which appear to be so ordered and unchangeable, are potentially quite fragile (Rai, 1995).

3.8 Strengthening one's intellectual self defence

These ideas remind me of an exchange an I had with another student placed in a drug assessment unit. Using a medicalised abstinence model for treatment, the unit spends and inordinate amount of resources on processing clients with professionally driven assessment tools which take little account for one's social environment. IQ tests, education assessments, physical reviews, psychological testing and criminal propensity tests take up a significant portion of the initial treatment time. As the student explained this to me, she mentioned how many clients 'abscond' from the treatment process just after the tests have been conducted. Unsurprisingly, more than a few of the professionals in the agency reportedly fail to see how the obsessive use of these tools might be the problem, preferring to locate the blame on the

clients' unwillingness to rehabilitate. This position of course, feeds into the common view that 'junkies' are unreliable and ungrateful people who are so 'difficult' to assist.

When the student and I analysed this phenomena I could hear the frustration in her voice. As the relatively isolated social work student in the organisation, committed to understanding both the intra and interpersonal dimensions of addiction within clients' social environments, she was understandably exhausted by the dominating epistemologies. And while she signalled that supervision was providing some relief by way of validating her version of reality and her clients' modes of framing the social problems she saw clients experiencing, she was at a loss as to how she might combat such attitudes.

We had already spent time investigating the concept of addiction in a discursive way, exploring how the quest for existential meaning (even for the resource rich) can present quite a challenge for many people's day to day functioning. We had also worked on the ways in which language constructs the lives, personalities and status of 'junkies'. Now that she had arrived at a stronger position of empathy and as she was afforded more autonomy in the agency, she was finding herself compelled to fill out the many pages of initial assessment forms in ways which seemed to collude with the very position she had objection to. If she refused to complete the forms, she feared this could be used to remove the social work role from the assessment process itself. Yet, if she completed them with the client/s in the orthodox way, she believed she would be generating some of the causes for the addiction in the first place.

Without labouring this example, the student's response was to try out more inclusive and less regimented ways for completing the forms, omitting to answer some of the sections she believed were not pertinent to the assessment and conveying to clients as she went some of the criticisms she had with the process. She also fed her carefully constructed criticisms back to the other staff in the forums available to her. The student noted that some shift in attitudes within the agency was occurring.

Nevertheless, she knew that she was ultimately conforming to the broad assessment expectations of the organisation. As she did this, she kept casting her eye around to the other possibilities to decentre the paradigm the conventional doctors, nurses and psychologists were using.

One might say this is hardly a success story as little structural change was effected. Another might argue however, that the student's small acts of strategic resistance, accompanied by her increased knowledge of the formal and informal systems within the agency meant she was better positioned to locate her future attempts at subversion.

As the placement proceeded, she was able to subvert and shift a couple of other processes that I do not have the space to discuss. She did this not because she wished simply to be rebellious but to engage in strategies that Mullaly (1997) would describe as attempts at : redefining, empowerment, collectivisation, consciousness raising of staff and clients to make overt the many instances of oppression occurring in the dialogical relationships. Perhaps even more importantly, the student was fuelling her capacity to *sustain* subversive activity in future practice.

3.9 Maintaining the 'agency' within supervisors as well as those who are supervised

In such a period of adversity, it is critical that we collectively believe in the ability to reverse the current assault on social citizenship rights. Not only must we engage in a politics of resistance against neo-conservatism, but as supervisors, we must make efforts to *democratise our professional authority* (Yeatman, 1994). This involves social work educators contemplating how the university system, with its own regulated procedures and production of truths, can militate against such a goal. More specifically, as lecturers and field educators, democratising one's professional authority involves considering our own capacity to silence others, especially those with less institutionally or socially conferred status. We need to try to 'walk the talk' of our ideas so that students/ supervisees are not simply subjected to empty rhetoric (see Gould and Harris, 1996). Yet such a process need not result in self-flagellation or a sense of inadequacy for we must balance our criticisms of self, others and society with the continual affirmation of what we and others have either achieved or resisted.

4. Conclusion

I started this paper by contextualising the level of hostility social workers and clients are operating within. Briefly, I tried to outline some of the political changes which have endorsed this hostility. I then sought to establish that the social work profession must continually reaffirm the need for supervision which is inclusive of the educative and restorative functions. I argued that supervisors need to be sensitive to the ways in which the managerial function of social work supervision can subjugate the importance of relationship building and critical thinking. As I did so, I explained that enlightening supervision can be a frightening process for both parties because it is *overtly politicised*, questioning established power relations and hegemonic regimes of truth. Unveiling the undemocratic nature of human societies within the late phases of capitalism can, at times, seem overwhelming as the ubiquitousness and insidiousness of dominatory practices unfolds. Such a process, may however, be the very life blood of optimism; the prerequisite to us maintaining our commitment to locate the strategies required to facilitate a more equitable and humane world.

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The Assessment of Attitudes in the Vocational Education of Social Welfare Workers

Helen Jessup, Paul Levett, Steve Rogerson

1. Course History

The Associate Diploma of Social Science (Community Services) is a two year full time vocational training course which consists of 900 hours of classroom based study and 400 hours of practical fieldwork. From its inception in 1982, professional development has been integral to the course. Initially teachers were required to interview students in each module of the course and provide an assessment on interpersonal skills related to professional practice as a welfare worker. If students did not reach a required standard they did not pass the module, even though their academic work had reached a suitable standard.

In 1987 Terry Whitely researched and developed a framework which identified personal attributes and interpersonal skills of a competent and proficient welfare worker. Personal attributes included warmth and sensitivity, open-mindedness regarding values and attitudes, empathy, awareness of self, awareness of others, and flexibility and adaptability. The interpersonal skills included listening, conversing, assertiveness/confidence, ability to deal with conflict and/or stress, and group interaction.

Whitely translated his findings into a selection process for entry into the course based on applicants demonstrating a minimal level of these skills and attributes in a series of group situations and an individual interview. It was here that the assessment of personal attributes on the basis of observable behaviours was first formally addressed.

Further work by Lindy Tregurtha (1988) implemented these principles leading to the integration of professional development (PD) into the course syllabus. Separate modules called Fieldwork and Professional Development Skills 1, 2, 3 and 4 were introduced. These modules were taught concurrently with all other modules (theory and practice) across the four semesters of the course. Integration with other coursework was established by PD teachers assimilating feedback from other module teachers into the PD assessment for the semester.

In 1993 Toosey Bannerman developed a series of student profiles. Profiles represent a series of behavioural indicators that distinguish progressive stages towards a required outcome. They are a device that translate the competencies of a module into behavioural indicators. These indicators provide benchmarks by which the performance of a student can be assessed. Stanton (1984) states profiling is not an assessment method, but rather it is the reporting of assessment.

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Profiles provide both the teacher with an articulate tool for formative assessment and the student with the capacity to assess and monitor their own progress towards achieving competencies. In this way Bannerman (1993) comments that profiles:

> have the potential to be clear reference points for students so that they can monitor their development/performance in relation to the desired level of competence...and thus facilitate students to develop more control/autonomy in the learning process (p.23).

Appendix 1 is the profile developed at this time in relation to the module PD 2.

2. Critique

In practice, the authors recognised that the Bannerman profiles provided extremely useful descriptors of relevant behaviour. However they were limited by their lack of reference to a particular standard which would assist in determining progressive stages towards a given competency. There is a lack of clarity around the behaviour associated with the language of the profile. For example, (see Appendix 1) **has limited** understanding of professional practice issues, **beginning to develop** understanding of professional practice issues, **demonstrates understanding** of professional practice issues, **demonstrates clear understanding** of professional practice issues.

Through further work conducted by the staff it became apparent that there was no place in these early profiles that allowed for the connection between attitudes and behaviours and therefore effective and ongoing assessment of the development of attitudes. Yet staff familiar with teaching within a competency based training (CBT) framework discovered that although teacher feedback indicated that a student needed to be working on a particular Whitely criteria area, eg. non judgementalism or empathy, action on that feedback did not occur. Frequently the student could acknowledge the need for change, but subsequent behaviour did not change. The result was that as long as students could 'confess' an awareness of their need to be doing something different they would be assessed as competent. Subsequently students could be still confessing at the end of the course, but still behaving in a non-professional manner.

The challenge was to construct a formative assessment process across the course for the PD modules which included behavioural descriptors that reflected both the cognitive and affective aspects of competency.

Our work is based on four premises:

(i) Holistic competency in CBT: a confluence of knowledge, skills and attitudes

Assessment in CBT involves knowledge, skills AND attitudes, and that attitudes can be clearly expressed in terms of observable behaviour - for instance empathy can be a technical skill utilised in an interview setting however potential welfare workers need the capacity to use this interpersonal communication skill across a range of broader contexts.

For example in a video interview a student may be able to demonstrate the use of empathic responses, however they do not demonstrate empathy in a classroom context, eg. constantly

interrupt, disparage other people, not participate in the learning process, refuse to attend classes because they already 'know' the material to be covered, do not participate through contributing to small group activities etc.

Often social welfare educators will discuss the progress of a student and say they are not 'happy' with that student. That is, they do not believe that such behaviour is appropriate for a potential social welfare practitioner. Furthermore, they often pose the situation as assessing character ie. a personal assessment. Whilst we agree that as a teacher you do not have a mandate to assess his/her individual character, there are significant elements of his/her behaviour which should be assessed in the professional context. Also, whilst values and behaviours are the property of the individual, as a student in a social welfare work course they are accountable to professional values and behaviours.

Again, in training social welfare workers competency is the confluence of the separate elements of knowledge, skills and attitudes (as illustrated in Figure 1)

Figure 1

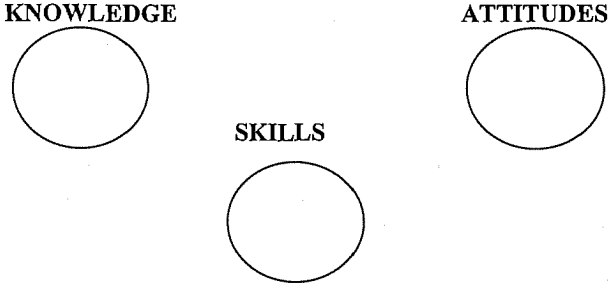
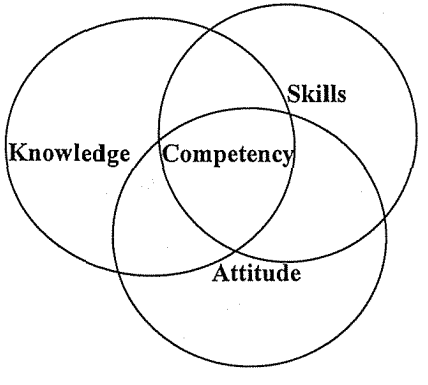


Figure 2 shows the representation of competency ie., the synthesis of all three.

Figure 2



Dominant views and definitions of competency often see its key components ie., knowledge, skills and attitudes in isolation from one another (as in Figure 1). More so, knowledge is often seen only in terms of underpinning technical skill formation. This can lead to a reductionist notion of thinking and knowledge (Schon 1986; Stevenson 1993; Pennington 1993).

Preston and Walker (year unknown) make a distinction between behaviourist and holistic notions of competency, highlighting the former as the model most utilised within national vocational education and training frameworks. However in insisting on a holistic definition of competence they support the authors' view here that competence is a 'confluence' of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Their definition also assists with acknowledging the impact of group processes and culture (whether organisational, professional, home or community) on performance. Such holistic competency is echoed through the work of Gonzci (1992), Gonzci and Hager (1993) and Gonzci, Hager and Oliver (1993) and Gonzci (1992).

(ii) Political context of adult learning

Bannerman's work on profiles made a connection between the writings of Knowles (Androgogy), Benn (1981) and Rees (1991) (social work/empowerment) and proposed that a similarity exists between the role of the teacher and social/welfare work practitioner:

> the role...is to create an environment in which people are able to determine a course of action based on their analysis of a particular situation and which involves them using their own and other resources (Bannerman 1993, pp.20-23).

However there is a *political* context to the learning process within a professional training course. Whereas principles of adult learning encourage the increasing self direction and autonomy of the student, learning takes place within a training context where competencies are determined by the industry and are not negotiable. Whilst students are acquiring the skills of welfare practice whilst engaged in the adult learning process they are also accountable to professional standards of behaviour. This can lead to a political tension between ideas of self direction and insistence on teacher imposed assessment.

It is here that the poststructural idea of *discourse* became useful for the authors, since adult learning through the profiles establishes a dialogue that invites the learner to take responsibility for their own pathways towards meeting defined learning goals/discourse.

Cherryholmes comments that:

> Discourses dominant in a historical period and geographical location determine what counts as true, important, or relevant, what gets spoken, what remains unsaid. Discourses are generated and governed by rules and power. (1988, p.35).

Attitudes within the framework of CBT and adult learning are a major aspect since they are often the anonymous voice of discourse. Cherryholmes comments that:

> Speakers...have no direct access to the origins of the discourses. In Foucault's terms they are anonymous speakers (1988, p.34).

He also emphasises that becoming proficient in a professional discourse through certification involves speaking with authority.

What becomes important in a training context is for the student to author their professional voice – to know which discourse their voice reflects. The dialogue that is opened up through the use of adult learning, profiles and the ensuing formative assessment is designed to assist the student practitioner author their professional voice, or at the very least become accountable to the discursive practices which shape it.

3. Teaching Discursive Analysis

Behaviour then is not just about what you do but it is also about what you say: how what you think translates to action. As a teacher the behaviour of a student is all the information that you have for an assessment. We have emphasised so far from this perspective there is no separation of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Cherryholmes comments:

> The act of stating is doing something...All speech is action, and some of what is said can be true or false. When one says something one is doing something, and its meaning is relative to setting, context, rules, and so forth. What is done with an utterance is material. If all speech is action, there is no firm distinction between discourse and practice. All discourse is material (1988, p.7).

Cherryholmes also refers to how we project texts and discourses onto the world around us through 'speech acts'. Discourses include what is spoken:

> Structuration is the dual process by which individuals create social processes and institutions through their choices and actions, and the latter both constrain and provide opportunities for the former (Giddens 1979, pp.66-73; Cherryholmes, 1988, p.8).

Therefore what students say and don't say as an aspect of their thinking becomes part of the assessment process. Ian Falk (1994) highlights the notion that it is the discourse that is the learning. It is the discursive change that provides the assessor with assessment criteria to measure learning. At the same time, Falk raises the issue of what he terms 'discursive colonisation'.

Discursive colonisation is the process of learning which occurs when learner discourses are matched to what is in the teacher's mind. The teacher values a particular form of knowledge and through the introduction of particular texts and positioning of particular speech acts constructs the valued subject knowledge.

For the authors of this paper, this was a difficult issue given the professional discourse students were being asked to consider. It involved preventing discursive colonisation by equipping students with the skills to deconstruct and reconstruct their learning pathways. Teachers needed frameworks to assist in maximising the students' ability to do this as well as providing mechanisms for making their decisions transparent.

We therefore sought to construct profiles which were maps to guide the construction and evaluation of discursive practices. This was designed so that students could locate and demonstrate their own attitudes, skills and knowledge (discourse) in relation to professional discursive requirements.

It is important here to emphasise the philosophy of the course:

> A basic premise of the Department is that the goal of welfare practice is social change to redress structural inequalities and injustice and to seek to remedy the various forms of distress of men, women and children in Australian society. Both socio-structural change and personal change can be complementary strategies towards more equal and just society...welfare workers in the community have a particular responsibility to work with disadvantaged groups. Workers must aim to expand the power and resources of these groups (Department of Vocational Education and Training, Tasmania, 1996).

If we juxtapose this with the following remark by Billington, an interesting alliance is created:

> Concepts of normality apply to all sorts of ideas we have about ourselves and for which we set standards : 'a healthy body', 'a stable personality', 'sanity', 'a normal family', 'a proper man or woman', and so on. Moreover they institute ways of exercising power through disciplinary mechanisms ...psychological in character...through school rooms, welfare offices, hospitals, mental institutions, prisons, families and workplaces, through the cultural practice of welfare workers and others (1991, p.42).

The authors believed that the principles of poststructural theory reveal how educators play an inevitable part in the cultural production of normalisation processes or can play a part in the disruption of those processes which disadvantage individuals and social groups.

It was crucial here to bear in mind Derrida, Barthes, Foucault and others who stressed that behaviour is representational - symbolic - indicative of the interaction of particular discourses which represent the polemics of values, political theory and organisational change. This includes silencing other discourses. People do not internalise consensual norms and behave accordingly - giving a stable or conflictual society - they participate in the production of the conditions which allow for their subjective experience.

Poststructuralism thus examines the organisation of meaning, how it is produced and maintained as forms of heterogenous power, which forms the basis of social relationships and in the constitution of subjectivity. Foucault suggests that these power relationships are established through discursive practices - 'discourses' - operating subjectively. Power is produced historically through knowledge systems.

As Chris Weedon puts it:

> language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organisation and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed (1987, p.21).

Again certain key words appear here - ideas, language, values, knowledge and their connection with power and social behaviour - signified meanings and their consequent political material effects. Attitudes become a necessity in the assessment of competencies demanding that the learner redresses structural inequalities and injustice.

The philosophy of the course stated here is clearly a discourse itself - a positioning of knowledge and power. The authors posit that students training within this context are required to address the relationship of their own developing professional voice to this discursive position.

4. Bloom's Taxonomies

Bloom's affective and cognitive taxonomies provided the authors with a construct for meeting many of the above demands. They provide explicit criteria, expressed in behavioural terms, which can be applied to the assessment process. Competency is demonstrated by the highest level of the Bloom's taxonomy ie., evaluation at the cognitive level and characterisation at the affective level. Appendices 2 and 3 represent these frameworks across the course semesters.

Bloom's taxonomies is a framework very much grounded in structuralist principles, yet as educators we were able to utilise the framework in a poststructural way. We emphasised above that inherent to social welfare practice is the production of power - power seen as something positive and beneficial and not necessarily negative. This participation is unavoidable (ie., discourse positioning is unavoidable, albeit times not disclosed).

The focus became about constructing Bloom's taxonomies in such a way that students make sense of their own discursive frameworks and their impact on the way they see the world and the practice which results from this. At the same time, the taxonomies have a linguistic construction which can be utilised to express the knowledge and attitudes generated through the philosophy of the course.

The first stage was to develop a map that related the appropriate cognitive and affective taxonomy standards to each semester of the course (see Appendices 2 and 3). These maps were then used to rewrite the Bannerman profiles for the modules Fieldwork and Professional Development (FPD) 1, 2, 3 and 4. We devised descriptions that reflected the affective domain and made the language coherent and consistent for the cognitive domain. Appendix 4 shows the results for FPD 2 .

Examples of these descriptions at the competent level are:

Cognitive	Affective
formulate	propose
apply	display
categorise	explain
distinguish	describe
relate	propose
initiate	follow
analyse	report

Note that competency here in FPD 2 is located at the semester 2 level of the taxonomies (refer again to Appendices 2 and 3): that is valuing and analysis. The 'not yet competent' levels reflect taxonomy levels and language descriptors, required in the first semester or during the learning of the second semester before competency is achieved.

One appropriate vehicle for this process is exemplified through selection criteria established from the two taxonomies and applied to journalling. Journalling has been integral to the course since 1993 and reflects the crux of the adult learning process in that it is an essential device by which students reflect and act upon their learning process. Within the context of training to be a welfare worker, the process of ongoing reflection and action is considered a core skill for a competent practitioner.

Journalling continues the dialogical process outside the classroom context. It is this dialogical process which characterises the teaching methodology practised within the course. In addition to the profiles the above mentioned maps (Appendices 2 and 3) were utilised in constructing an additional profile which related to journalling (see Appendix 5).

The feedback from both staff and students has been particularly favourable. Not only have staff been able to explain the assessment standard to students, they have found it extremely effective in applying a consistent, but progressive standard across the course. The benefit of a consistent standard framed up in this way is that it does not confine people to any particular method as such eg., a student group can negotiate to submit written journals periodically through the module, or they can undertake verbal journalling at the beginning of each session, or any other variation, as long as it demonstrates the standard for that semester.

But journalling is not just a dialogue - to be this would be without political context - it is a discourse analysis carried out by the student and assessed by the teacher. It is this which gives the formative assessment process the particular competency the authors wished to construct - the relationship between attitudes, knowledge, social behaviour and political power.

It is the knowledge/power (discourse) positions in the journal that need to be assessed. It is important for the educator to invite the student to consider the dominant or preferred position taken and to explicate the rationale for the choice. As Davies states:

> we can...develop ways to give them a speaking voice, ways that make visible the coercive power of discourse and structure and also make visible both the ways in which that silencing and marginalisation can be disrupted (1994, p.77).

In conclusion, the authors were assessing behaviours classified to increasing levels of sophistication using Bloom's taxonomies of affective and cognitive domains. A series of student profiles were constructed to reflect student progress matched across both domains. This technological tool did not supplant the philosophy of the course and indeed poststructural principles such as discourse analysis, have assisted the development of this assessment process. Hitherto claims of subjective, and therefore non-valid, attitudinal assessment have been clearly connected to the professional practice of social welfare work. In 1996 this revised taxonomy framework was incorporated into the new syllabus

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Appendix 1 - Student Profile Developed for the Module Fieldwork and Professional Development 2 (PD 2)

AREA	Elementary	Developing	Proficient (Competent)	Highly Proficient
Accept responsibility for own learning	Has limited awareness of own strengths and weaknesses. Has some difficulty in identifying learning goals and strategies. Needs direction. Has limited understanding of how to evaluate learning. Demonstrates a lack of initiative in learning tasks. Has limited ability to identify areas for future development. Needs a lot of assistance to develop learning contract.	Beginning to demonstrate some skill in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Is able to identify some learning goals and strategies. Needs some direction. Beginning to identify ways to evaluate learning. Demonstrates some ability to self evaluate. Is able to develop learning contract with assistance. Demonstrates some ability to identify areas for future development.	Demonstrates ability to identify goals to address professional development needs. Demonstrates ability to identify strategies to address learning foals. Demonstrates ability to identify means of evaluation of learning. Demonstrates ability to evaluate learning. Demonstrates ability to identify areas for future professional development. Is able to devise with limited assistance learning contract which encompasses goals, strategies, evaluative measures, etc.	Demonstrates initiative in devising own learning contract which sets out clearly goals, strategies, evaluation. Demonstrates well developed analytical skills In identifying future learning needs. Demonstrates initiative in seeking knowledge, developing skills, etc.
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

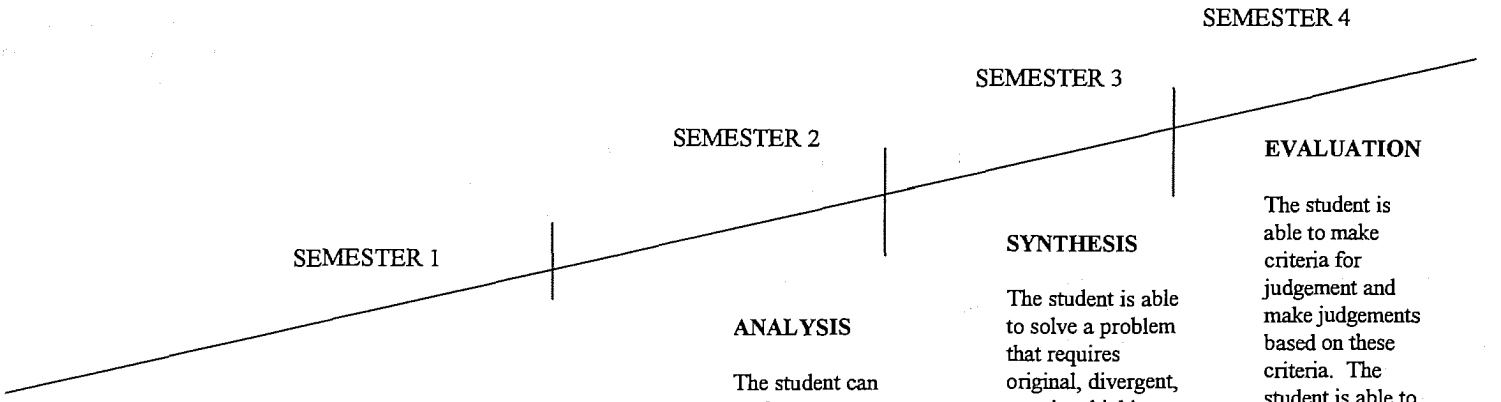
AREA	Elementary	Developing	Proficient (Competent)	Highly Proficient
The relationship between values, social issues and professional practice	Has difficulty in identifying own values. Has difficulty in recognising values underpinning social issues. Has difficulty in making link between own values and those implicit in social issues. Has difficulty in identifying the impact of values in welfare work practice. Has difficulty in making link between conflicting views and differing value bases.	Beginning to distinguish own values. Beginning to distinguish values underpinning social issues. Beginning to distinguish the link between values and stance taken on social issues. Beginning to contrast differing value basis on professional practice. Beginning to analyse the impact of conflicting values on professional practice.	Is able to articulate own value base. Is able to distinguish the link between one's value base and stance on social issues. Demonstrates an ability to analyse the impact of value base on professional practice. Demonstrates an ability to distinguish between different value stances in the professional context. Demonstrates an ability to analyse the impact of conflicting values in the professional context.	Is able to clearly articulate own values. Demonstrates clearly an ability to analyse values implicit in individual's stance on social issues. Demonstrates clearly an ability to analyse the impact of values on professional practice. Demonstrates clearly an ability to analyse the impact of conflicting values stance in the professional practice context.
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				
Code of Ethics	Has little understanding of a code of ethics. Has difficulty in making link between code of ethics and welfare practice.	Beginning to demonstrate knowledge of code of ethics in classroom discussion. Beginning to understand the relationship between code of ethics and welfare practice.	Demonstrates ability to apply code of ethics in practice setting.	Demonstrates well developed understanding of code of ethics and application in practice. Is able to identify potential ethical dilemmas for practitioners.
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

AREA	Elementary	Developing	Proficient (Competent)	Highly Proficient
Roles and responsibilities of welfare worker	Demonstrates very limited understanding of role of worker in a welfare agency. Has limited knowledge of range of activities undertaken by welfare workers. Demonstrates little understanding of the notion of 'accountability' and its application to practice.	Beginning to identify some aspects of the role of a welfare worker in an agency. Beginning to demonstrate knowledge or range of activities undertaken by welfare workers. Beginning to define notion of 'accountability' and identify impact on practice.	Demonstrates understanding of the role of a welfare worker in an agency. Demonstrates knowledge of range of activities undertaken by welfare worker. Demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between accountability and practice.	Is able to clearly define the role of a welfare worker in an agency. Demonstrates extensive knowledge of the range of activities carried out by welfare workers in a variety of settings. Has a very clear notion of accountability in welfare practice.
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				
Purpose of fieldwork	Has little understanding of purpose of fieldwork.	Beginning to identify some aspects of purpose of fieldwork.	Is able to define the purpose of fieldwork.	Has a very clear understanding of purpose of fieldwork.
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

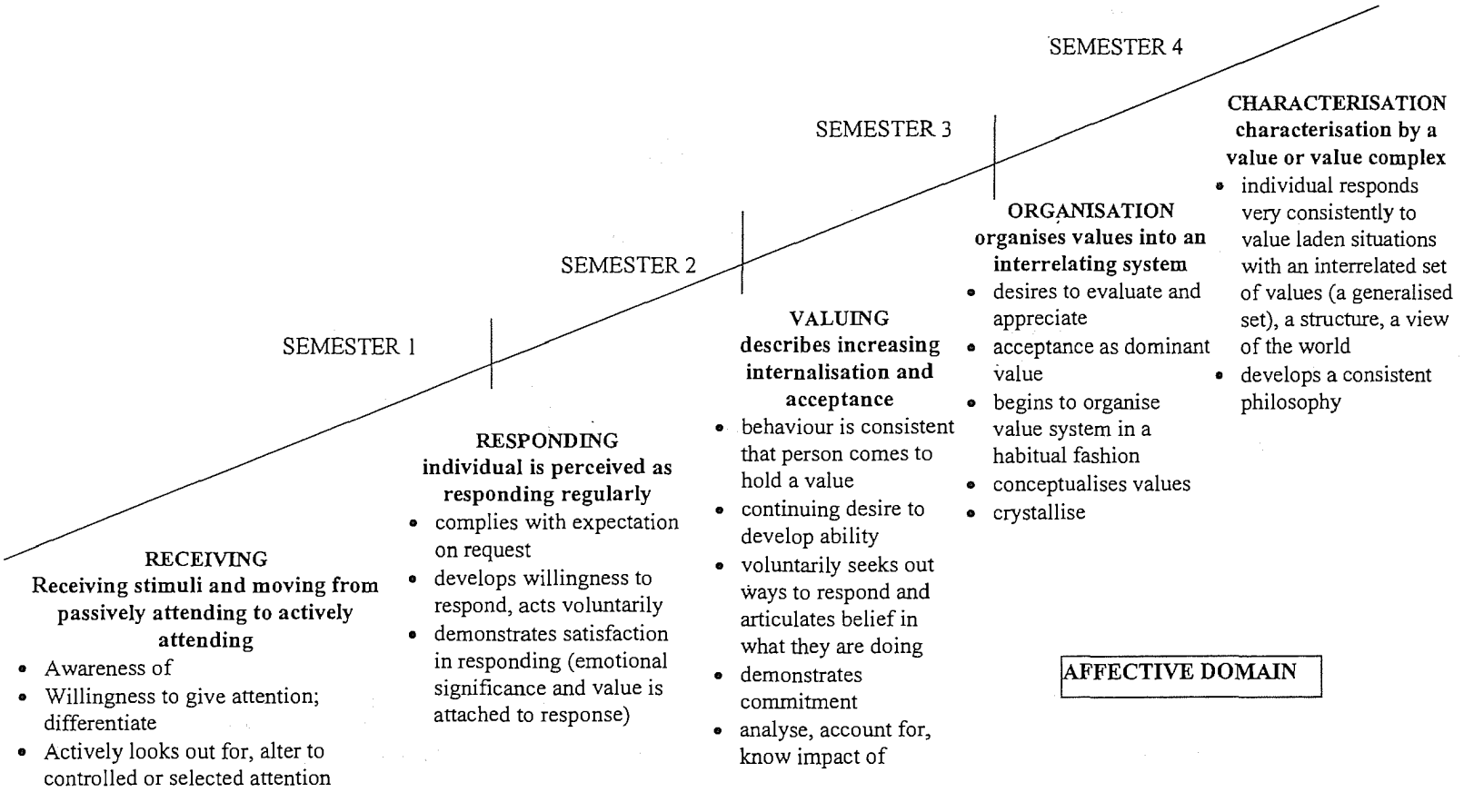
AREA	Elementary	Developing	Proficient (Competent)	Highly Proficient
Knowledge of welfare industry	Has difficulty in defining what is meant by 'welfare industry'. Has difficulty in identifying organisations which are part of the industry. Has limited knowledge of the structure of the industry. Has difficulty in identifying practice issues pursuant to the industry.	Beginning to demonstrate an understanding of the term 'welfare industry'. Has some knowledge of human service organisations included in the industry. Beginning to demonstrate knowledge of the structure of the industry at a number of government/non government levels. Beginning to identify some of the practice issues of concern to the industry.	Has a clear understanding of the meaning of the term 'welfare industry'. Is able to identify and compare human services in the welfare industry. Demonstrates an understanding of the organisation of the industry at a Federal, State, local non-government level. Is able to describe the current dominant practice issues in the industry. Is able to provide an analysis of some of the dominant issues in the industry.	Demonstrates a well developed knowledge and analysis of the organisation and structure of the welfare industry at a Federal, State, local government and non-government level. Is able to provide an analysis of a range of practice issues of current concern to the industry.
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

AREA	Elementary	Developing	Proficient (Competent)	Highly Proficient
Utilisation and application of a journal	Has some difficulty in seeing the journal as a tool to be used for self assessment. Demonstrates infrequent and irregular use of journal. Has difficulty maintaining focus on learning in journal entries. Journal entries tend to be descriptive rather than analytic.	Beginning to acknowledge and utilise journal as self assessment tool. Demonstrates increasing use of journal. Demonstrates some ability to evaluate learning progress-journal entries reflect more of an analytic approach.	Demonstrates an understanding of the role of a journal as a self assessment tool. Demonstrates regular and frequent use of journal. Demonstrates ability to record in journal entries which reflect an analysis of learning experience.	Demonstrates an attitude which reflects a clear understanding of the role of journals in self assessment. Demonstrates frequent and regular use of the journal in regard to recording and as a reference document to assess progress. Demonstrates ability to reword succinctly an analysis of learning.
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

Appendix 2 - Taxonomy of Educational Objectives - the Classification of Educational Goals in the Cognitive Domain in the Welfare Work Course
(from Handbook I: Cognitive Domain by Bloom, B.S., Krathwohl, D.R., Masia, B.B., 1964)



Appendix 3 - Taxonomy of Educational Objectives - the Classification of Educational Goals in the Affective Domain in the Welfare Work Course
(from Handbook II: Affective Domain by Bloom, B.S., Krathwohl, D.R., Masia, B.B., 1964)



Appendix 4 - Revised Student Profiles for the Modules Fieldwork and Professional Development (FPD) 1-4

AREA	1. Not Yet Competent	2. Not Yet Competent	3. Not Yet Competent	Competent
Accept responsibility for own learning	Able to locate strengths and weaknesses in the area of F and PD learning needs Able to express learning goals and strategies (with assistance) Able to list ways of evaluating own learning (with assistance) Able to locate areas for self evaluation Able to develop learning contract (with assistance) Able to recognise key areas for future development	Able to identify strengths and weaknesses in the area of learning needs Able to identify learning goals and strategies (with assistance) Able to outline ways of evaluating own learning Able to outline self evaluation strategies Able to develop learning contract (with assistance) Able to identify some areas for future development	Able to determine strengths and weaknesses in the area of F & PD learning needs Able to identify F & PD learning goals and strategies (with assistance) Able to detail ways of evaluating own learning Able to perform self evaluate Able to develop learning contract (with assistance) Able to identify areas for future F & PD development	Demonstrate ability to formulate and propose own learning contract which sets out goals, strategies, and forms of evaluation Able to apply and display analytical skills In identifying ongoing learning needs Able to apply initiative in seeking knowledge, and developing professional practice skills within F & PD
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

AREA	1. Not Yet Competent	2. Not Yet Competent	3. Not Yet Competent	Competent
The relationship between values, social issues and professional practice	Not yet able to identify own values Difficulty in locating own value base and stance on social issues Difficulty in identifying the impact of conflicting values on professional practice	Able to determine own values Able to determine the link between one's value bases and stance on social issues Able to explain the impact of conflicting values on professional practice Able to identify conflicting values in professional practice context	Able to relate and discuss own values Able to describe and demonstrate the link between one's value bases and stance on social issues Able to explain the impact of their own values on professional practice Able to explain the impact of conflicting values in a professional practice context (F & PD)	Able to describe and transmit own values Able to categorise and explain values implicit in ones own stance on social issues and the societal/structural context of these values Able to analyse and explain the impact of their own values on professional practice Able to identify and analyse the impact of conflicting values stance in the professional practice context (F & PD)
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

AREA	1. Not Yet Competent	2. Not Yet Competent	3. Not Yet Competent	Competent
Professional practice Issues	Able to restate knowledge, skills and attributes of a competent social welfare worker Limited recall of the role of a social welfare worker in a range of agencies and settings Able to outline some of the activities undertaken by a social welfare worker Able to state issues of accountability /confidentiality/ethics and how they might relate to own practice Able to reproduce code of ethics and list use in practice Able to identify dew core practice issues and ethical dilemmas in their own practice	Able to explain knowledge, skills and attributes of a competent social welfare worker Able to outline the role of a social welfare worker in a range of agencies and settings Able to identify some of the activities undertaken by a social welfare worker Able to identify issues of accountability /confidentiality/ethics and how they might relate to own practice Demonstrate reproduction of code of ethics and list use in practice Able to identify core practice issues and potential ethical dilemmas in their own practice	Able to explain and report on the knowledge, skills and attributes of a competent social welfare worker Able to explain the role of a social welfare worker in a range of agencies and settings Able to explain the activities undertaken by a social welfare worker Beginning to construct the relationship between accountability/ confidentiality/ ethics and practice Able to demonstrate familiarity with the code of ethics and application in practice (FWA) Able to detail core practice issues and ethical dilemmas for their own practice	Able to distinguish and describe the knowledge, skills and attributes of a competent social welfare worker Able to distinguish and describe the role of a social welfare worker in a range of agencies and settings Able to categorise and explain the range of activities undertaken by a social welfare worker Able to distinguish the relationship between accountability/ confidentiality/ ethics and practice Able to identify and apply codes of ethics in practice (FWA) Able to relate core practice issues/ potential ethical dilemmas for their own practice (F & PD)
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

AREA	1. Not Yet Competent	2. Not Yet Competent	3. Not Yet Competent	Competent
Appropriate level of skill in Assertiveness and Conflict Resolution	Demonstrate ability to recall perspectives on conflict management Able to recite some approaches to conflict management consistent with Community Services Industry standards Able to recall some of the principles of conflict management Able to list conflict management strategies in a range of practice settings Able to express the potential impact of their behaviour on the conflict process	Able to identify perspective's on conflict management Able to outline a preferred approach to conflict management consistent with Community Services Industry standards (with assistance) Able to state some of the principles of conflict management Able to state basic conflict management strategies which could be used in a range of practice settings Able to identify the impact of their behaviour on the conflict process	Able to identify perspectives on conflict management Able to develop a preferred approach to conflict management consistent with accepted Community Services Industry standards Able to determine some of the principles of conflict management Able to develop conflict management strategies in a range of practice settings Able to explain the impact of their behaviour on the conflict process	Able to categorise, describe and demonstrate a range of appropriate assertiveness/ conflict management strategies in a range of community services context Able to identify a range of perspectives on conflict management Able to relate and propose a preferred approach to conflict management consistent with Community Services Industry standards Able to initiate and follow in structured settings the principles of conflict management Able to initiate and follow appropriate conflict management strategies in a range of practice settings Able to analyse and report on the impact of their behaviour on the conflict process
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

AREA	1. Not Yet Competent	2. Not Yet Competent	3. Not Yet competent	Competent
Purpose of Fieldwork A and relationship to P.L.C.	Able to identify the general purpose of fieldwork A Able to recall linkages between own professional practice issues and fieldwork practicum A Able to state the respective roles and responsibilities of Fieldwork personnel including the FW supervisor, liaison officer and student practitioner	Able to detail the general purpose of fieldwork A Able to outline the linkages between own professional practice issues and fieldwork practicum A Able to outline the respective roles and responsibilities of Fieldwork personnel including the FW supervisor, liaison officer and student practitioner	Able to explain the general purpose of fieldwork A Able to describe linkages between own professional practice issue and fieldwork practicum A Able to specify the respective roles and responsibilities of Fieldwork personnel including the FW supervisor, liaison officer and student practitioner	Able to describe and explain the purpose of fieldwork A Able to distinguish and describe linkages between own professional practice issues and fieldwork practicum A Able to specify and explain the respective roles and responsibilities of Fieldwork personnel including the FW supervisor, liaison officer and student practitioner
Teacher Assessment				
Student Assessment				

Appendix 5 - Additional Student Profile Related to Journalling

COGNITIVE DOMAIN

Semester 1 **Comprehension:**

Explain, Discuss
Describe

Application:

Regular entries to

relate

to development of learning: Action - Reflection - Action

Semester 2 **Analysis:**

Analyse the integration/inter relate learning process.
Assess all modules

across

modules.

FIELDWORK PLACEMENT A

Semester 3 **Synthesis:**

Incorporate learning to their
model of practice - the student as a worker

FIELDWORK PLACEMENT B

Semester 4 **Synthesis/Evaluation:**

Make criteria for judgement and judge the value of material and how it can be used as a worker

AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

Semester 1 **Awareness:**

Willingness to Receive:

Controlled/selected attention ..... active participation

Responding:

Recognise value of journalling process

Semester 2 **Acceptance:**

Can do it if required to

Valuing/Preference:

Demonstrate a commitment to journalling process. Regular entries experimentation with different processes

FIELDWORK PLACEMENT A (Commitment/to try)

Semester 3 **Organisation:**

Value what journalling process is useful to them; how they use it and why

Organisation of a Value System:

FIELDWORK PLACEMENT B

Semester 4 **Characterisation:**

Journals used and act consistently as

learning

developmental tool

Taking Gender from the Inside Out

Sabina Leitmann and Fran Crawford

1. Who We Are

We both entered the social work course at the University of Western Australia in 1974, Fran having a first degree in anthropology and Sabina a psychology degree. On graduation we practised social work in a diversity of Western Australian settings. Sabina worked primarily in the field of health and mental health and Fran in public welfare provision, with a particular emphasis on rural social work and working with Aboriginal people. Our paths crossed again in the early 1980s when we both became academics in social work.

In writing this paper, we position ourselves as feminists, educators, researchers and practitioners.

In the early 1970s when we were both social work students, concepts such as patriarchy, gender analysis, or even sex discrimination did not have a place in the curriculum. At the same time, all around us the second phase of western feminism was increasingly visible (Stanley and Wise 1993). Each of us in different ways was stirred and inevitably shaped by the cultural revolution of the time. This movement gave us ways of understanding and naming those patterns of lived experience that created and normalised the oppression of women and others. We came to see feminist theory and gender analysis as a vital and integral part of effective social work practice.

Now in the 1990s, having won space for gender analysis, we are increasingly aware of the complexities and contradictions in our project. The more we reflect on our own social work program and teaching, the less certain we become about how to purposefully facilitate student discourse on gender in ways that will lead to creative critical practice. Unpacking the ways gender inscribes itself on social interactions is only the beginning. Additional but integral to this is our need to explicitly connect the workings of gender with the workings of other categories used to marginalise and privilege. How can we enter into an open exploration with others, both students and staff, without retreating into platititudes and superficial rhetoric, silence or intolerance?

In fourteen years of reflected practice, we have come to appreciate 'the multi-faceted nature of women's oppression and gendered power relations' (Pettman 1992, p.150). Women do not experience their gender in isolation from their class, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality and so on. Time and again, when we attempt to explore this with students, they interpret the categorical plays of power on each of us as meaning nothing more nor less than the liberal understanding of the uniqueness of each human being.

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The challenge is how to teach from a multi-centred postmodernist perspective without it fragmenting into individualism (Sands and Nuccio 1992). We want to work with students starting in their biographical lived experience, working out to connect with others and identifying the structural plays of power in this. We want students to be able to replicate this journey in the world outside university on graduation and it to shape their ways of working.

What we want to investigate in this paper are the styles of pedagogy that will do justice to these emergent understandings and that can be undertaken in the present climate of economic rationalism and the dismissive labelling of talk of fairness as political correctness.

2. Setting the Scene

We know from lived experience and academic discourse that the everyday workings of gender, race, class and ethnicity interconnect to maintain an unjust world. We know how power inscribes positions of privilege. To work towards the social work aim of creating a more equitable society requires a grounded exploration of how power plays out structurally. The struggle to make and hold the pedagogical base through which this exploration might be done has been, in our experience, ongoing, contested and uncertain in its outcomes for both staff and students.

Feminist theory has provided a way of weaving together the longstanding bifurcation between the micro and macro of social work practice (Dominelli 1992). At some levels the impact of such a shift in framing has been profound. This is clearly seen in the way we now address domestic violence and sexual assault (Marchant and Wearing 1987; Hamner and Statham 1989; Weeks and Wilson 1995). At the same time, in some field the influence of feminist thinking and other critical theories remains invisible or strongly resisted. Canadian researcher, Mullaly (1996), surveyed 16 introductory social work texts (American and Canadian, but a number of which are used in Australia), and found that only an average of 7% of page space was given to exploring the place of critical theory, including feminist theory (1.3%), in social work practice.

Feminist critical theory offers a means of understanding the ways in which the multiplicity of structural factors interweave marks of privilege and power between all of us. The particular positioning of any person is inscribed not only by gender, but also by her or his class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and other potential signifiers of identity (Stanley and Wise 1993). To implement this understanding in social work curricula, we cannot look to one form of structural analysis to inform all possible readings of a practice situation. There will be a complex, multifarious understanding, not a single one. A reliance on gender analysis alone (or class or race), is incapable of providing a detailed explanation of all inequities that confront practitioners.

The Australian Association of Social Workers may draw satisfaction in requiring content on race, ethnicity, gender and class to be added throughout the curricula. In commenting on similar moves in the standardised North American social work curricula, Sands and Nuccio (1992) astutely observe, these 'very categories promulgated to stem oppression are themselves oppressive in their superficiality' (p.493). An instrumental focus directed solely at meeting the accreditation requirements too often result in a curriculum where the privileged can continue

to question why the marginalised won't change despite all we have done for them. We have observed that requirements on including an awareness of Aboriginality in all units may be met simply and expediently by inviting an Aboriginal person, often also a student, to address the class on all they need to know. The core of the unit remains untouched while the lecturer confidently conveys a sense of having met accreditation requirements.

This move succeeds because of the selectivity of our professional field in acknowledging the practice relevance of feminist and other critical theories. We are well aware of these tensions as we undertake our task of teaching gender analysis. When it comes to our students, what does the uneasy alliance between practice actualities and feminist thinking mean? It means different things for different students.

Some students, usually older women, through their lived experience, are open and committed to exploring the dynamics of gender. The bulk of our students, both male and female, though not hostile or dismissive of the structural issues of gender, are waiting to be taught its relevance.

A small group of students of both sexes actively ward off any attempt by us to engage them with the curricula. They do not relate the content of this aspect of the course to their vision of themselves as future practitioners. Their autonomous individuality feels assaulted by the requirement that they move beyond technical and practical ways of knowing. The idea of transformational shifts at the personal, professional and social level is seen as impositional, political, dogmatic and dangerous. Such students resist.

The struggles we have in the classroom are not all that different from the ongoing struggle to make legitimate places for feminist understandings in social work practice generally. The difference is we have an authoritative base to require stakeholders' participation in reflecting on the workings of gender. How do we use this power position to take gender awareness from the inside world of learning to the outside world of action?

3. How Gender is taught in our School

Our course objectives commit us to incorporating a critical perspective on issues of class, race, ethnicity and gender across the whole of the Bachelor of Social Work curriculum. In meeting this requirement we have observed that, other than for the dimension of class, it is easy to be seduced into introducing students to power and domination as if they are add-on factors rather than generative of social life (Pettman 1992, p.24). There have been many critiques of the tendency to 'add others in'. What seems progressive on the surface turns out to inevitably support the status quo and deny the possibility of transformation (Olesen 1994).

As a school we have not articulated precisely the learning outcomes attached to the incorporation of a gender analysis into the curriculum. The authors of this paper would envision student learning outcomes in the following terms. On graduation, students would be able to

- reflect on their own autobiographies and lived experiences in shaping their gender (in)sensitivity
- analyse the social construction of femininity and masculinity and the ways in which these produce and reproduce gender inequality and privileging
- use a feminist reading to identify the diverse ways in which social structures produce and legitimise particular practices and the ways in which these may be challenged and reshaped by those who find these oppressive
- understand the interconnecting ways that power, domination and resistance are played out around gender, ethnicity, race, class and other marks of difference
- utilise these understandings to shape everyday practices to make them more equitable and empowering and reflexively recognise the contextual limitations to achieving this.

These learning outcomes we consider reflect the need to move beyond the disembodied and decontextualised abstractions often represented in critical pedagogy. Students need to be provided with the space to give voice to the multiplicity of experiences and positionings around oppressive practices as they locate themselves within the feminist discourse (Ellsworth 1989; Middleton 1995). In describing how gender is taught within our school it becomes painfully clear to us how practised we are at initiating students into someone else's knowledge and how difficult it is 'to keep to foreground the rich emotionality of our own and others personal narratives' (Middleton 1995, p.95) in developing theories for practices.

Students are introduced to critical perspectives in the first semester of their four year course. The diversity between students as to experiences and expectations is perhaps greatest at this stage. First year educators are conscious of developing a climate of trust in which these students can feel free to articulate and dialogue their opinions around issues like gender and race. At this stage our priority is to get students talking. Films and personal reflective exercises are used to this end. At the same time, content is covered that provides way of developing rigour in critical analysis of these experiences.

Across the next two semesters of the course there is a shift in focus from social theory to gaining practice knowledge and skills in working at the micro-interpersonal level. Students then go out on a field education placement for one semester before returning for a heavily academic third year in which critical theory and connected community oriented skills for change takes a central place. At this stage it becomes evident to us through tutorial discussions, as well as written assessment, that there are some students who have so far navigated their way through the course with little internalisation or processing of the content they have covered on gender, race and ethnicity.

4. What We Uncover in the Classroom

For us this third year is the most problematic space for analysing gender. We uncover students who openly hold the position that differences between people can be fully explained by reference to the unique individuality of each of us. 'We have our opinions of the nature of the world. Who is to say which interpretation of experience has more value than any of the others?' Students take the relativism that feminist understandings inherently brings and use it to collapse the moral drive of feminism into one of indifference.

In a different tack, we find students who say that they understand feminism was important in the past but now that the battle has been won, we are in a post-feminist world. So one young female student said, 'I know how to stand up for myself and get what I want. I think any woman can do the same nowadays'. A more sophisticated variation on this theme is the claim that because we have individually rejected a patriarchal framing of gender, the problem is dealt with. We can simply turn ourselves into androgynous beings with a balanced male and female sense of self.

Victimology is another theme clearly evident in student responses. It takes two main forms. In the first, women are cast in a role in which they have no choice, but to permanently experience powerlessness. This view is encapsulated in the sentiment 'men are bastards and they will get you every time'. Such a view offers little in terms of taking action for change. A variation of this theme and one primarily expressed by male students, is that 'men are victims too, there is no difference, we all suffer'. Often an attendant suggestion is that by the very act of women challenging the patriarchal world, men lose out and that is wrong.

Perhaps the most worrying classroom interaction is the one where women students with a passionate commitment to a feminist approach in practice are given ample space by other students in which to give voice and fill out the allocated class time. Their actions rescue the unengaged students from testifying as to their position. Yet to us this silence speaks volumes on student avoidance of engagement with gender analysis at a personal level.

We are implicated in the resistance we uncover. Students know that we are not neutral teachers with an objective package of knowledge. We are not silent about our feminist positioning though compared to some we may be judged as hardly radical. Nor do we claim to be all-knowing or without our own failures in addressing these issues. Often we unconsciously follow the same thought patterns as those we critique in our students. Our dilemma is that if we were to hid our value commitment so as not to intimidate some students, we would, in practice, valorise a conception of knowledge that is profoundly anti-feminist in suggesting that knowledge is value-free, objective (disconnected from the knower) and not emancipatory. Cochrane-Smith (1995) speaks of the tensions 'between inviting students to formulate new and perhaps disconcerting insights, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, using the power of one's position as a professor to impose those perspectives' (p.561).

This is the rub for us as feminist educators. We do not want to impose a set body of knowledge on all students in our classes. At the same time we do not believe it should be possible for students to graduate without having struggled to build an awareness of their own positionings and privilegings. Is it possible to create an educational setting that sustains relationships between teacher and student enabling critical engagement by each of us with the discourses structuring our and their lives? How can we make this happen?

We are not alone is posing this question. In a recent article Thompson and McGivern (1995) explore some different ways in which to engage reluctant management students, particularly men, to become involved in discussions around gender. Like us, these educators are caught in a conundrum about the level and intensity of intervention to pursue in raising consciousness in the area of gender.

5. Classroom Engagements that Students can take into Practice

At an abstract level the road forward for feminist pedagogy is clear. With varying success, we work at Lather's (1991) suggestion that feminist education must consist of critical inquiry which is student-centred and responsive to their desires, needs and experiences. Lather sums this up as being a 'self-sustaining process of critical analysis and enlightened action' (p.80).

Exactly what does this mean in our practice? As experienced social work practitioners we have skills to meet with our students in a manner that facilitates engagement. We do this in beginning with students' lived experiences and asking them to reflect on these through journal writing, classroom discussion, collaborative ethnographies, poetry reading, film studies and communication exercises. We challenge students to name the interactions and power plays in all of these exercises. In dialoguing about the consciousness revealed in this naming process, we work to honour students' perceptions while asking that they develop an awareness of structural patternings. Sounds easy, doesn't it?

At this point we will allow Cochrane-Smith (1995), writing about her experience of teaching race to education students in the United States, to say it all for us:

> Although I would like to believe that my courses have a lasting impact on students and that all discourse is genuine, I am resigned to the reality that part of what it represents is the effort of a very smart and successful group of students who have figured out how to talk the talk and play the game. (p.559)

Our fear is, for many students, ' talking the talk and playing the game' is the most powerful and enduring lesson that they take from inside the classroom to practice outside. This lesson of superficial accommodation to context in order to 'get on' allows students to sustain a vision of themselves as an effective practitioner who does not need a feminist and critical consciousness.

We are sometimes embarrassed at how ill-prepared our students are to work with Aboriginal women, with mentally ill women and women with disabilities. We are further embarrassed at how unconscious many are of their inadequacies, displaying rather a self-satisfied certainty that as a qualified social worker, they are competent to deal with the human condition in all its diversity. As educators, we consider it our individual responsibility to equip students with an understanding of the need for life-long learning. This requires a continual review of our own teaching practices, curriculum and university context, rather than falling into the easy out of blaming the student.

Gazing around our own academic corridors 'walking the walk and playing the game' are not unknown activities. Over the next twelve months, as a result of Federal government policy, Australian Schools of Social Work will sustain budget cutbacks of up to 20%. Who will wear these costs? How will these costs filter through in the shaping of the curriculum? As academics can we use our critical consciousness to keep the marginal central to attention. What does it say about what we teach if we cannot? If students tell us that, as practitioners, contextual limitations override theoretical understanding, will we be able to point to successes in our own context to disconfirm this belief? Finally, in posing these questions, we are

painfully aware that our positioning on the importance of a feminist critical consciousness is not one shared by all our colleagues.

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Professional Identity and Continuing Education

Alison McMichael

1. Introduction

A research project focused on the status of Continuing Professional Education (CPE) for social workers, particularly those in teaching hospitals, and identifying barriers and incentives for social workers to undertake CPE. Reflection on a growing awareness of a significant number of social workers' apparent resistance to continuing their education in a systematic way led to the study being undertaken. The teaching hospital context was chosen firstly as a familiar work place for the researcher, and secondly because such a context should be rich in continuing professional education opportunities.

This paper will briefly outline the methodology of the research, and then some of the findings, specifically around the issue of image of social work. Finally, some recommendations for the profession will be offered.

2. Methodology

The research was undertaken primarily from a qualitative perspective, with the data arising from interviewing focus groups, guided by a structured questionnaire. The focus groups consisted of three levels of social workers, clustered via stratified sampling, in each of six metropolitan hospitals in Melbourne: coordinators of CPE programs (17), experienced workers of more than five years experience (25), and new graduates of less than two years experience (8), a total of 50 social workers. The selection of six hospitals out of a total of 16 metropolitan teaching hospitals was based on different regional and geographical location, number of beds and size of social work department. An extensive literature search was also undertaken.

The focus group responses were recorded on tape and then transcribed, and are presented here largely in the words of the participants. This model was based on work done by Pahl (1994), who conducted semi-structured interviews which were tape recorded and transcribed. Her data source was discursive and flowed openly from the participants, and the data then presented anecdotally. The data for this study were analysed systematically under themes which had been developed from initial unstructured discussions with some colleagues who had been selected for their appropriate knowledge. In this way, the field systematically identified critical issues for research.

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3. Major Findings

The major findings were that the profession perceives that:

- the schools of social work had not, in the past, ingrained the concept of CPE into undergraduates to the detriment of the profession;
- the AASW seems not to have accorded CPE a high enough status, hence the low priority given it by social workers;
- the result of apparent neglect by the schools and the profession has impacted on the position of social work in organisations where policy reflects status;
- the profession's image and status seem linked to the status of CPE.

During this research, there was an expressed sentiment among the social workers interviewed as to how their profession is viewed by other professionals and by the public which in turn impacts on how social workers feel about themselves. That issue was viewed in relation to CPE and opportunity or lack of opportunity to access CPE.

4. Issues of Image

Perceived Value of Social Work

New graduates thought that social work was valued because of the complex 'nature of the work'. They contended that social work's value to the organisation was now mainly in the area of discharge planning, and lamented that the other social work roles, for which 'we were trained', like counselling and support, were 'secondary' in value. This was 'dissatisfying' as social workers were 'not used as well as they could be' and this had 'an adverse effect on professional development'.

New graduates also argued that, compared with other professions, social work is 'vague, uncertain and the role is unclear'. It was maintained that better utilisation of social work's knowledge would inevitably enhance the value of the profession. Cowles and Lefcowitz (1992) found that social work does present 'an unclear image' (1992, p.64) of the profession, and suggested that the distinguishing person-in-environment focus of social work be clarified to other professions.

Within the experienced worker ranks, there was a common view that social work was 'valued in pockets', that value fluctuated, and that social work was 'not valued for the things it would like to be valued for'. They claimed other profession 'do not see the value of social work' because practitioners generally do not publish or do research. Further, 'social work has an identity crisis with its self-perception'; it is 'not good at telling others' what it does, so, as a profession, 'social work is struggling now'. There seems to be a general 'blurring of boundaries' and while some social workers may be clear about their role, they were not sure that people outside the profession were.

It was suggested that social work's value was related to how well other profession were educated about social work's role. It was not easy to 'compartmentalise' social work like other professions. Appropriate referral processes are the consequence of social work's education of other professions, and this was seen as a 'constant battle'.

A coordinator stated that social work 'is of little concern to the power brokers', it is 'seen as dispensable'. One social work department however, earned the label 'lost and found department' where any insoluble problem was referred, and in that specialist hospital, social work's value was described as 'inestimable', according to the coordinator.

Perceived Status of Social Work

The status of social work was seen to vary, depending on the hospital unit. It was linked more to individual social workers than the profession as a whole - 'how they work, communicate, define social work, see themselves'. The coordinator group felt that the higher status, and indeed 'equality' of social work was more evident in the specialist psychiatric and child abuse areas, where the profession was seen to be more on a par with the other professions, speaking a 'similar language', unlike generalist medical social work.

Individually, social workers have status, but 'you have to prove yourself all the time'. it was asserted that the current changes in funding 'will make or break us', and were forcing social work to improve its status and profile. Social workers were responding to change by highlighting their unique systemic approach within the organisation and between disciplines, and were claiming some success.

Perceived Profile of Social Work

In all the groups at all levels, social work was viewed as having a 'fair bit of work to do about our profile with other professionals' in general.

Some thoughts were voiced that in the 'current competitive environment', social workers should realise that they have a 'strong contribution' to make through their expertise, particularly in the community context, and therefore an opportunity 'for others to see what we do'.

'The profile of social work is nebulous' according to the coordinator group. It fluctuates with staff changes and external preconceptions. Either social work 'is well down in the pecking order' and still declining despite a lot of work to project a better image - generally in medical social work; or social work has a high and impressive profile - in the specialist areas.

Links between CPE and Value, Status and Profile of Social Work

The new graduates asserted there was definitely a link between value and education. People who 'know what they are doing, know their role, provide a service to clients' were valued. However, there was some doubt that social work was seen as important enough by hospitals

to undertake CPE, when direct work was a priority. There was a feeling of 'mixed messages' - pressure to do the work but also to attend forums and meetings, etc. and this presented a dilemma for the vulnerable new graduates.

The experienced workers identified the personal advantages of CPE as well as the professional benefits. To be able to educate other professions with confidence and skill will 'certainly increase social work's identity'. As one said, 'a certain amount of internal strength comes from being prepared and having knowledge, and examining oneself'.

The coordinators also identified the impact of CPE on the value, status and profile of social work, perhaps even helping to clarify the social work role, but the impact was not as great as they hoped. Social work's 'different training and background' from other health professionals means there is always a 'degree to which we are not accepted' - that the profession is 'not considered academically respectable', but, social work should seek to 'maintain our difference', our unique professional traits. This becomes hard when social work is 'measuring itself in a different world' and seeking acceptance in a medical hierarchy. This dilemma is seen in this era of casemix funding, as social work struggles to identify measurable activities for funding.

Perceptions of Social Work by other Professionals and Selves

The new graduates believed that other professions' view of social work was varied. There seemed to be a 'lot of confusion about our role'. The 'nature of the work' is difficult to pinpoint, being so complex and intangible. 'Gone are the days when being a 'nice' person and doing a 'good' job is enough' (Herbert and Levin 1995, p.91).

This was perceived as a challenge for social work; to improve the profile by advertising services, educating other professions on the roles of social work and the social impact of illness, and being accessible to other professionals as well. Green's (1988) study addressed the issues of social work's apparent hazy domain and he concluded that the challenge to social work now is one of researching and marketing the profession's roles and areas of expertise.

New graduates thought that social work's self-view was generally positive. Social workers are 'pretty OK, proud, feel good, and are aware of their value'. They 'work hard, and do a good job'. However, there was also a perception that social work is 'feeling overworked, powerless', and 'more defensive' in the current climate. Energy goes on 'justifying actions', 'proving our worth', being recognised for doing a valuable job which is often 'unseen' due to the ethic of confidentiality.

Experienced workers stated that 'social work and essential' are not usually linked, rather 'social work and *useful* or *helpful*'. Other professions often do not understand what social work does, or they have a 'simplistic' view, tending 'to associate social work with tasks, and practical, menial activities', and there were often 'totally inappropriate' referrals. It was difficult to get the organisation to see beyond the acute problems and disorders of patients to the holistic focus that social work brings. Proactive training of other professions was again advocated.

Social work also appears to have a 'low status' in the community where views only change if people have good interactions with social workers. When seeing inpatients, one experienced group said that they were 'instructed' not to introduce themselves as social workers - it 'closes the door', but rather ask if the patient/family would like 'someone to talk to' as often people do not have any idea of what social work can do for them, and may not want to see one if asked directly. The profession, it was claimed, has allowed these views of social work 'to happen'.

The self view of the experienced social workers was mostly positive - feeling respected and accepted. We 'sometimes have to explain what social work does', but ultimately, it is 'the individual belief in your own value of the work you do' that counts.

There appears to be a conflict now for social work between the organisation's needs and the patient's/family's needs, and the profession has been fluctuating between 'feeling good about social work, to feeling it is all being eroded away - is it worth battling on?'. Social work was 'no longer the social conscience of the hospital'.

However, the times were seen as 'interesting' by some experienced workers who saw opportunity to become 'entrepreneurial'. They felt that their current hard work was improving their visibility, that social workers were 'finally proactive' and shifting their thinking around to where social work 'fits in to the hospital system'. This was 'stuff we never touched at university'.

According to the coordinators 'it is a question of degrees' as to how other professionals, the community and the patients view social work. 'Unless social workers value themselves, how can they expect others to value them?', said the coordinators. It was suggested that social work is 'in a state of flux', 'at a cross roads' and will 'either do well out of the changes or won't be here in five years'. Social work has some influence over its destiny, but those in power will 'make their decisions irrespective of what social work does'. Social work is being asked 'for evidence that interventions work - a more academic orientation', and its lack of profile as an 'exact science' is sometimes seen as a 'flaw'.

These coordinating social workers had a 'strong view of themselves' as well. Generally social work was seen to be positive about its capacity for work, but felt 'deskilled' with the constraints of the workplace and consequent 'radical changes' in trying to service the community.

Until recently, it was asserted social workers did 'not have a strong sense' of their contribution, but with the moves to discharge planning, early intervention and comprehensive health care, there should now be a 'greater demand' for the systemic approach of social work'. It was predicted that social work would then develop a stronger identity in certain areas, be 'able to articulate the role more clearly', and as hospital teams move towards programmatic work, social work will have more 'to offer', and therefore job satisfaction would increase.

5. Summary of Issues of Image

How social workers perceive themselves, and feel about how others see them, is an issue on which much energy has been expended. It continues to occupy the profession both in the literature and in practice. While there is identification of the facts contributing to image, there is also much creative thought about remedies, as is evidenced in this paper.

6. Schools and the Concept of CPE

A focus of the research was the status accorded CPE by the schools of social work, according to the participants who were asked if there was a *message* about CPE from the schools.

Only one of the coordinators recalled any encouragement from the schools for the need to continue their education on graduation. 'Formal education stopped when one graduated' in those days, when CPE was not readily available.

On the other hand, the experienced workers groups were divided in their recollection of CPE being raised at school. Half agreed that 'school was not where I picked up the message', while the other half stressed that it had been 'pushed'. This demonstrates some positive movement which is now being realised more fully by the new graduates, who had more positive tidings; all recalled that the schools raised the issue of CPE, some more strongly than others. Graduates will 'sink or swim' depending on whether they kept up, they were told.

Other specific academic topics were explored, including marketing of social work and organisational change.

Marketing of social work services (identification and meeting of needs) was just beginning to be mentioned to the new graduates, but was not included in any course over five years previously. This was 'not even hinted at' for the coordinators - 'this was pre-economic rationalism!'. The experienced workers stated that 'social action on behalf of the client' was the focus for them, and it was 'only later it hit home'. The new graduates observed that 'it is one of the big downfalls of the profession, that they undersold themselves' but defended the profession which they said had received 'no instruction on how to market' itself in an acceptable way. This was identified as a pressing current need.

Knowing and understanding the organisational context and how to use it have been cited as ways social work could improve its power base within organisations, according to Truswell (1985).

Organisational change had been taught to the majority of coordinators and experienced workers and to all of the new graduates, for whom it was 'a hot topic'. One new graduate recalled a significant message from school, 'There is not a lot of money out there, so prove yourself or perish. Keep educating yourself, keep providing an excellent service so people value you, as the first thing to go will be social work departments. Hospitals can't do without doctors, but when push comes to shove, they can do without social workers - or think they can'.

Lindsay (1989) found that one of three significant course inadequacies was 'work management agency survival skills' (p.33) in her study of students who graduated over a five year period from the University of Western Australia. The graduates, 84% of whom responded, were surveyed on employment experiences, which included professional development.

7. Summary of Schools and the Concept of CPE

The status accorded CPE, by the schools of social work, is growing, according to these respondents. Many practitioners feel that they did not understand the significance of CPE until they were in employment, and by then they were in an environment which supported the notion of CPE but not the actuality.

The perceived lack of rewards for CPE has obviously contributed to this omission. With the concept of CPE not formerly ingrained at undergraduate level, the profession has struggled subsequently in encouraging and accessing CPE. Now with the move towards a national CPE policy, the likelihood of schools according CPE higher status, is greater.

The recent proposal for the development of CPE programs in the University of Melbourne School of Social Work is based on the obvious 'market for the professional education of practising social workers', and the 'increasing recognition of the need for graduates to participate in (CPE) in order to maintain the relevance of their practice in an ever changing environment' (Smith 1996, p2). Ten years after introducing mandatory CPE for its members, the Manipulative Physiotherapists Association of Australia found that '80% of respondents indicated that their clinical expertise was enhanced by the programme' (McCormick and Marshall 1994, p.19).

8. Implications of the Research

While the social workers interviewed had many positive declarations of social work's contribution to hospitals, they could also see that they were often viewed as 'the icing on the cake', not acknowledged as a core service and therefore dispensable in the system.

The literature search demonstrated that inducements to undertaking CPE were primarily maintaining knowledge and remaining abreast of change, job satisfaction and meeting others' expectations and obligations; while hindrances to undertaking CPE were the lack of requirement for CPE, inadequate messages imparted by the schools and the profession itself. The study corroborated those views, and there is some evidence that social work's position can be linked to attitudes to CPE by the profession, schools and other professional colleagues.

The link between the documentation of successful services and professional acceptance emerged from the literature and the respondents. Social workers 'must objectify services, define expectations, clarify 'what' and 'for whom', and demonstrate that interventions are cost-effective' (Bergman, Wells, Bogo, Chandler, Embleton, Guirgis, Huot, McMeill, Prentice, Stapleton, Shekter-Wolfson, Urman, 1993, p.282). Credibility of social work must

be established, and a key factor in that process is visible CPE outcomes and essential contributions.

9. Recommendations

Finally, some strategies and recommendations for professional consideration are offered:

- schools both modelling and giving a clear message about CPE, tackling the difficult topic of ways to market the profession, and integrating research into daily practice;
- the professional association proceeding with the current national project where mandatory CPE will eventuate;
- the consistent marketing of the unique person-in-environment contribution that social work makes to organisations, as well as ongoing education of other professionals and the community about the roles of social work.

Current organisational changes present an opportunity for social work to embrace new directions, while the complex interrelationship between CPE and the professional image certainly invites further research.

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CD ROM - It's More Than Rock Music
The Utilisation of Multimedia Technology as a Teaching-Learning Resource in Social Work and Welfare Work Education

Pauline Meemeduma

> As teachers we have to ask ourselves how we can use our teaching repertoires in such a way that capitalise on and fit the development and characteristics of our students and help them achieve increasing control over their own growth (Joyce and Weil 1986, p.435)

1. Introduction

The focus of this paper is on the teaching-learning rationale for the development of a multimedia teaching resource utilising CD ROM technology to address specific teaching and learning difficulties faced by social work and community welfare students.

The paper is not an account of a research study. Rather the paper sets out to describe the development of a CD ROM teaching resource by outlining the process of integration of the educational rationale and the designed educational computer format[1].

A key function of the paper is to 'demystify' for social workers and welfare workers the design and implementation of computer-based technology in human service educational arenas. This aim is achieved by focusing on the existing skills and knowledge of social work and welfare work educators to conceptualise the educational needs and concerns of their professions and students and identify how computer technology can be utilised to address these needs. The computer skills and expertise of technicians can be then utilised in a collaborative format to develop new teaching resources. The paper outlines briefly the computer programming used, however, it is not intended to provide a detailed review of this technology.

In the first year of the Social Work and Community Welfare degrees at James Cook University (Queensland), students are required to undertake a foundation subject designed to introduce them to critical theoretical thinking. The aim of the subject is to develop first year students' critical theoretical thinking, knowledge and skills to a standard which enables students to integrate theoretical thinking throughout their university and practice career.

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The paper will argue that multimedia teaching resources and strategies provide a significant untapped educational resource for social work and welfare educationalists to extend their teaching. The paper will also argue that multimedia teaching resources and strategies have a significant role to play in addressing persistent learning difficulties experienced by social work and welfare work students in acquiring theoretical knowledge and skills and in being able to link theory to practice.

The paper will identify the importance of the learning content area of theoretical thinking in social work and welfare practice. The paper will go on to identify the complex learning expectations which theoretically informed practice places upon students. The subsequent learning difficulties experienced by students will be discussed. The paper will focus upon social work and welfare work educators, and identify why multimedia technology offers a key medium to provide an effective response to these learning difficulties. The paper will conclude by identifying the lessons of the current exploratory foray of the social work and welfare work professions into multimedia educational technology.

2. The Teaching Goal - to develop critical theoretical thinkers

The acquisition of knowledge and skills which enable students to engage in critical theoretical thinking when faced with complex social and personal problems, is the cornerstone of effective and appropriate social work and welfare work practice.

McPeck (quoted in Bell 1990) defines critical theoretical thinking as the capacity to engage and utilise 'reflective scepticism to establish good reasons for various beliefs' (p.53). The ability to engage in reflective scepticism is a product of a sophisticated conceptual process of understanding and applying knowledge of theoretical structures and processes to daily life situations. Brookfield (1986, pp.7-9), one of the leading writers on critical theoretical thinking, depicts a critical theoretical thinker as someone who:

(i) identifies and challenges assumptions
(ii) challenges the importance of context
(iii) imagines and explores alternatives
(iv) explores alternatives leading to reflective scepticism

Though seldom clearly labelled as critical theoretical thinking in social work, the same characteristics of critical theoretical thinkers, as outlined by Brookfield (1987), are clearly an expectation of social work practitioners. As England (1986, p.125) notes:

> Good social work rests upon the process of criticism, a process of experience and understanding of analysis and comparison. A critical faculty is integral to the very practice of social work (p.125).

3. The Learning Expectation

To be able to understand and utilise critical theoretical thinking in practice and to be able to critically reflect on theories, clearly implies certain learning expectations of social work and welfare work students. However, how students and practitioners are expected to learn and the problems they may face in learning, is less clearly articulated in the social work literature. **What** we expect social work students to learn is shaped by the content of the subjects we design. Subject content equally shapes **how** we expect students to learn. Seldom, however, does it appear that social work educators are aware of the learning skills prerequisites required to be in place if subject content is to be acquired. As Solas (1991) notes,

> social work education, like most areas of advanced education has concentrated more on the 'what' of teaching and learning than on the 'how' (p.19)

To expect students to learn about theoretical thinking, critically reflect upon this theoretical knowledge and transfer this learning into practice settings is based upon several assumptions related to student learning capacities and strategies. These assumptions are,

(i) the capacity to think at an abstract level
(ii) the capacity to make connections between abstract ideas
(iii) the capacity to move from the concrete to the abstract
(iv) the capacity to move from the abstract to the concrete
(v) the capacity to learn a body of knowledge

Research on social work students suggests they display a preference for concrete learning strategies (Kruzich, Friesen and Van Soest 1986; Solas 1991). Clearly, however, for social work and welfare work students and practitioners to be critical theoretical thinkers they must also be multi-skilled learners. It is of little surprise that, with the use of conventional teaching strategies, significant groups of first year social work and welfare work students have displayed persistent learning problems in developing critical theoretical thinking skills and knowledge.

4. Learning Problems

The teaching of critical theoretical thinking knowledge and skill to first year social work and welfare work students, through utilising traditional tertiary teaching strategies, such as lectures and tutorials, resulted in several significant learning difficulties for students. These difficulties were often linked to the changing characteristics of students who enter social work and welfare work degree programs.

Many of the students who enter the degree problems offered by James Cook University are from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds (ie., mature-age, Aboriginal and Islander). Often there have been considerable lengths of time since formal education, schooling disruption, early school leaving, and negative formal educational experiences. As a result, many students enter the subject on critical theoretical thinking unsure of their right to be at university and of their ability to perform when they are there.

Many of the students evidence difficulties in conceptualising and articulating their thoughts at an abstract level in a logical and systematic way. The western cultural epistemological language and rigour of theoretical thinking often does not make cultural or class 'common sense' to groups of students. Much of this lack of 'common sense' relevance of the subject material appeared to be derived from the students' own dominant 'Concrete' or 'Accommodator' (Kolb 1981) learning strategies. Learning predominantly occurs for many of the students through what can be observed, not through what can be thought about.

The lack of 'common sense familiarity' of the subject material acts to generate other learning problems. Because the subject material is unfamiliar and concerned with 'thinking', students often label the material too difficult before they have actually been exposed to the material. As a consequence, the students often define themselves as incapable of learning the material easily in the life of the subject. Commensurate with this self 'defining out' process is a process of labelling themselves 'too dumb' and 'too stupid' to comprehend and understand the material.

5. Teaching Implications

During the first two years of the introduction of the subject, the students' learning problems resulted in high demands being placed upon the two teaching staff for the material to be constantly retaught at an individual student level. High levels of repetitive teaching occurred with many students throughout the semester, both within and beyond lecture and tutorial teaching time. Due to high student demands for repetitive teaching, student access to staff often became problematic. As well, staff could not always ensure repetitive teaching was consistent across all students. Nor could staff ensure the specific content area of the material the student was unsure of was being addressed in the repetitive teaching times. Equally inefficient for students was the often required need to resubmit work until demonstrated mastery of the material was displayed. The learning problems of the students also resulted in high demands from many individual students on the teaching staff to provide individual counselling support, to address learning self-doubts and reassure the students of their capacity to acquire the material.

What was needed, in response to those teaching/learning problems, was a teaching medium which would efficiently provide a:

consistent repetitive learning resources independent of staff
immediate corrective feedback learning resources independent of staff
specific material content focus resources
unconditional access to the teaching resources source

Where a human could not achieve consistency, immediacy, specificity and unconditionality in their teaching response, perhaps a machine in the form of multimedia CD ROM could.

6. The CD ROM Project

Arger (1996) defines multimedia:

> as the use of a computer to present and combine texts, graphics, audio and visual with links and tools that let the user navigate, interact, create, and communicate (p.4)

A multimedia teaching resource, Arger (1996) argues, caters for varying learning styles by allowing information to be presented in context, by allowing information to be presented speedily, and by allowing the user to determine the level and access speed of information detail required.

The CD ROM program was developed at James Cook University's Centre for Interactive Multimedia. The development team consisted of the project leader, a multimedia designer, graphic programmer, audio programmer and two specialist programmers. The CD ROM program was produced using Authorware Professional, Photoshop, Director and Sound Edit 16, initially on a Macintosh platform, with eventual distribution to occur on a Hybrid delivery. The program can be run on most standard Macintosh multimedia machines that have SM6 of internal memory and a CD ROM player.

With the theoretical content of the subject already prepared as a result of the subject having been taught traditionally for two years, there was extensive discussion on how to effectively present this material in multimedia format. After much discussion, a case-based design emerged. The five cases used were broken into discrete segments for presentation to students. A standardised vertical and horizontal presentation format was developed which allowed the students to access the information around the case in a set way.

The cases utilised in the CD ROM program are cases taken from the social work practice experiences of the project leader. The cases are designed to take the student through the thinking process of the worker as the case evolves over time. Each case is designed to demonstrate the nature of practice as a questioning, thinking, theorising, reflecting and decision-making process. The program provides more information about the case, over the life of the case, to demonstrate to students the complexity of cases and how our questioning, thinking and theorising can change over time. the program allows students to constantly and easily reference core theoretical material as they attempt to answer key practice questions in the case. The program is interactive, demonstrating to the student how practice thinking occurs and then requiring the student to practice, check and record their own thinking in relation to the cases.

In Case One, for example, the student is faced with theoretically considering and working through the case of an eight-year old boy in a children's home, who wishes to find his mother. He has not seen his mother since he was two years old. When contact is made with his mother, she is badly disfigured and severely brain damaged from domestic violence assaults. The student has to theoretically consider whether the child should initially have contact with his mother. After two distressing contact visits between the mother and child, the student has to consider whether contact should continue.

The students are able to work through the cases by constant reference to the core theoretical material to facilitate their understanding and decision-making in relation to the case. The program is designed to be interactive, enabling the students to monitor their own learning progress. The program is designed for the students to record and reproduce their own thinking development through the use of a Notepad. The systemic nature of the material presentation enables students to access specific material as determined by their own learning needs.

Because the cases are based on real experiences, the graphic look, feel and sound of the cases are designed to convey the emotion and narrative quality of each case.

7. Student Response

Evaluation feedback from students indicates the program has been seen as highly beneficial. At this stage, subjective measures (as determined by the students) of whether the CD ROM program created a conducive learning environment, have only been conducted. Student feedback has indicated several beneficial features of the program which facilitate the creation of a positive learning environment. These learning benefits are: accessibility, repetition, review, interest, privacy, related to social welfare practice and self-monitoring.

Students indicated the program was user friendly, interesting, facilitated their understanding of the integration of theoretical material to direct social work and community welfare practice, allowed them to work privately, allowed them to focus on particular content they found difficult to understand, was highly accessible and finally, allowed interactive learning and cross-checking of comprehension and understanding.

Evaluation of the CD ROM as a teaching-learning, at this stage, has focused on its effectiveness in creating a positive learning environment for students, as assessed by students. This initial evaluation focus was determined by the significant negative learning experiences students have previously indicated in relation to learning theoretical material. Future evaluation will focus upon whether the facilitated positive learning utilising the CD ROM is translated to positive learning outcomes.

8. Doing CD ROM - The Development Process

The development of multimedia teaching resources for the project raised several design, planning and implementation issues, which future multimedia social work and welfare educators need to be aware of. Developing multimedia teaching resources requires additional dimensions to be considered relating to the integration of educational aims and technological capacities and demands.

A significant intellectual effort is required to reconceptualise the presentation of material in a multimedia format. This requires significant intellectual creativity. Computerised processing and accessing of information requires different kinds of conceptual thinking and presentation to traditional weekly semesterised presentation formats. The ability to translate material which has been traditionally taught in a non-technological format into a multimedia format presents significant challenges to the social work and welfare work educator. The subject material has

to be considered and conceptualised at both vertical and horizontal levels of integration to enable user access pathways to be developed. The machine (ie., the computer) therefore significant acts to shape what is educationally possible. The role of the machine works in a predetermining sense, in that the way the computer can process material acts to shape how the educator can conceptualise the learning process. Working within this predetermined format challenges the educator to utilise the format of the computer in a creative and innovative way.

The development of multimedia teaching resources also places significant demands upon educators to integrate the resource into the overall teaching-learning strategies of the curriculum. There is a significant danger that multimedia resources will be 'tacked on' curios, on the margins of traditional teaching methods and strategies. Effective utilisation of the CD ROM program requires a complete rethinking and restructuring of the teaching strategies of the subject to ensure the resources are appropriately and effectively integrated within the subject.

In the development of the project there was a significant consumption of time. designing, developing, implementing and evaluating the project places significant intellectual, technical and organisational demands on participants. These must be addressed in addition to their usual academic and professional role.

Frequently with multimedia projects, there often exists a gap between the vision for the project and the amount of money available to complete the project. There is a constant tension between achieving the absolute best creatively, technically and organisationally, and the amount of money available. This tension tended to be resolved through accessing large amounts of goodwill through voluntary labour and accessing other funds where available.

The multimedia road for social work and welfare educators is not solely paved with difficulties. The key to increasing the development and utilisation of multimedia teaching resources within the human services lies in our ability to utilise the technical expertise of computer designers and programmers. As human service educators, we have the knowledge and skills of our professional discipline, as well as an awareness of the teaching-learning needs of our students. A collaborative relationship between human service educators and computer programmers ensures such multimedia material can be developed without social workers and welfare workers needing to have high levels of computer technical expertise.

9. Applications

In developing the CD ROM program, it is apparent there is considerable potential for utilisation within the social work and welfare work educational field and beyond.

The CD ROM program has been designed as a foundation subject on critical theoretical thinking in relation to social work and welfare work practice. The design of the program enables the program to be used as part of different teaching strategies. The CD ROM can be used as part of a self-repetitive teaching strategy, to support and reinforce other teaching methods (lectures, tutorials). The CD ROM program can also be used as an **independent self-teaching strategy**, which does not require other university teaching strategies for full learning

to occur. With the ability of the CD ROM program to be utilised as both an integrated and independent teaching strategy, considerable applications can be envisaged.

As an integrated teaching strategy, the CD ROM program can be utilised to support face-to-face teaching contact. The CD ROM program can also be designed as the central teaching strategy, with face-to-face teaching contact used as teaching support to the CD ROM program. As an independent teaching method the CD ROM program can be used as the exclusive method of distance education teaching. Finally, as an independent teaching method the CD ROM program can be utilised for student learning outside any institutional teaching setting. It could be sold in bookshops and supermarkets as part of a self-learning program for students, practitioners and the general public.

10. Conclusion

It is apparent that multimedia technologies such as CD ROM will play a significant role in all arenas of education in the future (Apple 1994). Impressionistically, it is also apparent that departments of social work and welfare work will continue to provide an education for significant groups of students who are educationally disadvantaged. As educators, we will be consistently challenged to respond in the most effective, efficient way to creatively address the learning problems of such groups of students. One such creative option open to social work and welfare work educators is in the use of multimedia technologies such as CD ROM. The capacity of machines to consistently, speedily and interactively transfer information and understanding can be utilised as part of an overall teaching-learning strategy. Without the vision, energy and commitment of social work and welfare work educators to utilise this technology, the potential will remain untapped to the detriment of our students and our profession.

Notes

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Cartography and Truth: Using the Analogy of Maps to Explore Social Welfare Work Wisdom

Ian Murray

1. Introduction

This is an exploration and quest for no less than the nature of truth, wisdom and value, in the context of social welfare work education, and using analogies drawn from cartography and the use of maps.

At the outset, once could well question:

1. Why such an ambitious quest is important to education in this field?

2. What right I have to pursue it in an academic context, since I have no qualifications in philosophy, nor any direct academic experience in this field?

My answer to the first question lies in my 20 year experience of teaching the knowledge and values bases of social welfare work. Recently there have been increasing doubts about these and about the overall direction, goals and nature of work in this field. Although this very uncertainty enables us to respond better to changing situations (Gaha 1995a), it continues to inhibit practice and research and leads to disillusion in students and new graduates. A search for social welfare work 'truth' is therefore seen as worthwhile and probably impossible to discard.

Such uncertainties are reinforced by doubts about truth and goals elsewhere - in other professions (law, medicine, psychology), in other discourses (positivist, scientific, humanist, Marxist) and even the whole ideological framework of (at least) western society is exposed to postmodern and poststructural critique (see Fook 1996b, pp.196-7). We would say the rest has caught up with social welfare work - we are the pioneers in uncertainty.

While dealing with social welfare work values, I was forced to go beyond the standard ones in all the textbooks (individual worth and dignity, self-determination) to question the origin and validity of these values; and then to delve deeper into all values - where do they come from? How and why do individuals differ in their values? I asked students to look at (and participate in) the work of Rokeach (1973), Feather (1975) and later, Schwartz (1992) who each adopt a social science approach to the study of the variety of values and personal value hierarchies. Socialisation processes alone did not explain values, and I began to look more at

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'transcendent' sources such as philosophy and religion. These, together with my earlier studies in anthropology, focused attention upon relative and absolute values, and an early interest in maps and bushwalking led to the development of the analogy explored here.

The second question is answered in the spirit of postmodernism, which relates to 'theorising cultural conditions across a number of disciplines (the arts, humanities, sciences and profession)' (Fook 1996b, p.196). Stuart Rees (1994, pp.159-160), although critical of postmodernism, also argues for a transcendence of disciplines and participation by those outside official and academic circles in debates about 'humanity' and social welfare work. But such a multidisciplinary and non-academic approach usually implies a lack of expertise in many of the issues raised, and the treatment of broader issues may have to be simplified. This analysis also implies a rejection of jargon-filled or difficult academic treatments, and the encouragement of affinity with practice, the everyday world, and society as a whole, through the inclusion of popular accounts of theory or academic pursuits (as reflected in the bibliography).

Another somewhat unorthodox treatment in this paper will be reference to discussion after formal presentations, including those earlier in the AASWWE Conference at which this paper was first presented. A major goal of the presentation of papers, and of conferences as a whole, is to promote discussion, and yet such discussion is rarely formally addressed in other papers, or in published proceedings. (A recent exception was the Proceedings of the Practice diversity Conference in Cairns in September 1995 in which the facilitator made the same point (Camilleri and Allen-Kelly 1995, p.166)).

2. Cartographical Analogy - Maps and Truth

In what follows, the depiction of north on a map is used as an analogy for 'direction', 'truth' or 'value' in human activities, including social welfare work. Most simple maps or those used for urban navigation (eg. 'Melways' or 'Gregorys') have only one 'north', which aligns with the edge of the page, and with any grid which is superimposed onto the map to aid in referencing a particular point. This corresponds to Grid North on a large scale topographical map; the kind used for bushwalking. But such a map usually contains two other 'norths'. Magnetic North is the direction a compass needle points towards (unless distorted by a nearby magnetic field or deposit of iron ore), while True North is the actual direction of the North Pole (see Figure 1).

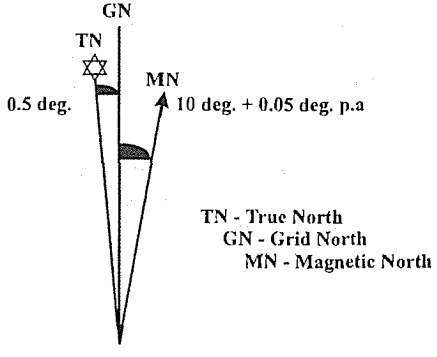

Figure 1
Different North Points on a topographical map illustrating magnetic variation per year

Each of these north points can be said to correspond to a different kind of truth or value. Grid North is the direction of the grid lines - the cartographic projection, which is the attempt to depict the curved surface of the earth onto flat paper. This distorts reality a little on large scale topographical maps. The Mercator Projection is the most popular grid for maps of the world, and the great distortion at the poles is quite well known, even by non-geographers.

In this analogy, Grid Truth is an agreed, useful construction which provides theoretical and/or normative structure to our 'curved' daily reality. The theories we use are only approximations, but make it easy to provide 'grid references' - useful theoretical reference points within chaotic reality. We can construct new 'grids' to suit different purposes, or when a conventional one is found to be ineffective. On a smaller scale, such grids can be seen as values, norms and policies, applying at the level of social welfare agencies, families and individuals.

While also providing a Magnetic North point, topographical maps included the angle between Grid North and Magnetic North, and also the date and rate of change of the angle, because the Magnetic North Pole is constantly changing its position, and therefore Magnetic North varies with time and place, even (very slightly) from the centre of the map to its edges. Someone lost in the bush can make do with just a compass if a general direction is all that is needed. But if more precision is needed, then a map, and calculations regarding Grid North are also needed. However, there is a more modern, technological, expensive solution in the form of a GPS 2000 Satellite Navigator available from Dick Smith stores for $495.00!

Magnetic Truth, by analogy, is the everyday 'truth' which often guides immediate action, but which varies with time and space. It is experiential, situational truth, and is often seen as most reliable and useful for relatively simple situations. It can be used on its own, intuitively, without analysis or comparison with theory for more simple or immediate situations. But a reflective comparison with theory is needed for more complex situations (if one is the equivalent of being lost in the bush - without the guidance of familiar structures or experience). Magnetic Truth can be diverted by our biases, stereotypes, blind-spots, etc., just as magnets in a compass can be influenced by nearby magnetic fields or iron deposits.

The analogy can be carried several steps further. First, the quality of compasses can vary as well, and this may correspond to how well we are equipped as persons or as workers - our own resources may be inadequate or malfunctioning. And secondly, perhaps satellite technology is equivalent to modern, positivist technological 'solutions' which are very good for locating where we are, but do not help decide on our existential or professional direction.

For limited similar locations and times, the relationship between Magnetic North and Grid North can be very similar, just as the agreed relationship between Magnetic Truth and the Grids that act as broader guides can correspond for social locations such as communities or societies. But move some distance away (geographically or culturally) and conventions, values and paradigms can vary greatly. This analysis (and Magnetic Truth and Value) could be said to correspond to poststructuralist emphasis on multiple interpretations, contextually influenced changes, and the social construction of individual identity (Fook 1996b, p.197).

This point is not at all new, of course. In ancient Greece, the Sophists believed that right and wrong varied from one city-state to another, and from one generation to the next (Gaarder

1995, p.65). Truth was variable - it 'flowed'. Socrates, on the other hand, believed in the existence of eternal and absolute rules for what was right and wrong. And Plato combined truth, beauty and goodness - what was right was also true, as 'Ideas' (Gaarder 1995, p.65). This absolute or universal truth corresponds to True North in the analogy, as dealt with below.

The analogy is not meant to show that Grid Truth is superior to Magnetic Truth, neither is more externally valid than the other, and each often (but not always) needs the other.

3. Explorations of 'Magnetic' Truth and Value

Sometimes the Magnetic should take precedence. A minor illustration comes from an agency which supplies secure accommodation and programs for disturbed and 'acting out' prepubescent girls. A policy or Grid Value insisted that if a client revealed she is Hepatitis C positive to a worker, that worker was to keep strict confidentiality, even to other workers. But if the client begins biting, scratching and spitting at workers and clients, the worker should be influenced by intuitive (Magnetic) values and reveal the client's infectious status to those likely to be affected.

Fook (1996b, p.193) draws attention to the work of Argyris and Schon who emphasise the difference between formalised 'espoused theory' which professionals believe they follow - a Grid Theory, and the 'theory in use', a variable, flexible (Magnetic) variety implicit in practice. Expert practice is intuitive (Magnetic) and often inaccessible to purely technical description and analysis.

Ann Ingamells (1994, p.134) draws attention to Schon's 1987 account of talented or intuitive practitioners who work very well in the indeterminate zones not covered by conventional professional practices. Ingamells' study outlines a shift in workers from abstract, neatly defined, cognitive responses to acknowledging the body/feeling/knowing connection within workers and all others engaged in the process. In the analogy, such workers could be characterised as 'Magnetic'. Jim Ife (1995, p.233) puts this point more bluntly when he states: 'Community work is more an art than a science, and this requires a community worker to make decisions based on wisdom, understanding and intuition rather than on abstract universal rules on how to do it'.

4. True North and Absolute Truth

If such rules are truly universal, then this introduces the notion of Absolute Truth or Platonic Good, corresponding to True North in the analogy. True North on a map is the actual direction of the North Pole, which in this part of Australia is about ½ a degree west (left) of Grid North (refer to Figure 1). But this North is not used at all for practical map-reading when lost in the bush. One only uses the difference between Magnetic and Grid Norths. Using the analogy, Absolute Truth can be said to exist, but is hidden and not used for most practical purposes.

This view, basically held by the writer of this paper, is firmly rejected by many academics, practitioners and popular writers, who insist that some form or approximately or Ultimate Reality or True North is available to them (Ferguson 1995, p.237f; Pirsig 1991, p.163).

Stuart Rees (1994, p.156) and Jim Ife (1995, p.70) both reinforce a universalist view, suggesting humanism/human rights as a basic universal value. Rees explores the nature of 'humanity' as a basis, suggesting that it involves environmental, personal and social well-being, and personal qualities of courage and challenge to conventional authority, an affinity with the arts (such as poetry) and the antithesis of economic rationalism. He points out that quests for socially just outcomes may hinder or postpone humanitarian concerns and that sometimes humanity will come before justice (1994, p.156).

Max Liddell (1996) raises other concerns about our failure to analyse what social justice really is and how it might relate to an individualised striving for excellence. Jo Gaha's (1995a) analysis of social work identity and direction suggested that social justice could be seen as a consistent value for social work in a rapidly changing world, but that as a constructionist, she could 'imagine a time when social justice may not be in context, and social work may then cease to exist, or become unrecognisable' (1995b). This is in contrast to Jim Ife's optimism, expressed in his passionate cry 'This madness [of economic rationalism] can't last forever - we must be ready for the opportunities' (1996b).

This discussion raises the issue of whether 'social justice' at least, and possibly 'humanity', and 'individual worth and dignity' are universal, Absolute Truth, or merely Grids, widely applicable for our present purposes or convenience. These questions have been examined for several thousand years at least, and no attempt at even a cursory philosophical summary can be attempted here. A very accessible popular account is written by Jostein Gaarder (1995).

5. Alternative Absolutes?

Among the many alternative visions of Absolutes, two deserve brief mention as providing creative frameworks with some popular appeal, which some students have found helpful.

In contrast to Gaarder's (1995) postmodern and somewhat surreal bestseller, Robert Pirsig (1976) earlier introduced an ultimate metaphysical construct which he labelled Quality. A grossly simplified definition of Quality could depict it as a consistent universal Caring or integrity - a duty to oneself.

In *Lila* (1991), Pirsig further developed Quality, suggesting it had two components - static quality and Dynamic Quality. Static quality entails conformity to an established pattern of fixed values which underlie justice and law; it is old and complex. Dynamic Quality, in contrast, is the pre-intellectual cutting edge of reality, the source of all things, completely simple and always new (1991, p.119). The interplay of these equally good and true components, is manifest in everything, and in social, interpersonal, economic, intellectual and artistic pursuits, for example, the traditional is in tension with the innovative. The Dynamic Quality of knowledge continually challenges traditional beliefs and 'paradigms' (Kuhn 1970) in all the sciences, as well as in other human activity. Pirsig relates to this well with his remark, 'The pencil is mightier than the pen' (1991, p.226).

Each aspect of Quality is needed in different situations and times, according to Pirsig. This interplay could help explain 'complicity with oppression' in domestic violence, for example - 'how a piece of behaviour which might function as self-defeating in one framework, may in fact be empowering in another' (Healy and Fook 1994, p.52). It could also relate to Jim Ife's strategic advice about organisational action - the need for both a radical stirrer and a maintainer who 'plays the game' and relates effectively to authority (Ife 1996b).

Another intriguing candidate for Ultimate Value, which could be adapted for social welfare work theory and practice, was developed by Ian Davison (1977). This involves a process criterion, rather like Kant's categorical imperative - *act so as to maximise the number of simply enumerable possibilities*, and a corollary *act so as to give rise to the greatest variety of ends* (1977, pp.151-6). Davison admits that fairness and minimisation of human suffering may have to be added as boundary conditions. But despite this complication, this 'Possibilities Criterion' has an appealing elegance.

These postulates from Pirsig and Davison (and Rees' humanity based ones) need to be explored further, to assess how they might benefit an understanding of social welfare work. But their very variability begs the universalist question; if global consensus does not exist about Absolute Truth, what criteria can be used to ascertain which version is the Ultimate one? This argument leads back to analogous comparison with True North - there may be an Absolute Truth and Value, but it is basically inaccessible to us, and may not even matter; the temporary Grids are enough for practical living, and perhaps for professional practice.

6. Four Realities?

Recent explorations in physics may throw light upon these uncertainties. Brian Pippard (Ferguson 1995, pp.10-11) suggests there are four separate kinds of reality. Articles (such as chairs) and people are firstly a quantum blur within atoms - which are themselves made up of mostly empty space; this could be called the quantum view. But they are also chairs and people as we know them in everyday life - the common sense or ordinary view. Then there is the perceptual view, which varies according to individual perception - of the colour brown, for example. And finally there is the platonic view, based on an ultimate 'Idea of 'chair-in-itself'.

Physicists and philosophers do distinguish between the quantum and common sense ordinary views. They are not equivalent, but are equally 'true', and the relationship and boundaries between them are mysterious (Ferguson 1995, p.223).

There may well be similar uncertainties in other branches of human knowledge, at least according to lay observers and critics, in such disciplines as mathematics (Pirsig 1976, pp.256-263; Ferguson 1995, p.65), economics (Hosking 1996, C1; Kaletsky 1996, p.21) and psychology (Shea 1996, p.26).

All of this questioning of basic paradigms fits with the ongoing questioning within social welfare work. We are uncertain about what theories should apply, or even whether theory is all that useful, since practitioners apparently make little use of it (Fook 1996a, pp.2-3).

7. Maps as Theoretical Structures of Knowledge

An extension to the cartographical analogy might be useful, beyond the use of north points to the use of maps generally as an analogy for epistemological models and intellectual structures (Davison 1977, p.103; Pirsig 991, p.103; Murray 1994, pp.11-12). And the concept of Magnetic Truth outlined earlier can be applied within this context in the discussion below.

In this new analogy we might not be lost in the bush, but merely want to get to somewhere, perhaps an urban location. This may correspond to a variety of analogous end points, ranging from a resolution of a particular problem, to mastering a field of social welfare work practice, to a professional direction with social welfare work, or to a purpose for our life. Some people seem able to gain easy access to a map (equivalent to relevant theory), be able to read it (understand the theory) and journey easily to the destination (use theory to find what they are looking for). Others are 'hopeless at reading maps', even if they had adequate access to them, and these may depend on other means, such as consulting and following others, intuiting a sense of direction, or wandering around using trial and error.

Many people, even those exposed to intensive reflection on theory and practice (in academia, for example) do not seem to really learn - in the sense of the ability to apply learning, generalise to other situations, or incorporate into other learning - until they have experienced something themselves. In terms of the analogy, they can scrutinise the 'maps' (theories, research), but if they are not familiar with the 'landscape' from actual experience, their knowledge of the area is very incomplete, and their vision of the territory is perhaps severely distorted. People can learn by rote, or read books and articles about theory and research, but it might not mean much - to us, or to those we professionally encounter in the 'real work' - unless it is experienced in some fashion.

On the other hand, those who wander the countryside do discover it experientially, but without a map it remains a partial and non-holistic experience - they are only familiar with the sections traversed. A good map provides an overview, and the traveller can see the relationship of different parts of the country to each other. It could also warn of difficult or even dangerous territory ahead - 'repressed memory' might be an example.

But perhaps this applies only to the map-minded, or, by analogy, to the intellectually inclined. For these people, any earlier consulted theory can suddenly acquire pertinent meaning when encountered in real life, and the theory can act as confirmation of their experience, giving it increased richness and validity.

Some explorers, however, are just not interested in a map of 'their' territory, and may even resist consulting maps, disparaging them in general. So it is with some (many?) 'ordinary people', who have no use for theory, nor for reflection on how various aspects of their lives fit (or don't fit) together - they just want to get to a particular destination as easily as possible.

This might correspond to the frequent demand of clients for action, and their evaluation of the best helping being linked to how much the worker acted for or with them to get them what they say they wanted. Such clients may have little interest in poring over a 'map' of their situation, and may become impatient with the not always well articulated theoretical explanations offered or implied by workers.

Instead of maps or theories, such persons may merely need pointing in the direction of a resource (the nearest accommodation or shops or petrol station), not an overall discussion of their location in regard to other sources of 'supplies', or their relationship to the countryside as a whole. Some may benefit from a 'sketch map' perhaps constructed on the spot by a worker, but anything more elaborate might just be confusing.

And, of course, many such travellers might never ask for or need directions at all. These 'experiential experts' may have reflectively experimented themselves, or asked or observed others, without theories (or research) ever seeming relevant. Some evidence (England 1986; Cohen, Flowers, McDonald and Schaafsma 1994, p.11; Ife 1995, p.234; Kennedy 1991) suggests that such persons can be seen as just as knowledgable and competent - both as helpers and as human beings - as theoretically educated persons, according to peers, supervisors and those they work with.

Some other people might simply prefer not to use maps, even if capable of doing so. Such explorers might be experts who were previously map-bound but now use intuition only, having incorporated an unerring sense of direction. For such people, most of the relevant theoretical knowledge has been incorporated and is unconsciously available, even if the person cannot articulate the theories.

If maps represent theoretical knowledge, then researchers and theoreticians within universities can be said to be the makers of at least the more elaborate (and more acute?) maps. It is these maps that a worker might base their local or sketch maps upon, and well developed theories certainly have an important place in overall knowledge. But formal maps (based on university research) might still vary in quality, and some people might prefer familiar outdated maps (theories) to more contemporary ones; a preference which could frustrate map-makers and (some) academics alike.

8. Application to Social Welfare Education

The use of the mapping analogy has not yet been systematically or extensively used with students by the author. A quite different use of a 'map' concept has been made by elaborating upon the Ecomap developed by Hartman in 1978, but this is more a diagrammatic representation used in conjunction with Genograms, and has little to do with cartography (Hartman 1984).

Brief mention in lectures has been made of the north point analogy as part of an exploration of the nature and origin of values (as mentioned in the introduction to this paper), and students have generally found it helpful. The writing of this paper has helped to clarify the analogy and some of its wider implications, and it is intended to explore these further with students when next the introductory subject is taught.

It may be best to introduce such explorations via workshop discussion, but a student exercise might also be contemplated. Such an exercise could involve asking students what strategies they would use to find their way by road to a specific urban or country location, and then compare this with their attitudes to theory, in comparison to experiential learning. Another similar exercise could involve a 'lost in the bush' scenario, with students offering strategies re finding their way, and comparing this with the cartographical analogy of direction re professional practice, and direction in life.

9. Conclusion

This paper has tried to explore some of the ultimate philosophical bases underlying social welfare work. Several maps or Grids have been explored here to see which makes most sense for teaching, learning, and practice in this field. Within the context of doubts and dilemmas facing social welfare work, this exploration has reached no certainties, and has maybe increased the doubts. But this is not necessarily problematic, and such uncertain wanderings may well suit the age we live in. Perhaps we will learn to appreciate new efforts at map-making or theory-building, but also appreciate those who find their way without maps; that is, without recourse to obvious theory or research.

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Postgraduate Social Work Education in Australia: Findings of a Preliminary Survey

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1. Introduction

The primary goal of Australian Schools of Social Work since the 1940s has been to provide basic undergraduate social work education which is then accountable to a professional association through an accreditation process. Postgraduate social work qualifications have been offered in Australian schools since the late 1960s. Prior to that the predominate reason such courses were not offered was that there were insufficient academic staff in schools who had themselves completed postgraduate qualifications.

With appropriately qualified staff and demand coming from social work graduates themselves, such courses commenced. Since the 1980s there has been rapid growth in the number of postgraduate courses offered and the numbers of students undertaking them. Despite this expansion, no systematic research has been conducted about these courses and their students.

Two of the authors of this paper (Ryan and Sheehan nee Martyn), in undertaking a content analysis of Australian journal articles published in the period 1983-93, found that one of the key gaps in the literature in that period was '...the almost total focus on Bachelor of Social Work education at the expense of postgraduate and continuing education. (Only five articles addressed these issues in these years.' (Ryan and Martyn 1996). Of these five articles, three related to postgraduate education. Of these three, one described postgraduate courses in an Australian state (Tasmania) (Grichting 1994a) and two described particular innovative postgraduate subjects offered in courses (Grichting 1994b; Bolzon 1994). The published material on postgraduate social work courses has tended to be very specific rather than general in nature. We concluded in our previous article that there was '...virtually no attention paid to the educational needs of practitioners after graduation' (Ryan and Martyn 1996).

Fook and Healy (1994) reported that 'There is no Australian literature on post-graduate social work education in general' (p.3). In their study, these two authors focused specifically on postgraduate social work supervision at one university in Victoria. Amongst other things, they found that students were:

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> ...most likely to have undertaken post-graduate study on their own initiative: for intellectual stimulation, although personal satisfaction and prospects for career and professional involvement, or the opportunity to pursue an interest through research are also important reasons for study. They are less likely to have responded to some social pressure or circumstances in undertaking study such as needing a change in career direction, work requirements, or the provision of opportunities through change in circumstances (leave or unemployment) now making the study possible or desirable.(p.5)

In contrast to the dearth of Australian literature, in North America there is quite a body of literature on postgraduate social work education (which means doctoral level studies, as the Master of Social Work (MSW) rather than the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) remains the primary route to social work practice), but it focuses on issues like characteristics of graduates, student satisfaction and success, scholarly productivity, preparedness for teaching and coursework content (eg., Rosen 1978; Patchner 1982; Abbott 1985; Harrison and Thyer 1988; Reamer 1991; Fraser, Jenson and Lewis, 1991; Baker and Wilson 1992; Green, Hutchinson and Sar 1992; Fraser 1994; Valentine, Edwards, Gohagan, Huff, Pereira and Wilson 1998).

Postgraduate social work education traditionally has served two purposes:

1. To prepare practitioners for more advanced levels of practice through a combined coursework and minor research thesis degree; or

2. To train future academics who will engage in research and teaching through undertaking a research only degree.

Having baseline information about postgraduate social work courses available permits an accurate picture to be drawn up and therefore enables one to see the patterns and nature of courses. Thereby possible gaps and omissions in them can be identified. Only by having this data can an assessment be made as to whether such courses are meeting the needs of the profession and its practitioners who are the students in these courses. Research on the nature of these programs is necessary if they are to remain responsive to both the present and future needs of the profession and its practitioners.

Although BSW programs must meet accreditation standards established by the AASW, no such standards exist for postgraduate programs in social work. Only by collecting baseline information about available postgraduate social work courses can the question be examined as to whether the AASW should become involved in setting standards for postgraduate courses.

Such research is even more crucial when set against the background of debates surrounding postgraduate education in general and changes in higher education funding in Australia (Zuber-Skerrit, Ortrun and Ryan 1994; Lee and Green 1995) which includes issues like the relevance of such degrees, completion rates, quality of programs, supervision, and the costs and benefits of such education (Holdaway 1994). Social work does not appear to have featured in these debates, at least in published form. There are also likely to be funding complications around postgraduate courses as Linda Rosenman (1996) and Brian English (1996) referred to at the 1996 AASWWE Conference. For example, postgraduate coursework degrees are under considerable threat from pressures to make them full-fee paying courses which will have as a possible by-product that it may make them financially unattractive to students. Such moves are likely to make the pursuit of research only degrees more attractive (which at worst would only attract HECS and, at best, be HECS exempt).

What implications would this have for the postgraduate education needs of the social work profession? Only by having basic information about the present courses available can this question begin to be answered.

The first stage of a three stage study of postgraduate social work education in Australia will be reported on in this paper. This first stage reports on an analysis of the range and nature of courses offered based on institute handbooks and course information. Subsequent stages will involve a mail questionnaire survey to schools offering courses and then a survey of a sample of graduated students, with the overall aim of building a picture of Australian social work postgraduate education.

In planning the study, we postulated no particular hypotheses arising from a theoretical framework that we had in mind, but a number of issues did feature in our thinking as we developed research questions and a framework of analysis for the survey. These issues included: did all schools offer both coursework and research qualifications? Or were there particular concentrations in their offerings? Were there variations in the prerequisites for admission to courses across schools? How many schools offered masters degrees by coursework alone? What patterns were there in the specialisations offered in coursework?

The overall aim of the first stage of the study was to analyse the range and nature of postgraduate social work courses offered in Australia based on institute handbooks and course information. This first part of the study sought to answer the following specific research questions:

1. What postgraduate qualifications are offered by schools of social work?

2. If they offer coursework qualifications, does the school have a particular focus or specialisation in their courses?

3. If they offer coursework qualifications, what are the admission requirements for them and what is the structure and content of these qualifications?

4. If they offer research degrees, what are the prerequisites, general requirements and timelines for these degrees?

This paper will therefore focus on the number of schools offering postgraduate courses, the nature of these courses, their purpose, entry prerequisites and major similarities and differences. The major findings and trends will be discussed in the light of implications for future social work education.

2. Method

In order to survey the available postgraduate social work courses, all Australian Schools of Social Work accredited for their BSW courses were contacted by one of the researchers in the period March-August 1996. She asked to be sent their postgraduate course information material. Information was also collected from institute handbooks to complement this mailed information. This collated data was then subjected to content analysis based on the responses to the research questions:

3. Findings

Twenty schools were surveyed as part of the study. These were all those schools in Australia with at least provisional accreditation for their BSW from the AASW.

In summary, it was found that in terms of postgraduate qualifications they offered, all schools offer at least one postgraduate course. This may only be a Masters degree offered by the university (which may offer social work as one of the disciplines) as a whole or a Master of Social Work degree only, as was the case at the University of Newcastle or Northern Territory University. All offer research degrees at both PhD and Masters levels (the latter may be called an MA rather than an MSW)

In terms of coursework qualifications, most offer Masters degrees in Social Work. Those that do not tend to be the newer schools of social work eg., Victoria University and RMIT who both offer courses in social policy, rather than in social work.

There are some quite specific streams in Master of Social Work degrees combining coursework and a thesis. These include the following:

1. The University of New South Wales who offer streams in Equity and Social Administration, International Social Development and Couple and Family Therapy.

2. The University of Queensland who provide streams in Social Welfare Administration and Planning.

3. La Trobe University who have streams in International Social Work, Advanced Practice and Human Service Management.

For admission to a Master of Social Work by coursework and minor thesis, a Bachelor of Social Work or its equivalent plus 1-2 years practice experience is required. Although in a number of instances, a Bachelor of Social Work degree is not required, just a first degree (eg., La Trobe University for MSW Human Service Management and International Social Work streams).

Most Masters by coursework and thesis tend to conform to a general pattern of a couple of core subjects and a range of electives being offered, along with the requirement to complete a minor thesis. Examples of such courses include the University of Sydney, University of Newcastle and the

University of Western Australia. The University of Sydney has the following subjects as core ones - 'Ideologies in Social Welfare' and 'Research Methods in Social Work and Social Welfare'. The University of Newcastle has as core subjects - 'Introduction to Learning for Advanced Practice' and 'Current Issues in Social Work Theory and Practice', whereas the University of Western Australia lists - 'Advanced Social Work Theory and Practice', 'Social Work Research and Evaluation', 'Women, Welfare and the State', and 'Advanced Social Policy' as core subjects.

There are an increasing number of coursework only Master of Social Work degrees with four universities (the Universities of Sydney, Melbourne, Monash University and James Cook) offering one.

Generally speaking there were common requirements for admission to research degrees as required by Australian universities ie., for a PhD. it is a first or 11A honours level Bachelors degree or a Masters degree with a major research component and for an MA or MSW by research alone, it is a first or 11A honours level Bachelors degree which apply to social work research only degrees.

Nine of the 20 schools conducted courses that provided non-degree qualifications. Of these nine, six conducted postgraduate or graduate diplomas only, three had both graduate diplomas and graduate certificates and one offered a graduate certificate only. In a number of cases, the graduate diplomas had the same coursework content as the schools' Masters degree without the requirement to complete a research minor thesis. This was the situation at the University of New South Wales and La Trobe University. Other schools offered quite a range of specialisations within these non-degree qualifications. This was particularly so at Charles Sturt University, where there were qualifications in child and adolescent welfare, genetic counselling, and guardianship and protection, and the University of South Australia, where there were courses in counselling, health and education and family mediation.

4. Discussion

It should be stated at the outset, that this was an exploratory piece of research and therefore concentrates on looking at broad patterns and context. It should be noted that the considerable variability in courses made the search for patterns and similarities difficult to find.

Obviously, any discussion on postgraduate social work courses is predicated on the purposes for which it is undertaken - is it for continuing professional development for practice? Is it a means of pursuing an academic career? Is it for research training? Is it a means of researching a particular topic of interest in some depth? Or is it a combination of some of these purposes ie. continuing professional development and researching a particular topic? Given this confusion around purposes, and that changes are often driven economic policy it is hardly surprising that the whole area of postgraduate pedagogy is poorly theorised, as Green and Lee (1995) contend.

It seems that postgraduate social work courses have really grown in a rather disordered way in a very short time. This has resulted in a situation where there is now considerable diversity due to market forces (both from within universities in their bid to attract students and in response to demands from students for courses) and staff research interests.

Postgraduate social work courses in Australia can be seen to have gone through a number of phases. The first was characterised by the setting up of Master of Social Work degrees with both coursework and minor thesis. This phase was followed by research degrees at both Masters and doctoral levels and then a range of graduate diplomas. The next phase, which we are undergoing at present and the final form of which remains unclear, is shaped by a combination of financial realities and professional/practice demands. It is likely to feature an emphasis on research degrees, popular coursework programs that will attract students prepared to pay fees and short subjects undertaken as continuing education on a fee paying basis.

There are commonalities at one level with Masters degrees by a combination of coursework and minor thesis. They tend to conform to a general pattern of a couple of core subjects and a range of electives being offered, along with the requirement to complete a minor thesis. At the same time, there is an incredible diversity in such courses, especially in the range of elective subjects. This is exemplified by the range of streams in some courses. Another area of wide diversity is the variation in the length and requirements of such courses eg., the coursework only Master of Social Work degree at Monash consists of four subjects which could be undertaken in a year of full-time study. In comparison, the University of Sydney requires the completion of six units and the University of Melbourne which requires eight subjects be completed. The latter two degrees can still both be undertaken in a full-time year of study.

There is a range of Graduate Diplomas which tend to focus on particular practice areas eg., distance education at Charles Sturt University and family mediation, health counselling and educational counselling at the University of South Australia. Only two schools have an international social work focus (the University of New South Wales and La Trobe University).

Whilst the purpose of many courses is to be clearly linked to the field and practice, only two courses retain a practicum as part of their Masters degree. What is the relationship between such a practicum and practice? One can legitimately ask the question that if courses are purported to be preparing students for advanced practice should there not be a practicum, which directly assesses their practice, included as a compulsory part of their course?

A whole series of related questions can also be posed: should we expect a greater coherence and greater commonality from courses? What are the aims and purposes of such courses? Does the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) also have a role in social work postgraduate courses? Should there be links with postgraduate social work education and professional membership of the AASW as the AASW's CPE (Continuing Professional Education) document (1996) proposes?

The diversity and range of courses has resulted in a two edged sword that has both positive and negative sides - on the positive side, it has meant that there is a range of courses responding to a variety of student needs from wanting to obtain a research degree through to additional continuing education through undertaking a Graduate Diploma. There appears to be a changing framework for postgraduate education in social work with a real attempt to meet the needs of field and practice. On the negative side, it can appear that there are a large number of courses of peripheral and marginal interest to small numbers of students with variable standards which may make them unviable in the eyes of universities, particularly administrators. Again the question needs to be asked - should there be some regulation or control be imposed on courses, possibly by the AASW?

Decision-making on these issues may well be taken out of the hands of social work departments by the impact of higher education funding policy. Clearly the changing funding of higher education will impact on the shape and nature of social work education. As Linda Rosenman told us at the AASWWE Conference in 1996 in speaking about higher education funding, it is likely that Masters by coursework to any degree will be required to become full-fee paying courses or they will become extinct. Therefore in order to survive courses will have to attract paying students in sufficient numbers to continue to be viable. That may well mean for Schools of Social Work that they will be running research only degrees which will in turn considerably change the shape of social work postgraduate education. This may mean that universities are educating future researchers and academics rather than practitioners seeking further education for advanced practice.

Social work faces a whole array of challenges with its very existence under threat in some quarters. In such an environment, it is important that those with basic social work qualifications have the opportunity acquire postgraduate qualifications that will assist them to compete in a highly competitive, conflictual environment.

Perhaps the future for combining research and practice in postgraduate social work education lies in the development of professional doctorates in social work. Such doctorates have components of both coursework and a research thesis and often have an explicit agenda of linking research with professional practice (Brennan 1998). These doctorates have been specifically instituted to be done part-time whilst the student is undertaking full-time professional work.

The existence of the professional doctorate in Australia is a relatively recent one (Holdaway 1994). The Australian Higher Education Council in 1989 recommended the introduction of doctoral programs more suited to professional settings in fields such as engineering, accounting, law, education and nursing (NBEET 1989, p.28). This recommendation is economically motivated in order to '... provide Australia with economic advantage in a global economy' (Brennan 1995, p.20) rather than for the intrinsic value or their value to universities or students (Brennan 1998, p.73). Financially, these degrees if they can be classed as research degrees (by having a thesis worth more than 50% of the degree) rather than a coursework degree, can attract HECS only or HECS-exempt status rather than having the potential to become full-fee paying courses if classified as coursework programs. This means that they can attract the same level of funding for the university as a PhD as long as it remains predominantly research oriented. This potentially makes professional doctorates more attractive to potential students.

The call for the introduction of the professional doctorates has resulted in 29 of Australia's 38 universities offering them in 1996. Fifteen different types of professional doctorates are available in a range of fields including education (23 universities), business (9), juridical science (9) and a range of other areas including public administration, environmental design, psychology, health, nursing, engineering, technology and creative arts (Jongeling 1996).

Examining this list reveals the notable absence of social work. For a range of reasons (financial, professional and educational), social work has the opportunity to become involved in professional doctorate education. La Trobe University will be the first to introduce a professional doctorate in social work in 1999 (a Doctor of Social Work - D.S.W.). Other universities are likely to follow suit shortly thereafter.

A key reason for there being a demand for a professional doctorate in social work is that there is logical progression in development and education for the increasing numbers who have completed a Master of Social Work coursework qualification and are looking to undertake further studies, but do not wish to pursue the traditional path of PhD research. Professional doctorates may well also serve as a means of encouraging universities to adopt constructive research partnerships with professional fields and vice versa and as a way of reconceptualising the traditional binary opposition between research and practice (Brennan 1998).

As was stated at the outset of this paper, this paper reports on the first stage of this research. The next stage will involve a mail questionnaire survey to schools offering courses requesting information about such things numbers and rates of students completing. This will be followed by a survey of a sample of graduated students focusing on their perceptions and satisfaction with their courses. The overall aim is to build a picture of Australian social work postgraduate education and attempt to answer, based on sound evidence, many of the questions we have posed in this preliminary paper.

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Interactive Multimedia - A New Tool for Teaching Interpersonal Communication Skills

Lionel Sharpe

1. Traditional Approaches for Teaching Skills

Social work education has, for many decades, relied on a number of approaches for providing a learning environment for practice skills development. In the fieldwork setting for example, students sit in on interviews with experienced agency staff observing their interactions and responses. Following the interview, a debriefing allows student feedback, questions and discussion. A field teacher assess the quality of the students' observations and the performance is assessed in respect to competence in observation and reflection, rather than on actual performance.

Conjoint interviews are another approach where the student and the field teacher are both present in the same room with the client. This gives an opportunity for the student to take control of the interview from time to time and allows for direct observation and feedback by the field teacher.

Alongside these approaches are the classroom teaching of interview skills. These came about as a result of two major developments which occurred some 25 years ago.

First, there was the development of microcounselling and microtraining techniques. Helping skills, as they were often referred to in the literature, were identified, labelled and classified by early pioneers such as Carkuff, Egan and others and taught in a systematic manner in a classroom situation. This opened up a new teaching mode of 'experiential learning' and was seen as a valuable preparation for the fieldwork placement experience. Experiential learning relies on a replication of a possible event which might possibly occur in a practice context. Having rehearsed this event, it is assumed that the student is better prepared for practice.

The other teaching development was the introduction of new audio-video technologies to enhance classroom instruction.

When Allen Ivey first introduced a systematic method of training helpers and counsellors, in the early seventies, social work educators saw its potential and began to establish in universities and Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) what has been popularly called 'practice skill labs' equipped with video cameras (Ivey 1971). Large carpeted rooms, often with cushions for floor seating, enabled the mobility to form into small groups or observe the 'fishbowl' interview demonstration.

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Microskills training, as it is often called, was an innovative approach based on the assumption that 'interviewer behaviour is extremely complex and therefore can best be taught by breaking the interview down into discrete behavioural units' (Ivey and Authier 1978). These specific components were usually taught and practiced in dyads and triads over a number of weeks, as single units, and later in the program these were integrated into a meaningful flowing interview.

Some courses introduced specially designed interviewing rooms where a one-way glass screen was installed and, with the aid of a hidden microphone, students could observe interviews first hand. Family counselling agencies in the sixties, for example, often boasted this innovative development and students sought out such placements pioneering this learning opportunity.

The portable tape recorder of the sixties also enabled students to record interviews outside the classroom or on placement. Supervision involved the playback of a recorded interview with critical feedback. Along with this development were the work books or training manuals for teaching microskills and aiding self-directed learning. Egan is perhaps the most popular innovator of the work book approach (Egan 1995).

A major technology breakthrough occurred in the sixties with the introduction of the video recorder. The early video recorders were bulky reel to reel tapes and not very user friendly. Nevertheless, their potential was recognised by psychologists such as Norman Kagan, who innovated the 'interpersonal process recall (IPR) as a technique for developing interviewing skills (Kagan 1975).

Kagan promoted the idea that students are unlikely to acquire new skills in a threatening situation where the teacher replays a videotape with the student and critically comments on performance. Kagan believed that the learner is her/his own best critic and developed a structured process to guide the student through a process of self-exploration and self-appraisal.

His IPR method involved a triad session where an inquirer or observer sits in on the replay of a pre-taped interview, together with the student interviewer and interviewee (perhaps another student roleplaying a client) and asks the student to stop the tape whenever she/he wishes. The observer that facilitates the debriefing by asking a range of open-ended questions.

This approach laid the foundations for the development of interactive multimedia applications. As a classroom strategy, they place high demands on the teacher as instant feedback is essential following each classroom interview and often a number of small groups are working together simultaneously and vying for the teacher's attention.

2. Interactive Multimedia

The introduction of computer-assisted learning, especially the use of interactive multimedia (IMM), is a major breakthrough which should attract the attention of social work educators.

Simply put, IMM programs are computer-based presentations that can incorporate graphics, text, photographic images, video clips, animations, sound and voiceover all in one presentation. Its key feature is that it can be designed to respond to the user by either

operating a mouse, using a keyboard or pressing on a touch screen. The user can go deeper and deeper to various levels of complexity in a learning program.

The writer began to explore the value of this new technology after attending a workshop in Melbourne given by Professor Frank Maple of the University of Michigan a number of years ago.

Maple developed four interactive videodiscs on individual, group and family treatment. The computer allows the user to function as a therapist in a treatment session by interacting with videotaped sessions which had been transferred to videodiscs. These programs are currently used to train social work students at the University of Michigan (Seabury and Maple 1993).

The writer had been teaching direct service skills for many years and was aware that the pressures from cutbacks to tertiary education would impact on small group experiential teaching, which was a prized aspect of many courses. There was also an urgent need by those conducting distant education courses in social work to have an effective means to monitor learning and assess progress. The two to four day 'intensive', where distance education students attend the university campus on a few occasions during a semester and meet teaching staff face-to-face in a workshop or seminar format, are only a partial answer to this important educational need.

In 1996 an opportunity arose to work with Greg Powell of the Addiction Research Institute (ARI) in South Melbourne, a psychologist, who had considerable experience in interactive multimedia systems for health promotion and research. ARI, an independent organisation with a membership base aimed at promoting research and health promotional activities, was seeking new horizons to expand its expertise in this new medium.

In 1995 the writer had supervised a group of social work students in producing a training videotape consisting of 56 short vignettes suitable for teaching responding skills for interviewers and counsellors. Titled *Fly on the Wall*, this videotape provided a range of situations suitable for selection for use with IMM. One vignette was chosen for digitising and a script was prepared for presentation to funding bodies such as Victoria 21 Interactive Multimedia Development Fund. This fund had been set up recently to support, by way of a loan, the development of interactive multimedia in Victoria.

3. Aim of the Project

To develop an interactive multimedia learning program to facilitate people working in the human service professions and students in health and welfare courses, to learn and practice basic skills in interpersonal communication relevant to the counselling interview.

4. Specific Goals

1. To provide a CD ROM resource to enable learners to engage in an individualised study program designed to enhance listening and responding skills.

2. To provide a supplementary teaching tool to be used alongside classroom teaching for teachers and trainers in interpersonal communication and counselling courses in such fields as medicine, psychology, nursing, social work, youth work, welfare studies, educational and pastoral counselling, and the like.

3. To provide a resource for students engaged in distance education courses requiring skills in interviewing and counselling.

5. The Demonstration

The viewer will watch a 60 second vignette featuring a young female actor talking about a childhood sexual experience to a counsellor. The scene fades out and the viewer is asked to type in a response to the person's statement. The viewer can then choose to undertake a basic or advanced route into the program. It is assumed that both beginning and advanced counsellors can benefit from this program.

The basic program takes the viewer through exploration of non-verbal behaviours, distinguishing observation from inference, identification and labelling of feelings and an opportunity to attempt a second response and compare it with some other predetermined options. A rationale and critique is then given for various response options prepared by a panel of 'expert practitioners'. The demonstration only provides a glimpse at the basic program as the final program is yet to be developed.

6. Discussion

The growth of interest in this technology is evident from the growing literature and government support for IMM projects. Its application to social work education has been slow, even though an American journal, *Computers in Human Services*, was launched over a decade ago. Another initiative to provide an opportunity to explore developments is the joint Netherlands and UK quarterly journal, *New Technology in the Human Services*, which commenced in 1988.

Very few articles, however, have appeared demonstrating its application to skill development in social work. The reason for this might be associated with a number of challenges which need to be faced by social work educators. Social work education has always regarded human interaction, in all its complexity, as a primary concern for teaching intervention skills. The fieldwork placement, or practicum, and experiential exercises in the classroom, have a long tradition in the history of the social work curriculum. The growth of distance education has, however, forced a re-examination of classroom skill training approaches.

Interactive multimedia technology may provide a partial answer, not only to distance education programs, but also to courses which are affected by funding cuts and are forced to abandon traditional small group experiential group learning.

For those exploring this new territory, there are a number of obstacles to be overcome.

First, there is the complex terminology used to label the various applications. Flynn (1994) points out that the literature provides a confusing variety of acronyms such as computer-assisted instruction (CAI), computer-managed instruction (CMI) or computer-based training (BBT) and others, each with its particular aspect of computer use. Coming to grips with the new language is not easy for the newly initiated.

Then there is the challenge to understand the almost infinite capacity of the computer to respond to creative teaching ideas and put them into use for students. This was possible the most exciting aspect of the venture into this new area of education. For example, the technology is available to build in programs for the formal assessment of student learning. By asking the student to type in responses to triggers on the computer screen, feedback can be given at a later stage by the social work educator, either through the internet or hard copy through the mail.

Secondly, interactive multimedia programs are expensive to develop. Victorian government funding arrangements require a detailed marketing plan and funding comes in the form of a loan which is repayable after sale of the product to a marketing organisation. The small size of the 'social work education market' would surely make such a funding arrangement unfeasible. There is a danger that rapid changes in technology are likely to have an impact on the 'use by' date of many programs and new products might quickly supplant the older ones. These are financial risks that the program developer must face in embarking on this new technology in teaching.

Social work educators need to be alerted that budget conscious university administrators may see this technology as an opportunity to cut staffing and 'streamline' teaching. A particular problems for social work education is the possibility of importation of inappropriate overseas programs where cultural differences make them unsuitable for skill training.

Associated with the cost factor is the accessibility of computers with CD-ROM capacity to students. While most universities are planning for the expansion of computer labs, it may be some years off before there can be full utilisation of the technology.

A working party from the University of Canberra recently identified four pervasive myths concerning the role of information technology in universities. One such myth sees technology as an easy solution to teaching problems, another that it threatens to replace people with machines, another that it saves time and yet another, that it saves money (Clark et al 1995). Social work educators certainly need to examine the first of these so-called myths.

It is heartening to learn that one trial reported in the literature has shown some positive results. Seabury and Maple (1993) gathered more than 300 systematic student evaluations over four years of computer-assisted instructional programs designed to teach practice skills in

introductory social work methods courses. The results revealed that the students were extremely positive about these programs as learning experiences.

This paper has argued that flexible delivery of social work skill-based learning programs, through the use of modern technology, needs to be accepted as a challenge to traditional social work education. Learning more about these new technologies and accepting the challenge may open up new opportunities, even to the most sceptical.

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Reflections On Teaching Law In Social Work - If Only It Were That Simple

Phillip A Swain

1. Introduction

In 1990, in an article on which the title to this paper is loosely based, Suzy Braye and Michael Preston-Shoot reflected on the debate in Britain prompted by the 1988 Ball Report into the relationship between social work practice and the law, and the teaching of law to social workers (Braye and Preston Shoot 1990). They noted that the Ball Report had (then) concluded that such teaching was marked by,

> ...inadequacies and inconsistencies in both teaching content and style. [The Report highlights] students' dissatisfactions about the practice relevance of their learning about law, [and is] unimpressed with the levels of law knowledge shown by qualifying students... (Braye and Preston Shoot 1990, p.333).

Braye and Preston Shoot noted that the practice realities and dilemmas of social work (such as risks v. rights, care v. control, needs v. resources, duty v. power) are indicative of the multiple and often conflicting roles which social workers are often required to perform, contrast sharply with the supposed certainty of legal principles and approaches to understanding (Braye and Preston Shoot 1990, pp.337-341) - the 'illusion that the law...is definitive and concrete' (ibid., pp.351). The illusion is, however, well established: students and (often) practitioners are dismayed to find that the approaches and remedies offered by legal systems are cumbersome, costly and incomprehensible. Moreover, those who champion legal solutions and remedies can be seemingly impervious to the limitations of those solutions. As Carol Smart wrote,

> ...law sets itself above other knowledges like psychology, sociology or common sense. It claims to have the method to establish the truth of events. For example, the criminal trial, through the adversarial system, is thought to be a secure basis for findings of guilt and innocence. Judges can come to correct legal decisions. The fact that other judges in higher courts may overrule some decisions only goes to prove that the system ultimately divines the correct view...(1990, p.5).

Nevertheless, law and social work share the same social space; while each may view problems, appropriate interventions and solutions from a different perspective, the 'turf' is - to some extent at least - shared. A reconciliation of the practice differences between and a recognition of the respective strengths and wisdoms of law and social work (Zifcak 1995), is critical so that those who rely on the two professions are best assisted. Social work students and practitioners need to be aware of and utilise the boundaries, strengths and allegiances that can be forged between the two approaches to understanding.

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2. Why Teach 'Law' At All In A Social Work Course?

In a student evaluation in 1991, one social work student in response to the question 'Do you expect this course to be relevant to your practice as a social worker?' responded by writing 'probably - but I plan on avoiding every legal issue I can.'

This student response may have been wishful thinking, or perhaps naive. We live in a society in which many activities and behaviours are regulated by legislation at either federal or state level. Sometimes, perhaps, the legislation that impinges upon what we do - either as social workers or citizens - is not very prominent in our thinking, but is nevertheless there. Some practice settings necessitate a more obvious acknowledgment of legal dimensions and issues, but all settings incorporate legal dimensions - whether these are in relation to substantive law (such as child protection law, health law, family law, guardianship law etc.), Freedom of Information (and confidentiality/privacy legislation), industrial laws (pay/conditions etc.), Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination legislation, health/safety requirements, worker's compensation and work practice requirements, and the competencies which can be reasonably expected of social workers as professional workers holding claim to a body of knowledge and skills upon which the community is entitled to rely (Partlett 1985; Skene 1990; Jones 1991; Dyer 1992; Swain 1996). Whatever the practice setting, the legal context of that setting will in part, at least, effect how interpersonal issues and disputes are able to be resolved. The law is a potent force both upon professional practice and, in turn, upon what is seen to be critical within educational preparation for that practice.

Social workers work both as direct practitioners, in community development, evaluation, agency management, and policy development. Legislation has been described as the 'backbone' of social policy (that is, necessary for both the implementation of and change in social policy) (Zifcak 1995, p.281). Social policy, ideas and ideals are often expressed through legislative amendment; the 'law' can be many years behind prevailing community views. Developments heralded by legislative change can lead community debate to a newer direction or level of community acceptance of behaviour, rights and responsibilities. Arguably, too, the legislation promulgated within a particular community can be perceived as a mirror to that community's view of its citizens and the extent to which citizenship rights and entitlements are accorded to all, but particularly to those whose status in the community is marginalised in some way (Graycar and Morgan 1990). What is accepted, or is acceptable, as 'law' may give a window to the attitudes and values held by the community. So if (as has happened) Australia signs the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Convention requires signatory states to recognise the rights of children as full citizens to the full protection of the law and the guarantee of the same legal rights as adults enjoy, but then allow laws such as the juvenile detention law in Western Australia (which permits indefinite detention of children for certain offences to continue to exist) then it can legitimately be asked how committed Australia really is to its children and their rights, or is the signing of an International Convention no more than a matter of rhetoric (Brewer and Swain 1992). The structure of the legal system, and the legislation which a community adopts and accepts, can point to the relative citizenship of its various constituent members. On this argument, some constituents - such as women, children, those with a disability, those on social security payments, those whose first language and culture is not Anglo-Celtic, and Aboriginal Australians - who often have less than equal access to the means of protection of their rights, are excluded from the citizenship guarantees most would take for granted.

3. The Practice Context

Social work practice in Australia - in fact, human services practice generally - is characterised by increasing legalisation, an increasing attention to rights and their enforcement, and greater demands for accountability. The legal system in Australia is also increasingly complex legislatively and organisationally; what some have termed 'tribunalisation' (Teague 1992, p.24) has meant the proliferation of jurisdictions for both rights enforcement and the merits review which is essential to ensure that legislative obligations are met and that citizens are - in theory, at least - treated by governments and departments with fairness, justice and equity.

Social workers in Australia are rarely the subject of direct legal suit in relation to their competence or the advice they give, though perhaps this is a reflection of the relatively low rates of private practice and the financial status of their clientele rather than the likelihood that incompetent, incomplete or erroneous advice is never given. Nevertheless, social workers have in the United States been the subject of malpractice litigation over allegations that treatment was undertaken without consent, that inappropriate treatment was used, that the worker failed to consult or refer, failed to protect the parties, breached confidentiality, or failed to advise (Besharov and Besharov 1987, pp.519-520). Social workers in the child welfare field have been sued in respect of failure to remove a child from an abusive environment (Alexander 1993, p.67), failure to notify reported sexual abuse of a child, failure to accept for investigation an abuse notification, failing to investigate a report adequately or to provide adequate case monitoring, and for undertaking investigations held to be overly intrusive (Besharov and Besharov 1987, p.520; Swain 1996).

Though social workers in Australia are infrequently sued, the trend elsewhere across most professions is for increased litigation claims and questioning of competence (Jones and Alcabes 1989). There seems to be no reason for social workers to presume that lawsuit will continue to be unusual. In Australia in child protection practice, for example, the threat of a malpractice suit against an individual child protection worker was made by a child's non-custodial father (as noted in the reporting of the investigations into the death of Daniel Valerio, referred to in the Melbourne *Age* articles in October/November 1993) whilst lawsuits against the staff of the Victorian Health and Community Services Department were threatened by the families involved in the 'Children of God' cases (*The Age*, April 29 1994).

If reported cases in Australia against social workers in respect of their competence are uncommon (Collingridge 1991, p.12), questioning of competence and practice skills via the media, or during public enquiries, is quite frequent - widely publicised examples being the media discussion and public enquiries into the 'baby Kajal' adoption case (Collingridge 1991, p.13), such deaths as those of Paul Montcalm in New South Wales and Daniel Valerio in Victoria (Swain 1993), or the 'Children of God' interventions in 1993 (Swain 1992), each of which drew attention to questions of competence and the judgements made by the social workers involved. More recently in Victoria the investigations into the child protection system by Mr Justice Fogarty of the Family Court and the Victorian Auditor-General have, amongst other things, questioned the experience and skills of social work practitioners (Fogarty and Sargeant 1988; Fogarty 1993: Auditor-General of Victoria 1996). Public questioning of social work practice competence is by no means uncommon in Australia, although largely confined to the child protection practice arena.

4. A Critique Of The Law Content Of Social Work Courses

Braye and Preston-Shoot (1990) concluded that '...it is not just knowledge of the law which must be conveyed [in law courses] but the problems and dilemmas in applying it' (ibid., p.345). Their evaluation of the content and process of teaching led to the conclusion that students needed and desired an increased knowledge of broad legal principles (rather than greater knowledge of a specific area of legislation), but that knowledge of the law and legal processes is of itself insufficient '...legal knowledge must be connected to practice knowledge' (ibid., p.346).

There are perhaps 70 or 80 different jurisdictions in Victoria alone, each governed by state or federal legislation, each with its own procedural requirements and practices. In any of these - though some more so than others - a social worker may at some point be required to appear, to advise, to report, to provide information, to support an applicant or - increasingly - to be part of the decision-making processes as a specialist non-legal member of a decision-making body. Whilst any survey of practitioners, academics and past and current students, inevitably suggests specific legal jurisdictions which require greater attention in the design of law courses for social workers, to some extent this reflects the particular practice requirements of the settings in which those consulted are found, and the extent of those settings is vast.

A clear and unambiguous commitment to direct practice relevance, and to approaching law from the perspectives of everyday social work practice, was the basis on which the replanning in 1994-5 of the content and teaching of law within The University of Melbourne (hereafter referred to as Melbourne University) social work course took place.

5. The Melbourne Teaching Context And Content

Like, perhaps, many courses and many component areas which together make up a discipline of study such as social work, the law component of social work suffers from the perennial difficulty of insufficient time. If only there were more time, then students could do more, be more focused, be more diverse. Due to the pressures of high student workloads across the years of a social work degree, input in relation to legal aspects of practice is necessarily limited in scope. By way of comparison, a student in a law faculty could expect to spend a semester (or possibly a whole year) examining the aspects of law to which the Bachelor of Social Work degree is able to devote perhaps one or two hours of class time. For instance, Melbourne University law students study Family Law for a whole year; the Melbourne social work course allows about eight hours of class time for these aspects of practice.

The other side of this coin is that a social work course is producing **social workers**, not lawyers. Hence, over the recent years (refer Table 1) although the Melbourne (and La Trobe) Universitys' social work degrees have not (until 1996, in the case of the Melbourne degree) devoted more time to the law components of the degree, they have more importantly moved away from a focus on jurisdictions - other than a few key jurisdictions of widespread relevance to practitioners - to an emphasis on understanding the law, how legal systems 'work', and how to negotiate a path through whichever jurisdiction is appropriate. The course components referred to below attempt to examine the law from the perspective of social work practice, highlighting practice dilemmas and the role which social workers can play in the legal arena,

alongside the necessary presentation of the law and legal process. The courses also assume that students use readings and texts to extend their knowledge, and draw upon the issues presented in the law components in tutorials and seminars related to other subjects in the social work course.

The Melbourne and La Trobe courses provide a general overview of the Australian and Victorian legal systems and their components, and the values and principles upon which law is based. The courses aim to give students **a beginning** level of understanding of the legislative arrangements and legal systems within which social work is practised. They also examine current legal issues in such practice areas as child protection, family law, social security and domestic violence. The course content of the lecture series in 1996 included,

an overview of the legal context of practice

- Australia as a federated country, and Constitutional implications
- Australia's legal institutions (court/tribunal structures, appeal processes, developments in alternative dispute resolution)

several substantive areas of law

- child protection practice (the Children*s Court jurisdiction, notification/investigation grounds and outcomes, dispositions and post-Court options)
- family law (marriage and its meanings, divorce, developments regarding custody, guardianship and access)
- responses to domestic violence (common law, federal and state remedies, and their adequacy)
- social security eligibility (structure of the social security system, principal work and family-related payments, presumptions underpinning the social security system, appeal rights)

related quasi-legal dimensions of practice

- preparation for Court/Tribunal appearances (preparation of witnesses and legal advisers, of reports, evidence and cross-examination techniques and skills)
- ethics of practice - confidentiality/duty of care/competence

Table 1 - Comparison Of Teaching Formats And Modes 1990-1996 in Law Components in Victorian Bachelor of Social Work Courses

University/Campus	Year	Mode	Course Taken By	Teaching Format	Teaching Hours Per Week	Assessment Format	Enrolment & Student/Staff Ratio[4]
Melbourne	1990-91	on campus	all BSW first year students	lecture & tutorial	6 (l) 6 (t)	essay (choice)	100-105 (t 1:16)
Melbourne	1992-94	on campus	all BSW first year students	lecture only[2]	12	essay (choice)	95-105
Melbourne	1992-95	on-campus	option course for final year BSW students	seminar	20	essay (choice)	18-20 (s 1:20)
Melbourne	1996-7	on campus	all BSW final year students	lecture and seminar or tutorial	39 (1996) 25 (1997)	1-2 short answer papers + essay (choice)	66 (s 1:22) (1996) 105 (t 1:18) (1997)
Melbourne (Geelong)	1990	extended campus[1]	all BSW first year students	seminar	12	essay (choice)	14 (S 1:14)
La Trobe Bundoora	1991-97	on campus	all BSW first year students[3]	lecture (1996); lecture & seminar (1997)[2]	24	essay (choice)	65-70 (s 1:65)
Monash	1997	on-campus	all BSW first year students	lecture only	18	essay (choice)	47
La Trobe Wodonga	1991-95	extended campus[1]	all BSW first year students[3]	lecture/seminar	12	essay (choice)	14-20 (s 1:14)

Notes:

1. Courses taught at extended campuses by staff attending from the principal campuses. Classes conducted at evenings and weekends; course taught in "concentrated" format (eg. all day devoted to the one subject etc.)
2. 'Law' series a component of a broader based subject.
3. Course exemption granted for students who had undertaken prior legal studies.
4. 'l' refers to lectures; 's' refers to seminars; 't' refers to tutorials.

The Melbourne and La Trobe courses had in 1996 substantially similar content; a significant difference, however, was that the La Trobe course was taught by lecture alone, whereas the 1996 Melbourne course incorporated - after substantial course review in 1995 - a weekly seminar alongside the lecture series. The Melbourne seminar series included content focused on:

- reading/understanding legislation
- ethics scenarios and resolution, including the duties specified in the AASW Code of Ethics
- court preparation- giving evidence, coping with cross-examination; report preparation
- child protection - grounds; Children*s Court processes; dispositions
- family law - roles for social workers in the Family Court; report/recommendation preparation
- responses to family violence - options and (dis)advantages
- social security - entitlement scenarios; options and appeal processes

The other contextual issue, at both Melbourne (and to a lesser extent at La Trobe), is the location (and, by implication, relative importance) of the law components of the social work degree vis-a-vis other course content. At Melbourne, particularly, the law course has had a chequered history, moving from a place as part of a larger context of practice subject, to a stand alone dis-integrated lecture series attached to the first year direct practice subject, to (in 1996, for the first time) a separate subject with both lecture and smaller-group teaching components (reference should be made to Table 1). Whilst academic staff and students endorse the importance of law components to an understanding of policy development and to practice competence, and recognise that the legal context is one of the critical systems within which social work must practice, the placing of law components represents a marginalisation when considered alongside skills and direct practice courses. In the context of reducing university resources and teaching allocations, and increased questioning of the place of social work within academic discourse - as seems to be the trend in the 1990s - it remains to be seen whether law components of social work degrees will be further marginalised or will move - as an examination of the practice realities of graduate social workers suggests they should - to a position of equality alongside social work practice knowledge and skills.

5. The Teaching Format

In the light of the critique of the teaching of law to social work students by Braye and Preston-Shoot (1990), some comment on the approach taken to teaching this component over recent years and in 1996, is appropriate.

Throughout the 1990s, the strong message in student course evaluations at both La Trobe and Melbourne Universities was that a course providing lectures alone, was inadequate. Some 65% of Melbourne social work students who evaluated the law component of their social

work course in 1992 suggested that a tutorial series would have assisted in understanding the course material 'somewhat' or 'a great deal'; this was the view of 68% of La Trobe social work students in 1993. These comments and ratios were consistently reported by students since then, at both institutions, although La Trobe has yet to move towards incorporation of any small-group teaching into its law component. An exception to this format was the La Trobe extended campus concentrated course at Albury-Wodonga, offered until 1995. Here the opportunity to teach in smaller groups was valued, but largely mitigated by the reduced hours and the obligation in those hours to cover substantially the same content as Bundoora students who had about twice as many contact hours available.

The Melbourne course was substantially revised during the latter part of 1995, a reflection of both staff and student dissatisfaction with the limited hours devoted to this component in the past, and a recognition of the increasing complexity and accountability requirements of practice. In 1996 the Melbourne course comprised –

(a) *Lectures*
A total of ten 2-hour lectures were offered encompassing the content referred to above. The lectures were offered to all enrolled students (66 in 1996) in standard lecture format. The lectures enabled a core of content to be covered, but like all such modes allowed little interaction between students or lecturer and students. The lectures utilised PowerPoint computer-aided presentations, and some audio and several video excerpts (regarding domestic violence, the court system, presumptions of the law, family law, and court preparation and evidence giving). The lectures were supported by a prepared pack of text and journal recommended readings, and some distributed case, legislative and other relevant resource materials.

(b) *Seminars*
The seminars were envisaged as a smaller-group forum (planned to be a maximum of 20 students per group, but in fact groups were of 22 students) in which the focus would be on relating lectures and readings to practical/ethical/practice issues. For each seminar a series of exercises/tasks were developed, on which students worked either individually or (more usually) in small groups of 3 or 4, examining legal options and consequences, practice issues which arose, and developing and practising particular skills of relevance to legal settings. The exercises were drawn or developed from direct social work practice experiences, and frequently drew upon issues being currently debated in the media. In several weeks, additional resource materials were distributed to students at either lectures or seminars (for instance, handout materials included resources on child protection, family law, legal responses to family violence, and social security entitlements, including excerpts of appropriate legislation). Video resources were used in some seminars as a basis for student discussion. Most seminars involved a combination of small- and whole-group discussion, with an emphasis on case analysis, in-class skill development, and problem resolution using (where possible) current debates or issues presented recently in the media.

(c) *Court/Tribunal Observation Visits*
Arrangements were made for students to visit a variety of jurisdictions, including the Children*s Court, the Mental Health Review Board, the Guardianship and Administration Board, the Intellectual Disability Review Panel, the Social Security Appeal Tribunal, the County Court and the Supreme Court. Students were invited to choose their preferred date/time from those available; in all about two-thirds of the student group did use this

opportunity, and the feedback from students was very positive about the experience. If repeating this in 1997, it perhaps could be a course expectation for all students and incorporated into the assignment requirements. Following the visits, seminar time was devoted to discussion of the roles of various players in the settings observed, the social work roles played and skills required, and the legal strategies and formalities evident in the jurisdiction concerned.

Table 2 - Results of 1996 Student Course Evaluation at The University of Melbourne

% (n = 54/66 81% response)						
question	**s/disagree**	**disagree**	**neither**	**agree**	**s/agree**	**mean score**
Q1	1.9		11.1	51.9	35.2	4.19
Q2			9.3	50	38.9	4.39
Q3			7.4	40.7	51.9	4.44
Q4		1.9		33.3	64.2	4.69
Q5		7.4	13	57.4	20.4	4.02
Q6	1.9	9.3	16.7	48.1	24.1	3.83
Q7			11.1	53.7	35.2	4.24
Q8		1.9	14.8	44.4	38.9	4.2
Q9		5.6	24.1	42.6	25.9	4
Q10			22.2	51.9	25.9	4.04
Q11			13	51.9	33.3	4.3
Q12		1.9	18.5	55.6	24.1	4.02
Q13	3.7	7.4	31.5	42.6	14.8	3.57
Q14	1.9	7.4	18.5	42.6	29.6	3.91
Q15	3.7	3.7	16.7	24.1	51.9	4.17
Q16	5.6	14.8	29.6	20.4	24.1	3.76
Q17	1.9	3.7	25.9	44.4	22.2	3.8
Q18	1.9	3.7	13	55.6	24.1	4.07
Q19	1.9	18.5	14.8	51.9	13	3.56
Q20	3.7	7.4	27.8	46.3	13	3.69
Q21			7.4	50	37.1	4.31

* For the exact content of questions 1-21, refer to Appendix 1.

6. The Student Response

The 1996 course feedback from the 66 social work students at Melbourne University gives some interesting insights into perceptions of the relevance of a course dealing with legal and ethical issues of practice. The instrument used as an Evaluation Tool is attached as Appendix 1, to which reference should be made, whilst the analysis of student feedback to the initial quantitative measures (questions 1 to 21) is contained in Table 2 above.

The informal feedback from students throughout the course was very positive, and this was confirmed by the formal response (Appendix 2). Overall, the responses to the quantitative questions (Appendix 2, Questions 1-21) were very positive, with the majority of response means in excess of 4 (out of a possible 5 - reflecting strongest support), and 3.56 being the lowest mean. There was very strong affirmation from students as to the structure of the course (Q4), the quality of the teaching (Q3), the content of lectures and seminars (Q7), and the appropriateness of lectures and seminars to the aims of the course (Q2). There was less strong support for the amount of reading for the course (Q6), the usefulness of the seminars (Q13), the accessibility of teaching staff (Q16), the overall amount of work required for the course (Q19) and the time devoted to each topic (Q20). These responses will be incorporated into future course planning; however, even in these areas there was still **strong support** from the great majority of students for the design, content and relevance of the course.

Questions 22 to 28 enabled students to provide more qualitative and general comments about the course. In considering what **other topics** could be included, multiple students supported greater emphasis on cultural/ethnicity issues (4 students), Koori issues (5), and crime and juvenile correctional issues (8). Individual students suggested inclusion of gay and lesbian issues, family law, ethical issues in health settings, sexual assault on women and children, women's rights, parliamentary procedures on legislation, social work roles with police, professional indemnity, guardianship issues for the elderly, and philosophical/ethical issues generally. The difficulty - as in all courses - is what to include or exclude in a course of finite duration, although some of the topics raised by students (for example family law, the legal responses to sexual assault on women, women*s rights, culture and ethnicity issues, gay/lesbian issues in the context of the substantive areas of law covered) **were** explicitly included in the course, though the relative emphasis may not accord with the preferences of all students. Any course dealing with law and social work - and indeed any social work course - should incorporate issues of gender, sexuality, culture and Aboriginality wherever possible.

Multiple students thought that **more time** needed to be devoted to family law (8 students), social security (5), multicultural issues (2), juvenile crime/corrections (2), women and domestic violence (4), and social work involvement in courts (3). Other areas referred to by single students were increased emphasis on courts and tribunals, and mandatory reporting of child abuse. Again, this response is perhaps a matter of student interest, career expectations, and emphasis. With the exception of juvenile crime/corrections (which was not directly covered at all in the course) all the other issues were addressed within the course at some level; indeed the course in 1996 devoted approximately 11% of class time to each of family law, social security and domestic violence.

Conversely, when considering what could occupy **less time** within the course, multiple students referred to the court system (4), and constitutional issues (2). Single students referred to social security, the history of law, gay/lesbian issues, and ethical issues (the comment here being 'what we learned was almost common sense'). In fact, the structure of the legal system occupied less than half of one hour of class time, and the constitutional issues even less. These topics may well be perceived by some students as dry and rather dull, and of limited relevance to social work practice - on the other hand the number of students who in course assignments and class discussion are unable to distinguish between federal and state jurisdictions suggests that these are not topics which can be foregone completely. Their inclusion reflects the reality that Australia is a constitutional federation with a complex legal hierarchy, some understanding of which is necessary not only for legal access, but also to know where policy and resource lobbying needs to be directed.

Of interest, and perhaps a reflection of the disparate views of relevance and importance held by different students, is the inclusion by some students within those matters to be given greater emphasis of substantially the same issues or topics as those to which others believe less emphasis is appropriate. Some students want more of what is already offered; others want less; some (apparently) do not recognise that what they perceive as relevant or important, is already there within the courses they attend. This, of course, makes course development to meet student needs problematic - but then student perception of appropriate course content should only be one factor in determining the shape of the courses to be offered. Further course development and teaching will also need to take account of the changing student profiles in social work. The trend at Melbourne is toward taking more students at earlier stages of their undergraduate careers, many of whom will have taken some undergraduate or secondary school courses in legal or related studies. Whilst this needs to be noted in course planning, the teaching of law within social work should aim not to develop an legal understanding as an end in itself, but to develop that understanding as it affects *social work practice* in particular. To this end, knowledge of law, even extensive, is not sufficient alone. The use of that knowledge, and the dilemmas which that use entails, are not the same for lawyer, nurse, teacher or social worker.

Overall, there was very strong support for the content and format of teaching incorporated into the 1996 Melbourne course, which was generally seen as relevant to social work practice, practical, and well taught. The student assessment confirmed earlier assessments through 1992-1995 that a lecture format, even well presented and well resourced, is inadequate (as far as students are concerned) in that it allows no or at best limited exploration of issues and dilemmas which practitioners face in daily practice. This was the single most consistent concern voiced by students across all courses and institutions included in Table 1 - the presumption that opportunities for discussion of legal issues and dilemmas within class time allotted to tutorials and other small-group interaction in other social work subjects, was not borne out by student experience on any campus in any course in any year.

7. The Future Shape Of Law And Social Work Teaching

Like Braye and Preston-Shoot, the experience of the 1996 Melbourne law course was that '...[a] practice-led approach involved the students more directly and creatively, ...brought alive the moral and ethical dilemmas in applying the law, and enabled them to confront some of the hidden value assumptions underlying the law...' (p.349)

Students responded positively to the practice-led method of learning, in which issues raised in lectures, readings, observations and personal experience, could be analysed, challenged and understood.

The increasing complexity of the legal systems within which and alongside social work must practice, and the increasing requirement that social workers be and be seen to be accountable for what they do, means that the great divide between law and social work needs to be bridged. The stereotypic views of lawyer and social worker are just that - the comment that '...lawyers love to play games...the games are invariably good for the lawyer, occasionally good for his [sic] client, and rarely good for society...' (*Time*, 1978, p.59, quoted in Lau 1983, pp.22-3) fails to acknowledge that social workers, too, play games and can at times act to the detriment of client or society. The competent practitioner, rather than avoiding the uncertainty and confusion of the 'games' lawyers play, needs to ensure that the games and the rules by which they are played, are understood and used.

The clear message from student and practitioner feedback is that the law components of social work courses are critical to student understanding and practitioner competence. Such courses need to be practice based, small group in format, and taught by social work practitioners with direct experience in dealing with the complex interface between law and social work. Given the competency and accountability expectations of graduate social workers, competence and confidence in using the legal system - with all its vagaries and uncertainties - is an essential component of social work education.

The author would like to thank John McCormack, lecturer and doctoral student in Department of Social Work, University of Melbourne, for his assistance and expertise in undertaking the statistical analysis of student feedback on the 1996 University of Melbourne Law and Social Work course.

Appendix 1 - Evaluation Instrument 1996

Law and Social Work Practice 1996 Course Evaluation

For each question below, please follow the scale
(1) Strongly Disagree -> (2) -> (3) Neither Agree or Disagree -> (4) -> (5) Strongly Agree.

1. The aims of the Course were made clear.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. The lectures and workshops were appropriate to the aims of the course.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. The educational program was provided through good quality teaching.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. The overall structure of the lectures was clear.
   1 2 3 4 5

5. The content of the lectures and workshops challenged my intellectual ability.
   1 2 3 4 5

6. The required reading for the course was manageable.
   1 2 3 4 5

7. The content of the lectures and workshops was interesting.
   1 2 3 4 5

8. The material covered in lectures and workshops will be relevant to my practice.
   1 2 3 4 5

9. The lectures assisted me in understanding course readings and texts.
   1 2 3 4 5

10. The lectures were presented in an interesting and challenging way.
    1 2 3 4 5

11. The workshops provided opportunities to consider practice situations.
    1 2 3 4 5

12. The course as a whole encouraged the integration of theory and practice.
    1 2 3 4 5

13. The workshops assisted in understanding course readings and texts.
    1 2 3 4 5

14. The workshops were presented in an interesting and challenging way

1 2 3 4 5

15. My workshop tutor was approachable regarding issues about the course.
1 2 3 4 5

16. My workshop tutor was accessible out of class times.
1 2 3 4 5

17. The course assessments were helpful in achieving course objectives.
1 2 3 4 5

18. The assessment requirements related clearly to the content of the course.
1 2 3 4 5

19. The overall workload of the course was about right.
1 2 3 4 5

20. The time devoted to each topic area in the course was adequate.
1 2 3 4 5

21. Overall, I enjoyed this course.
1 2 3 4 5

22. Other topics/materials which should be incorporated into this course include -

23. Greater time should be devoted to the following topics in the course -

24. Less time could be spent on the following topics -

25. Course presentation/teaching would be improved by the following changes -

26. The best aspects of the course were -

27. The worst aspects of the course were -

28. Any other comments?

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A Risk Assessment for Practitioners when working with Disclosures of Domestic Violence

Deborah Walsh

This paper will outline a framework for a risk assessment that can be utilised by social work practitioners in the field. It has become apparent that in a wide range of service provision, social workers will be confronted with disclosures of domestic violence at one time or other. It is, therefore, imperative that social workers have tools at their disposal to conduct a risk assessment to assist in the priority setting for the safety of the woman and her children. For, it is not only vital that human service providers respond appropriately but it may assist in saving lives. In Victoria alone, 30 - 40 women and children are murdered each year by family members. (Women's Coalition Against Family Violence, 1994:1) The majority of these occur upon, around and just after separation. (Ibid) This frightening statistic, together with practice experience has prompted my proposal to document and test the formulation of a risk assessment framework developed as a result of practice research and practice wisdom was the basis for my thesis in a Master of Social Work degree.

The notion that domestic violence is about some lunatic bashing his wife black and blue on a regular basis pervades our community, our media and indeed some professional responses to domestic violence. This also forms the basis of some of the myths about domestic violence that help perpetuate the enduring stereotype that the perpetrator has to be sick or mad to do such a thing and the victim either asks for it, deserves it, likes it or is over-reacting. However, the incidence and occurrence of domestic violence does not reflect these commonly held myths.

During 1992/3 in Victoria, women's refuge accommodation was provided for 2,383 women and 2,133 requests for refuge were turned away as all beds were full. (SAAP, 1994:13) The SAAP Service Systems Review, (1994) notes that,

> It is becoming increasingly evident that women in refuge are merely the tip of the ice-berg, with significant numbers of women not accessing the refuge system, but in great need of assistance, support and options. (SAAP, 1994, p.1)

Support services such as Domestic Violence Outreach Services are funded to provide assistance to those women who, for a range of reasons, do not access the refuge option. It was one of these services that I worked for, for a number of years. It was evident that there were many more women in the community that experienced domestic violence who did not contact refuge services, which support's the SAAP Service System's Review (1994) conclusion and reflects my own experience in the field.

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When perusing the literature on the subject it becomes clear that there is little agreement about causation, incidence and cure for domestic violence in our community. However, one thing is clear and that is domestic violence costs the nation millions of dollars each year, both directly and indirectly. Cox et al. (1991) conducted a cost analysis of domestic violence in NSW. This costing included medical services, lost income, accommodation, legal and building a new life for 100,000 women whom reported domestic violence. Cox et al. projects the costs to the community to be in the order of $780,590,000 per year. (1991, p.20) While this costing is based on those who may survive the experience, it does not include the cost of those who do not. It has been estimated that between 30 - 40 women and children are murdered each year in Victoria alone. (Women's Coalition Against Family Violence, 1994, p.1) The cost of these murders can not be measured in mere dollar terms, for how can one measure the loss of a daughter, sister, mother and friend.

While the statistics are frightening the literature also indicates that when do disclose domestic violence to professionals, whose response is critical, women stories are often ignored, overlooked or criticised. The literature reflects my own experience where almost two thirds of women with whom I worked with over a period of 5 years reported that they had, in the past, told other professionals about the violence.

However, these disclosures were not explored fully or they were ignored. Atkins (1995, p.20) cites two case scenarios where women had disclosed violence to professionals and the issue was not detected or ignored and it was five and six years before these women disclosed again.

The Women's Coalition Against Family Violence (1994), quote a woman in refuge who stated,

> No-one believed the fear. The marriage counsellor didn't believe my fear of the gun. She felt that I was paranoid because of my fears of him. I didn't want to bad mouth or upset him. She couldn't work out why I was so afraid...She felt that he was quite harmless and that it would be quite safe to have sessions together. (1994, p.45)

The Women's Coalition Against Family Violence (1994) go onto cite other instances where counsellors have not responded appropriately to disclosures of violence, often framing the violence as a 'communication problem' or interpreted as a man's inability to control his anger or emotions. (1994, p.46)

Research conducted by the Office of the Status of Women (1988) found that,

> ... many victims and survivors have had negative experiences of counsellors. Some have felt blamed by them...Many found that marriage guidance counsellors have quite punitive attitudes towards victims of violence. (quoted in W.C.A.F.V., 1994, p.46)

Social Workers, Schwartz and Goldiamond, (1975, pp.193-238) document an interview referred to as 'The Johnson Case'. During this interview Mrs Johnson discloses domestic violence and stated that the violence was serious enough to warrant medical attention. The interviewer does not explore this disclosure and once the full assessment is completed, does not even cite the violence as an issue of concern, let alone to be worked on. Instead the four areas identified to be worked on in counselling include the couple's financial situation,

communication, the problem of sex and the weight problem of Mrs Johnson (1975, p.227). This documented example was used to demonstrate assessment and treatment techniques for teaching purposes and in my view a frightening reflection of many professionals' practice.

Scutt (1990) also notes that,

> A common response of family, medical practitioners, ministers of religion, priests and marriage counsellors, was that marriage was made to last forever. If the woman expresses a desire to leave, it was quashed. (Scutt, 1990, p.129)

Harway et al. (1993), undertook two studies of family therapists to explore whether the workers were able to identify violence as a cause for concern and whether they were able to recognise indicators and respond appropriately. In the first study, 91% of those surveyed failed to recognise the seriousness of the violence. In the second survey the respondents were told that the outcome of the case scenario was that the man killed his wife (1993, p.47), and as Harway et al. explain,

> ... fully half our sample, when asked what intervention could have been made prior to the fatal outcome, failed to invoke crisis intervention. (Harway, et al, 1993:53)

Many other writers have commented on professional responses to disclosures of domestic violence where workers have overlooked, ignored or criticised women (Hatty, 1985 & 1988; Otter, 1986; Sayers, 1987; Hoff, 1990 and The Family Violence Professional Educational Taskforce, 1994). All of who appear to validate my practice research indicating that inappropriate responses to disclosures are a common scenario.

It was through practice research and practice wisdom that I began to develop a tool for practice that can be utilised for practitioners to assist as a guide to assess risk when confronted with a woman disclosing domestic violence. For it became apparent to me that in a wide range of service provision, social workers will be confronted with disclosures of domestic violence at one time or other during their working life. It is therefore, imperative that they have the tools at their disposal to conduct an assessment to identify potential areas of risk and to assist in the priority setting for the safety of women and their children. It is anticipated that this framework will provide the practitioner with a guide as to what area to target questioning, based on an interview with a woman without contact with the violent partner.

It has been argued that practice research and practice wisdom is applied research and is fast becoming an identifiable tool for social work practitioners (Scott, 1990; Grace, 1995). Fook (1996) states that a reflective approach to practice assists the social work practitioner to identify and develop theoretical ideas drawn from practice experience. It assists social workers to validate their experience as legitimate and an important site for research, learning and theorising. (Fook, 1996, p.6) Fook goes onto argue that:

> Taking a reflective approach to practice means that the joint goals of practice, research and theory can be served in any one piece of activity. (1996, p.5)

Utilising this reflective practitioner model in supervision, gaps and themes in practice were identified and developed over time into the framework presented here. Detailed discussions

regarding the development of the model can be found in the completed Master's thesis (Walsh, 1992).

1. Risk Assessment Framework

Risk can be determined by seeing the woman as the expert in her own situation, however, women who are victims of violence are often desensitised to their own personal safety needs. Particularly if they have experienced violence over a period of time. It is therefore encumbent on practitioners to take seriously what the woman is saying about the violence and reframe any minimising and trivialising of the violence. For it is common, in my experience, that women will relate their story filtered through the language of the perpetrator. For example, Sophie stated that her partner was not a violent man, he just pushed her around a bit as she was a hopeless wife. Further questioning uncovered that while any physical assault occurred only once or twice per year, the last incident resulted in her being rendered unconscious with her head split open, after her husband hit her over the head with a bottle. Or other woman have stated that their partners lost control because she did or didn't do this or that. Often focusing the blame on themselves, which reflects the perpetrators reasons for his treatment of her.

Many authors have argued that violence is about the abuse of power with control being central to this. So if the perpetrator feels that his partner is not conforming to his notion of what should be, then the woman is at risk of abuse in the format common for that particular man. This information can only be gathered through the woman.

To establish exactly what risk and to whom is the purpose of the any questioning utilising this framework. The ultimate assessment must be a shared one between the woman and the worker. The woman must be invited to see her safety needs as an issue and participate in determining the direction of the intervention for it to be meaningful to her and her situation.

The risk assessment is presented in a diagrammatic framework with a description following. Each arm of the diagram indicates an area of potential risk to the woman and it is through the skill of interviewing that questions can be woven into the session utilising the framework as a guide. However, it is vital that workers' are aware of a number of issues that are relevant to understanding the context of domestic violence. I have included a summary of these issues that have been formulated through practice wisdom, reading and is been supported by colleagues in the area. (Walsh, 1997)

2. Issues To Consider

- We know that women are most at risk of being murdered at the point of separation or shortly after. (W.C.A.F.V, 1994:1)

- We know that women experience an escalation of the violence once they their partner knows that she has disclosed the violence to others, particularly professionals.

- We know that some male perpetrators pursue, harass and stalk their female partners for years after the separation and divorce.

- We know that some male perpetrators will harass and threatened workers, family members and friends once separation has occurred.

- We know that some male perpetrators will attempt to recruit family members and friends by playing the victim role, to gain support once separation has occurred.

- We know that many male perpetrators will blame others for the separation.

- We know that many male perpetrators' behaviour reflect the Cycle of Abuse and the Tactics of Power and Control. (See Appendix 1 & 2)

3. An Explanation

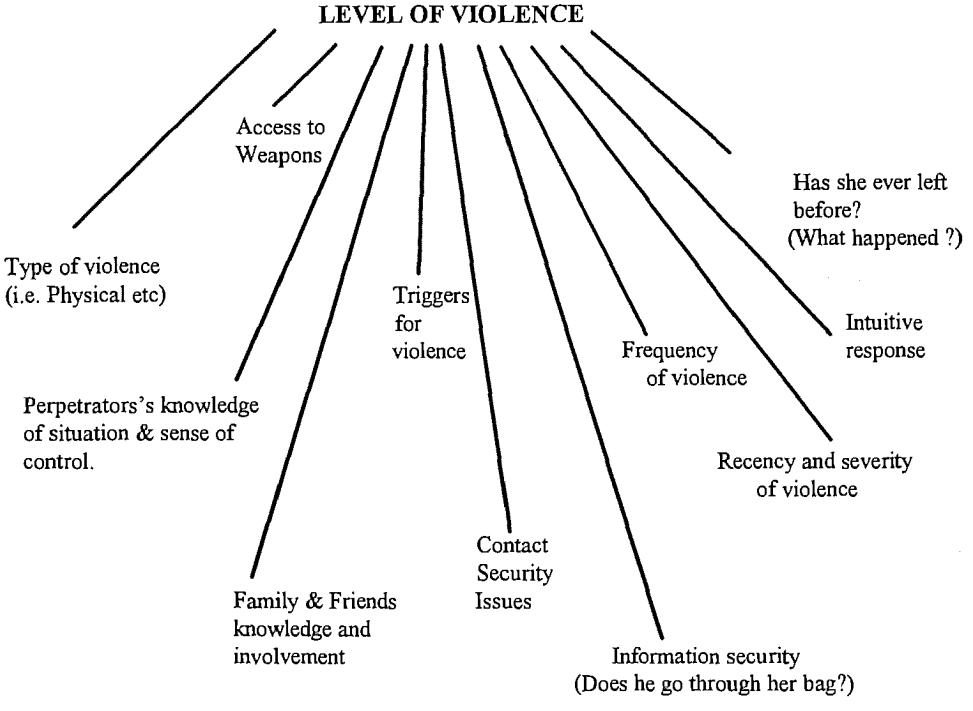
The over-riding assumption of the model is that the degree of risk often equals the level and extent of the violence. This assumption has been informed by practice wisdom gathered over the years of working in this field.

During the process of interviewing a woman utilising this model, the worker can also begin to formulate a profile of the perpetrator and the pattern of his violent behaviour. This is useful for workers and women when women are planning future sessions or for planning if she is going to leave the situation, if that is what she wants as an outcome.

While there is not set place to start on the diagram, a useful place to begin with is the Type of Violence to give context to the overall discussion and assessment process.

RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

DEGREE OF = LEVEL OF VIOLENCE



RISK ASSESSMENT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SAFETY ISSUES FOR BOTH THE WOMAN, WORKER AND FRIENDS AND/OR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS.

AT ALL TIMES OBTAIN SECONDARY CONSULTATION WHERE YOU THINK THERE IS HIGH RISK.

4. Description

Types of Violence (including any threats)

Questioning about the types of violence can be useful to begin with, as the worker can begin to define the violence and ask the woman to point out the types of abuse that apply to her situation. it is essential to establish the type of violence being perpetrated, for this issue will inform the worker what range of options are available to her if she decides to leave. For example, if severe physical assault is occasioned on a regular basis then the assessment recommendation would be to outline the option of a woman's refuge, however, if the there is no physical assault, then a women's refuge may not be an option for her. The overall assumption here is that the woman herself is the expert in her own situation. The Family Violence Professional Education Taskforce state,

> Professional discourse commonly ignores the expertise of those who have direct experience in the area, namely the women and children who are presently victims or who are survivors of family violence. (1994, p.95)

Access to Weapons

Workers should not assume that women will automatically volunteer information, so it is vital to ask if the partner has access to weapons and if so, has he ever threatened her with them. For example, a woman disclosed that her partner never directly threatened but during a fight he would clean the gun on the table and say things like 'funny about guns they can go off accidentally sometimes'. She perceived this as a threat to her life and was terrified of him.

Remember also that weapons do not only include guns, they include crossbows, martial arts equipment and/or training.

Triggers for Violence

An exploration of what triggers his violence and the woman's perception of what this means and what are the indicators of a build up of tension. For example, is it the way he drives up the driveway, the way he opens the door, or the dinner not on the table at 6 pm sharp etc. Here we are exploring the level of control, what are the triggers for his violence and how she views her role in his violent outbursts is very important, for we can then begin the process of reframing fault and locating the responsibility of behaviour with the perpetrator. It can be useful to give the woman a copy of both the Cycle of Abuse and The Tactics of Power and Control, utilising these as a point of discussion. Frequently women are surprised and often confronted about the violence when they see these visual representations.

Information gleaned here is useful when the woman is planning further sessions and/or planning to leave the situation, as the identification of triggers can assist in determining the safest option.

Frequency of Violence

Here we explore any pattern to his violence, often utilising the Cycle of Abuse handout and can be used in conjunction with discussion about triggers. Information gleaned form this discussion is useful for planning further options and is useful as an educational opportunity. It can validate her experiences as real and believed.

Recency and Severity of Violence

We establish here, when was the last episode and at what point her partner is in, at the moment in the Cycle. It is important to thoroughly explore what his responses are during post-violent episode. Frequently, violent men become remorseful, but if he does not it may be an indication of the potential danger the woman is in. For it indicates a total lack of responsibility and lack of any recognition of the impact of his violence on her and a real signal to be aware of. If this were established together with threats to kill, the case would, on this indicator alone, be considered serious.

If a recent assault has taken place, it is essential to ask if the woman requires medical attention, as frequently perpetrators do not mark their partners where the injuries can be seen. If there are bruises etc. and can be seen by the worker, then this needs to be thoroughly documented and the woman needs to be encouraged to seek medical attention ensuring the doctor also records these injuries as a result of domestic violence. This may be vital evidence later on.

Has She Ever Left Before? (What Happened?)

Exploring with the woman if she has ever left before and what happened may give both the worker and the woman insight as to what may happen again if she intends leaving. This aids in the planning process and also has the added benefit of being able to highlight what areas she is most vulnerable which may impact on her ability to be firm in her decision to leave. After highlighting vulnerable areas, both the worker and the woman can work through these issues.

It is appropriate to reflect on the Cycle of Abuse when referring to separation for some male perpetrators will attempt to persuade their partners to return to the relationship by buying presents and promising to change. Discussion about the variety of tactics used by perpetrators as persuasion can be a useful exercise.

Perpetrator's Knowledge of Situation and Sense of Control

It is essential to establish if the perpetrator has any knowledge of her contact with your service, and/or does he know she is seeking assistance about his violence. It is also important to explore whether or not he is aware she may be thinking of leaving, for it is common that women experience an increase in the level and extent of her partners surveillance over her. Directly asking whether or not he has threatened her about leaving him is also vital as it may indicate the level of his sense of control over her.

To establish potential danger and risks is vital if she plans to leave the relationship for it can inform both the woman and the worker about any limitations to be aware of for future planning purposes.

Family And Friends Knowledge And Involvement

The exploration of support systems for the woman is important to any work; however, in this context it is also important to establish who knows about the violence. To establish if her partner also knows who knows is vital if the woman plans to leave for it is possible that once the woman does leave, her partner may contact these friends and family members.

Women have experienced their partners either threatening family and friends or alternatively the male partners have attempted to recruit friends and family by playing the victim role, in an attempt to persuade her to return. It may be worth the woman considering that close friends and family not be told of the exact times, place etc. if she leaves for their own safety as well as the woman's. It is my experience that on some occasions well meaning family and friends have told the perpetrator what is happening and has placed the woman at risk.

Contact Security Issues

Workers must establish what contact procedure will be followed by both the worker and the woman to ensure her safety will not be compromised. For example, the worker may outline what would happen if they had arranged an appointment time and the worker was sick on that day. This will allow the opportunity to explore contact security. Any telephone contact requires caution particularly if the woman does not want her partner to know. Any breach of security regarding contact with services can place her at risk.

Worker's can be creative when needing to contact a woman over the phone in a way that will not compromise her safety. I have worked with many women where the Avon Lady is not appropriate so we have agreed on a telephone researcher from Colgate/Palmolive. I have asked the perpetrator if I could speak to the lady of the house and then have asked her questions about what products she uses between discussing any urgent matters that may have necessitated the telephone contact.

Information Security (Does he go through her bag?)

Frequently women state that they have no privacy and that their partners go through the woman's personal belongings, including their handbag, so to give the woman any printed material can be potentially dangerous. Which means that brochures about subjects that would not be considered risky may need to be considered and essential information written throughout these may be one way of the woman having the information she requires on her without placing her at risk.

When discussing information security I also include a description of what files are kept by me and who has access to them. I will often show a woman her file and encourage her to read it. For women are often threatened by their partners about what will happen to them if they tell anyone so this process can also challenge her partners power base.

Intuitive Response

i) The Woman

An exploration as to what the woman's intuition tells her about the safety needs of herself and her children is often very revealing. Frequently a woman's assessment of her own safety needs and those of her children will differ greatly. An opportunity to explore with the woman why the difference, if any, can be a useful way to invite the woman to consider her own safety as significant.

ii) The Worker

It is essential to establish whether the woman's perception of the violence and safety issues is congruent with the worker's. For some women, who have experienced physical assaults over a number of years, have become desensitised to the impact of this on themselves. Their reaction is to sometimes minimise and trivialise the violence perpetrated on them.

Workers' over time develop the ability to make informal, intuitive assessments. The value of these can not be underestimated nor ignored and it is useful for workers' to include a discussion about their own intuitive assessment. It may be worth consulting a colleague prior to introducing this into a session with a woman, particularly if the worker is unsure of her/ his thoughts about this issue.

5. Conclusion

While numerous theories have emerged about the explanation, causation and incidents of domestic violence, it has only been over the last five to ten years that writers and practitioners have articulated the need for education and skills development for working with victim/ survivors. (Pinderhughes, 1983; Otter, 1986; Hassenfeld, 1987; McGregor, 1990; Gelles, 1993)

Pinderhughes asserts that:

> Social workers will be more effective in ensuring the survival of our clients as well as our selves if we understand the way in which power and powerlessness operate in human systems and base our interventions upon this knowledge (Pinderhughes, 1983, p.331).

A key to working with domestic violence is to develop an understanding of the powerlessness of the female victim and the power of the perpetrator over the victim, including the social and

economic structure that perpetuate its existence. Further to this, the need to respond and to explore disclosures is critical. For if there is an opportunity missed the victim may not disclose again for years, (Atkins, 1995, p.20) thus exposing her to further abuse and ultimately costing the community millions of dollars. (Cox et al., 1991)

Discussions with practitioner colleagues and other service providers established clearly that they felt they lacked the training, the skills, the knowledge and the tools to respond appropriately. It was this evidence that led to the decision to utilise practice experience and practice wisdom to formulate a framework that would contribute to the development of knowledge and skills in the area of domestic violence.

This framework has been tested in the field by myself and others, who have commented on the usefulness. Comments such as the diagrammatic representation being a visually contained and easy to follow framework reflect some of these. However, it has also been said that it is difficult to pick it up and follow it without any training as to how to apply it in a clinical setting. For most of the people who now use this framework have been trained in its application. I have now developed a training package and have been training service providers in its usage. Workers from a range of services such as Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Grant–in–Aid Programs, Community Health, Hospital Social Workers, Domestic Violence Workers and others have now received training in this framework.

In essence, this framework is still in its infancy and it is envisaged that it will continue to be evaluated and tested over time. However, it appears that this research has filled a gap in the current available literature on the subject of domestic violence practice. It builds on existing knowledge, skills and theories and hopefully will contribute a great deal to the field of domestic violence practice.

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