Practicum Supervision in Child and Youth Care: A Guide for Site Supervisors

by

Sheila Awai,

B.A., University of Victoria, 2011

A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the School of Child and Youth Care

Sheila Awai, 2018

University of Victoria

Practicum Supervision in Child and Youth Care: A Guide for Site Supervisors

by

Sheila Awai

B.A., University of Victoria, 2011

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Sibylle Artz, School of Child and Youth Care
Supervisor

Dr. Daniel G. Scott, School of Child and Youth Care
Departmental Committee Member

Christine Shelton, Program Manager of Distance and Distributed Learning
Outside Member, Community Sponsor

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support and guidance of Dr. Sibylle Artz and Dr. Daniel G. Scott, Professors at the School of Child and Youth Care of the University of Victoria. With their encouragement, direction, and determination, I developed the practice confidence and abilities to work with complex, multi-stressed individuals and families where I can continue to foster hope and change, as well as learn from their phenomenal resiliency.

I am dedicating this manual to all of the enthusiastic practicum supervisors that I had the opportunity to work with in various placements during my educational journey. Through their insightful and constructive feedback, I was able to grow and learn, and expand my comprehension of human services work. With your on-site support, I was able to embrace my own unique practice style and learned that constructive supervisor relationships can support continuous learning and skill development.

Additionally, I would like to thank the instructors at Camosun College who shaped my emerging mind and practice abilities, while helping me develop core practice skills that assisted me in practicing in an inclusive and ethical manner. Through the 'lived' values of the Child, Youth, and Family Studies Program, I began to honour the unique strengths and abilities of all students, and continue to look for those qualities in the co-workers and clients I engage with today.

Finally, I would like to thank my English teacher Debbie Gascoyne ("Big G"). She sparked my enthusiasm for writing and inspired me to work with others in a genuine and enthusiastic manner. I thought of her often as I completed this project. From you I received the lowest mark in my entire educational career; I thank you for that, for it activated my insatiable drive for learning and improvement.

Abstract

There are a number of factors that contribute to didactic practicum supervision for Child and Youth Care (CYC) students. Analyzing current human service research revealed field placement components that support learning outcomes. Academic instructors, site-supervisors, and students appear to agree on which parameters promote student learning, growth, and confidence in field settings. In chapter one, the determinants for progressive practicum placements extrapolated by this literature review are presented in three broad categories: elements of a developmental learning environment, supervision requisites for effective human service field placements, and necessary academic oversight. In chapter two, the informal and formal assessment methods for evaluating students in practicum are reviewed. Lastly, in chapter three the information from the literature reviews is condensed into a practical guide for practicum supervisors.

Keywords: practicum, supervision, child and youth care, human services, assessment, guide

Table of Contents

Introduction

Dr. Sibylle Artz, with the support of the Child and Youth Care (CYC) program at the University of Victoria, offered me the opportunity to create a guide for field supervisors who assist the school of CYC by providing students with placements in their agencies. With academic guidance, I explored the factors that contribute to a successful practicum experience, and reviewed assessment models that are used to facilitate practicum learning. To present the pertinent information, I compiled the research findings into two narrative literature reviews. The first review focuses on the learning environment, supervision requisites, and academic oversight that support practicum students and supervisors in the field. The second review outlines a variety of assessment tools used in human services practicum settings, as well as how and when those methods can best be applied to evaluate and encourage student learning. With the findings from those two literature reviews, I compiled a practical guide for practicum supervisors that oversee CYC students in the field.

There are an incredibly diverse number of settings and situations that CYC students may have the opportunity to learn and practice in. The information contained herein was gathered from research based on practicums in a variety of human services settings including CYC, social work, psychology, nursing, and teaching. These fields of practice have aspects in common with CYC and the information from a variety of research studies was used to establish a base of procedural practicum knowledge. The information in the literature was influenced by these assorted settings and practice norms and may not be transferable to all CYC practicum environments. Additionally, some practices and assessment styles may be more suited to formal placements, and/or may require more time and resources that can be offered in all settings. Furthermore, much of the research in this domain is still evolving and may not be generalizable,

valid, and/or reliable. As a result, the guide is limited by what is currently known and what areas of practice have been formally reviewed and researched thus far.

The intention of this research and subsequent guide is to assist practicum instructors and supervisors in fostering learning environments that promote student development and practice competence in field settings. Assessment models used in the field are reviewed to clarify the purpose and role of various assessment methods used in practicum placements. This guide is intended for informational purposes, and can be adapted to the particular practice setting as required. Prior to student placement, the planning process should include written agreements that clarify the roles and expectations of the supervisor and include descriptions of the assessment responsibilities during practicum for the particular practicum site.

Literature Review Methodology

In order to locate peer-reviewed research on practicum supervision, in January 2017, an online literature search was conducted by entering the following strings of key words in to EBSCOhost information services database.[1]

- practicum supervision child and youth care
- practicum supervision social services
- practicum supervision youth work
- supervision practicum
- internship supervision social services

In order to gather the latest research findings, the search parameters were limited by the year 2006 until the present day. Some papers prior to 2006 were discovered while reviewing papers that cited previous studies and that original data was investigated and included. After the search

[1] EBSCO host is a discovery technology that can access a World-Wide Web-based system of periodical databases.

was completed, the articles were surveyed to analyze, compile, and synthesize the findings related to practicum supervision in human services. Whenever possible, studies that specifically focused on graduate students and supervisors in the field and centered on CYC practice were prioritized. When additional information was required, literature searches for the particular section of the review were conducted using keywords most relevant to the topic of focus. For example, most of the assessment methods needed to be individually researched using a variety of terms (e.g. "informal dialogue," "formative feedback," "constructive criticism").

A number of studies have researched key elements in practicum placements that contribute to positive learning outcomes, promote student learning and growth, and increase confidence in field settings. In conjunction, some researchers included information on assessment methods in practicum settings, whereas other studies have focused discretely on assessment methods in their research design (Bogo, 2015; Garfat et al., 2016; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Hatcher et al. 2012; Miehls et al., 2013). Interestingly, the opinions of students and their supervisors generally agree, and support the needs and concerns of the other party (Bogo 2015; Chapman et al. 2011; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Garfat et al., 2016; Hatcher et al., 2012; Miehls et al., 2013; Ostinelli, 2015). The 'best practice' practicum determinants examined by this literature review have been grouped into two chapters. Chapter one describes three depictive areas of focus relating to the practicum setting: the elements of a developmental learning environment, the supervision requisites for effective CYC field placements, and the oversight of the academic institution. Chapter two outlines formal and informal assessment approaches, as well as the benefits and limitations of each approach.

CHAPTER 1:

A Review of the Literature on Practicum Supervision:

Learning Environment, Supervision Requisites, and Academic Oversight

Educating accomplished and prepared human service graduates requires hands-on learning and practice in the service environments in which students intend to pursue their careers (Bogo, 2015; Miehls, 2013; Mingun & Fortune, 2013). In Child and Youth Care (CYC) positive learning environments and relationally based practice is modeled and encouraged. Practicum placements that help students move theoretical ideas into practice and facilitate the application of knowledge in field settings are an integral part of CYC educational programs (Charles, 2016; Freeman, 2013; Ostinelli, 2013).

In his article *The Field of Child and Youth Care: Are We There yet?*, Freeman (2013) provides a brief history of CYC and concludes that the field of CYC has a promising future with significant occupational opportunities. Noting that CYC is not a homogenous practice, and that students work in an eclectic variety of environments, Freeman points out that

> Child and Youth Care practitioners are individuals who engage with young people in the context and complexity of daily life interactions to promote their optimal development. They serve in a variety of settings across the spectrum of human services. (p.100)

To develop as a distinct field of practice, Freeman is aware that CYC will need to continue providing skilled graduates who can render quality services and continue to increase recognition for the distinct practice as a result.

Keough (2016), who researched educational practices in CYC practicums, highlights the fact that practicum courses are frequently embedded in CYC curriculum but

also points out that while such courses are deemed to be significant to learning, there has been little research that focuses on CYC practice in field placement settings. This follows McElwee et al. who noted in 2002 that there was a body of "emerging literature on human service supervision, but most of it was not specific to the child and youth care context" (p. 270). It would appear that this paucity of CYC related knowledge of supervision in practicum settings continues to this day (Garfat, Fulcher, and Freeman, 2016). Garfat et al. (2016) also adduce that CYC has not yet developed and clearly defined a distinct approach to supervision and postulate that this lack of clarity may hinder the collection of reliable and valid data that could help in researching current practices in field settings.

This literature review, which sought information specific to practicum placements in human services settings was guided by the following questions:

- What factors promote a positive learning environment?
- What supervision elements engender student learning and growth?
- What academic oversight is required to support supervisors in the field?

In analyzing a number of studies, this literature review collated and summarized the data from various research undertakings conducted in a number of human services realms, and in a range of placements that included entry to advanced level practicum settings.

The Elements of a Formative Learning Environment

Bogo (2015) posits that "field education is the most significant component [of curriculum] in preparing competent, effective, and ethical" (p. 317) human service workers. Bogo also confirms that students agree that practicums and field settings are highly important in preparing them for their future careers. This direct experience also seems to provide the foundations for continual learning and growth on and off the job site for the next generation of

human service workers. Cooper and Ord (2014) note that practicum students in learning settings see the experience as an opportunity to enjoy the work, challenge their knowledge, and learn from and with clients they serve. For these authors, participation itself is a cornerstone of learning. Ostensibly, interaction between supervisors and students should be intentional, well thought-out and purposeful. This interrelationship should also be geared towards the developmental needs of practicum students at that given time (Charles, 2016; Everett et al., 2011; Freeman 2013; McElwee, O'Reily & McKenna, 2002; Ostinelli, 2015).

This review examines a number of human service studies that focus on the practicum environment and describes how consistency and accountability in practicum placements can be ensured, while meeting supervisor needs and student learning outcomes. As the research stipulates, successful practicum placements need to foster collaborative relationships, create positive learning environments**,** emphasize the importance of making time to observe and debrief with experienced practitioners, and offer students opportunities to practice with clients. (Allen & Wright, 2014; Bogo, 2015; Carter et al., 2009; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Hatcher et al., 2012).

Developmental Underpinnings

According to Garfat et al. (2016), McElwee et al. (2002), and Miehls et al. (2013) ideally speaking, practicum supervision should be aligned with CYC practice values along with the related human service and social intervention guidelines of the setting. To develop evidence-informed and effective supervisory methods, the best practices surrounding learning elements must be defined, implemented, and continually evaluated in these crucial field placements (Bogo, 2015; Domakin & Forrester, 2018; Miehls et al, 2013). Currently, many researchers are well aware of the challenges related to the provision of effective supervision and educational guidance given the complexities of human service practice (Bogo 2015; Chapman et al 2011;

Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Hatcher et al. 2012). The quality of the field experience and the development of student competency depend on well structured practice opportunities and interactive feedback, along with the inclusion of supervision methodologies that are aligned with other evidence-based practices of the profession (Bogo, 2015; Everett et al., 2011; Miehls et al., 2013).

In their book entitled, *Supervision in Child and Youth Care Practice,* which focuses on supervision in residential care settings, Garfat et al. (2016) sought to prioritize supervision as a critical element of knowledge acquisition, and to equip learners with strategies for making deliberate and meaningful use of structured and impromptu supervision opportunities that occur in various practice settings. In that book, these authors propose that intentionally focusing on natural interactions in the practicum placement is as valuable to learning as are formal supervision sessions. They term this kind of supervision practice a 'daily life events' approach and suggest that this practice aligns well with the CYC values of a developmental, person-centered learning environment. Ergo, what applies to the client also applies to students in practice placements. With this methodology in mind, supervisors impart a number of transferable skills to students on site; these skills may include, but are not limited to, boundary setting, communication, organization, critical thinking, active listening, facilitation, and intervention options (Bogo, 2015; Everett, 2011; Garfat et al., 2016).

Stark et al. (2015) propose that developmental models of supervision should be strength-based and person-centered. Ostinelli (2015) and Stark et al. assert that in the early stages of practicum, student confidence is built by emphasizing strengths rather than focusing on deficits. Thus, a strengths-based approach alleviates student concerns and anxieties as they experience on-site successes in practice. Additionally, this cooperative practice style helps foster personal

growth and develops unique practice abilities at a pace that is suited to the particular individual (Garfat et al., 2016, Ostinelli, 2015; Stark et al., 2015).

Ostinelli (2015) contends that through relational and direct supervision, students can become confident CYC practitioners. The researched reviewed above explains some of the practical elements of a developmental learning environment. The means of supporting students appears to be straightforward, yet how supervision actually fosters learning and equates to a transfer of practice skills in placement settings needs to be further considered, clarified, operationalized, researched, and defined (Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al. 2015; Cleak & Smith, 2012; Miehls et al., 2013).

Collaborative Relationships

As a number of studies have shown, optimizing learning and development in practicum settings requires a working alliance grounded in positive and productive working relationships (Brodie & Williams, 2013; Bogo, 2015; Cleak & Smith, 2012; Keough, 2017; Klein 2015; Miehls et al., 2013; Ussher & Carss, 2014). This working alliance is akin to the secure attachment that is foundational in human services practice; this theory poses that, when there is a secure relational pattern, this supportive foundation helps a person be confident and self-possessed and able to easily interact with others, meeting both their own and another's needs (Garfat et al., 2015; Freeman, 2013; McElwee et al., 2002).

In studying the importance of mentoring in postgraduate educational settings, Passi (2016) found that improving student supervision and support fostered the development of practical skills. To better define this working relationship, Passi offered a specific step-wise framework to follow. The first step of this framework includes taking the time to discuss students' individual learning plans and goals to ensure that these are realistic and relevant to the

students' career plans. The second step involves ensuring that students demonstrate a high level of competence in the field, and the third step involves offering mental and emotional support, especially for students who are challenged in this domain. Throughout this process, Passi conjointly promoted mentoring and modeling that helped students consider and develop skills to maintain a healthy work/life balance.

Garfat et al. (2016) discussed similar positive traits that are characteristic of effective supervisors. Among these were role modeling, confidence, and a sense of professionalism, combined with being flexible, creative, positive, friendly, and accepting. Garfat et al. also note that an effective supervisory relationship should include conscious interactions where active reflection on the part of both participants continues throughout the practicum. These authors propose that supervision that takes place during natural practicum activities whereby students and supervisors can focus on interactions with clients 'in the moment,' ensures that contextual understanding of practice is garnered.

As the research points out, within a collaborative model, academic learning goals will need to be considered and supervisory roles will require adaptations to ranges of students' abilities (Garfat et al., 2016; McElwee et al., 2002; Smith, Cleak, & Vreugdenhil, 2015). The skills of supervisors should also be considered; supervisors themselves can encounter the same anxiety and performance related doubts that students encounter (Keough, 2017). With all this in mind, Garfat et al. describe three levels or stages of supervision for CYC students. In all three stages, an effective supervisor-student relationship is required, with the power balance and practice roles shifting as student competence develops.

At the first level or stage, Garfat et al. (2016) focus on the need for supervisors to adopt the expert role in order to help students foster safe client interactions while learning to practice

skillfully and ethically. These authors suggest that to begin with, supervisors maintain an authoritative, professional stance rather that a personal one as this can help to establish a predictable and safe learning environment. Garfat et al. also recognize that in this approach students could become stuck in the subordinate role and therefore remain unsure of their abilities when the supervisor's external control subsides and offer the additional stages below to prevent this relational dependency (Garfat et al., 2016).

The second stage of professional development, outlined by Garfat et al. (2016), assumes that students have developed some mastery in their practice and will require less direct guidance from the supervisor. Support for learners at this point requires that supervisors let go of the expert stance while enabling students to apply their own skills and ideas in practice. This means that supervision in the second stage should encourage students to consider their own individualized, independent approaches rather than sticking with rigid practice paradigms (Garfat et al., 2016).

During the third stage, a collegial relationship develops as the two practitioners become more equal in their skills and practice abilities. At this stage, students are encouraged to act as competent practitioners that contribute to practice in leadership roles. Garfat et al. (2016) suggest that, at this point, having students design workshops and new programs, and engaging in other challenging activities will help them continue to learn and grow as independent practitioners. This follows Stark et al. (2015), who in their solution-focused study of counselling students, concluded that students' engagement in the learning process could be enhanced by a supervisor's level of commitment to and enjoyment of the topic being studied, and that supervision may be improved by trying something new or novel (like sandtray supervision). These authors posit that

this kind of relational approach fosters the development of students while reducing anxieties that are typical in practicum placements (Stark et al., 2015).

Although supervisory roles may shift as students develop practice proficiency, a collaborative relationship must continue to underpin the learning placement. Careful observation and adaptation will be required to support student learning goals and to determine appropriate tasks for students to manage. Development is not a linear process, and through the creation of a learning alliance, supervisors can assist students in moving through anxieties, increasing their confidence in their abilities, and ensuring that growth continues throughout the course of education (Bogo, 2015; Garfat et al., 2016; Miehls et al., 2013).

Positive Learning Environments

Positive learning environments are foundational to a prosperous learning atmosphere (Ostinelli, 2015; McElwee et al., 2002). Belonging to an extended community enhances student learning; therefore, the entire placement site should be considered as part of the learning context. Welcoming positive environments that view teaching and learning as beneficial for all parties are contribute to a successful practicum experience (Bogo, 2015). High expectations of students' ability and trusting that they will contribute productively at the agency need to be part of this environment (Bogo, 2015; Garfat et al., 2016; Klein 2015; Miehls et al., 2013).

Garfat et al. (2016) carefully describe several habits of strong supervisors that contribute to positive learning environments: firstly, these authors note that practitioners who promote a good learning environment encourage risk-taking and reflection, and then provide constructive feedback. These supervisors also view mistakes as learning opportunities rather than a lack of ability. Garfat et al. subsequently point out that supervisors who practice from a strength-based, non-judgmental approach and create an adaptive environment that allows for increasing

responsibilities with demonstrated growth, forge a positive learning experience. Furthermore, they note that skilled mentors accept responsibility, act assertively, pass on the language and culture of the profession, and are flexible yet consistent. Finally, Garfat et al. note that capable supervisors promote the unique development of students and ensure that students have a voice in work-place interactions.

A quality learning environment contains many factors, which may or may not be present in every setting. Focusing on the environment itself prior to placement, and ensuring there are consistent and routine practices that support learning and student development will help to ensure that students are offered satisfactory practicum experiences (Bogo 2015).

Time to Observe and Debrief with Experienced Practitioners

To fully benefit from a practicum, students need access to and interactions with supervisors who are mentoring them (Bogo 2015; Chui, 2010; McElwee et al., 2002). Modeling, providing information in a variety of forms, and assigning tasks, are regular supervisory activities in practicum placements (Brodie & Williams, 2013; Mumm, 2006). Regular reflective discussions are a crucial part of the learning process and require that supervisors actually access and observe student-client interactions during the students' placement (Bogo, 2015; Chui, 2010; McElwee et al., 2002; Miehls et al., 2013; Mumm, 2006). This 'quality time' is required for student and supervisor collaboration and assessment (Chui, 2010). Further to this, students indicate that they appreciate supervision that balances mentoring and guidance with autonomy and independence (Bogo, 2015; Chui, 2010; Miehls et al., 2013). Student goals and plans also require time to evaluate achievements and examine areas of challenge (Klein 2015; Miehls et al., 2013).

In order to ensure they have the time and resources to support student learning and growth prior to site placement, potential supervisors need to be aware of the actual time and practice commitment that is required when agreeing to a field placement (Bogo, 2015; Chui, 2010; McElwee et al., 2002; Miehls et al., 2013; Mumm, 2006).

Taking the time to meet and converse with supervisors, as well as observing and debriefing with practitioners who are completing actual interventions, helps students to reflect on and improve their own work (Bogo, 2105; McElwee et al., 2002; Miehls et al., 2013). When students work with clients, opportunities to receive feedback on their practice is helpful to both students and their clients. McElwee et al. (2002) wrote that "feedback is the process of relaying observations, impressions, feelings or other evaluative information about a person's behaviour for their own use and learning" (p. 277). In examining student's views of supervision, Miehls et al. found that students expressed a need for more occasions to receive direct feedback and to discuss possible criticisms. These students were generally open and willing to engage with supervisors, especially if the feedback was offered in the contexts in which they were working. Despite the recognized value of this kind of supervision, Hatcher et al. (2012), in surveying site coordinators, noted that there appears to be limited use of direct observation in practicum placements (which possibly reflects upon the lack of time and resources in the field). Other researchers also noted that time for training and meeting was reported as insufficient by a number of practicum programs and that students themselves were requesting more time with their supervisors (Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2013; Cleak & Smith, 2012; Miehls et al., 2013).

Smith et al. (2015) who researched learning activities in placement settings, reported that "the more regularly students engaged in learning activities with their social work supervisors, the more likely they were to reports a sense of social work identity and feelings of practice

competence" (p. 515). Unfortunately, this study also revealed an overall low percentage of students actually getting to observe professionals in practice and being observed in their own developing practice, even though this part of the practicum experience has been repeatedly identified as an essential learning tool (Bogo 2015; McElwee, 2002; Miehls et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2015).

Debriefing with supervisors also provides students with the chance to discuss and rehearse interventions and receive feedback prior to student-client interactions (McElwee, 2002; Miehls et al., 2013; Mumm, 2006). By practicing intervention options with students in advance, supervisors can formulate feedback on the actual demonstration of practice skills, and new or constructive information can be integrated and rehearsed again for learning purposes (Bogo 2015; Miehls et al., 2013; Mumm, 2006). Through these targeted practice examples, supervisors can ensure that students are practicing effectively and appropriately, while offering them opportunities to enhance abilities and troubleshoot problem areas (McElwee, 2002; Miehls et al., 2013; Mumm, 2006).

Opportunities to Practice with Clients

Mumm (2006) concluded that the least effective method of promoting practice competence is lectures. Mumm noted that over 80% of site supervisors simply employ learning tools that were used in their own supervisory experiences rather than thoughtfully considering their supervision strengths and abilities and employing a variety of learning tools. This finding is worrisome and underlines the importance of intentional supervision, especially because learning through the actual practice of human services work is critical to forming and advancing practice skills (Bogo, 2015; Brodie & Williams, 2013; Jones & Ryan, 2014; Miehls et al., 2013). Bogo explains that "preparing effective practitioners requires not only learning about the knowledge

base for the practice but also having opportunities to learn and integrate theory and apply it in their practice" (p. 324). The author proposes that practicum settings are the ideal mechanism in which students can apply and integrate skills in practice with guidance.

Developmental Learning Environment Summarized

Hands-on field experiences support student learning and outcomes by offering them opportunities to develop skills and apply classroom based-learning. In order for students to be able to apply their knowledge in practice, they must be able to engage in numerous guided and supervised interactions in the practicum setting (Bogo, 2015; Brodie & Williams, 2013).

There are a number of elements that contribute to a developmental learning environment in practicum (Bogo, 2015; Brodie & Williams, 2013; Chapman et al 2011; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Hatcher et al. 2012). In this section of the review, some of the factors identified by students and supervisors that lead to favorable practice outcomes included the establishment of collaborative relationships, the creation of positive learning environments, the provision of time to observe and debrief with experienced practitioners, and the opportunity to actually practice with clients in the field. Garfat et al. (2016) contend that this kind of developmental learning environment parallels the values and approaches in educational settings and promotes congruent and continuous learning opportunities in the field. Having outlined factors in the learning environment that promote student learning, the next section focuses on the aspects of supervision that further enhance the learning experiences of students.

Supervision Requisites for Effective Human Service Field Placements

When students are placed in community settings, they are likely to be exposed to a variety of working cultures and professional identities (Charles, 2016; Freeman, 2013; Ostinelli, 2013). The ability of CYC practitioners to work in a number of diverse settings helps instructors

align student goals and career prospects with placement opportunities, and likely offers students an understanding of various roles in human services (Freeman, 2013; Klein, 2015).

For the purpose of this review, the practice areas that have been outlined in the research are categorized into three broad areas of focus: supervisors who have the time and ability to model and mentor, supervisors who demonstrate practice standards and relationships, as well as supervisors who can communicate clearly and relay explicit guidelines for the practice setting.

Present Supervisors Who Have Time to Guide, Model, and Mentor

Practicum in field placements provides a hands-on learning experience with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real time situations (Smith et al., 2015; McElwee et al., 2002). In their study of supervisor student interactions, Smith et al. noted that engagement in learning with supervisors varied significantly from placement to placement while Ostinelli (2015) found that 'being available' is central to the role of practicum instructors and supervisors. This raises the questions: What level of availability is required in the placement setting? How does this relate to the actual time spent with students? Are there ways of being available that are more useful and impactful for student learning? What are the availability requirements of an advanced student versus the first-year student? Many researchers have tried to answer these questions related to supervision and this section reviews some of the findings.

Cleak & Smith (2012) note that the quality of the student-supervisor relationship "has been well documented as constituting a key influence on students' learning and general level of satisfaction" with practicum placements (p. 247). Ussher and Carss (2014) contend that more access and availability to supervisors, more time for reflective conversations, and improved elucidation of the connections between theory and practice are required to optimize student learning. Ussher and Carss call for improved mentoring of students that includes time for

constructive feedback and reflection and point out that these educational conversations also allow time for troubleshooting challenges within the placement setting itself. Ferrier-Kerr (2009) suggests that time is also required for the discussion and development of the supervisor-student relationship itself. In the same vein, Leeman (2013) states that "even students who are mature, independent, and reasonably self-assured . . . can find that the combination of academic rigor, continuous self-examination, and the acquisition and mastery of a new role can lead to the questioning of one's self concept" (p. 270). Leeman concludes that a strong supervisory relationship can help reduce this practice-based stress and minimize this student vulnerability.

In numerous studies, students have reported the need for more availability of their supervisor on site (Bogo, 2015; Carter et al., 2009; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Miehls et al., 2013). Researchers have also noted a need for more communication and clarity in supervisor-student conversations (Carter et al., 2009; Hatcher at al., 2011; Miehls et al., 2013). The need for more time with supervisors was also noted by Cleak and Smith (2012) who examined alternative approaches to supervision in field placements including group supervision, external supervision, task supervision, and shared supervision. These authors suggested that, while these approaches may have been designed with the idea of saving time and maximizing resources, results of their study revealed that students were somewhat dissatisfied with these non-one-to-one, alternative supervision approaches. The participants in the Cleak and Smith study stated that, although they were satisfied with their field experiences in general, students who received one to one supervision reported higher satisfaction ratios. Thus, Cleak and Smith proposed that educational programs that include practicums should be resourcing sites that provide one to one, or other satisfactory supervision models (co-supervision shared placements, etc), and that it would be

beneficial to follow-up with a study that identified actual aspects of supervision that students felt were necessary for a positive learning experience.

With the intention of enhancing the efficacy of constructive feedback and reducing practicum-based student anxieties, Ussher and Carss (2014) researched a supervision approach with a continuous relational and developmental foundation. Students in this research study were assigned an instructor that would support students' learning in all of their practicum placements (rather than having a new instructor for each placement). Ussher and Carss' findings indicated a demonstrable preference for this approach. The consistent relationship and understanding of students' entire learning journey offered students a stable learning platform from which strengths and challenges could be thoughtfully explored and reflected upon to maximize student growth. Students reported improved relationships with instructors, lower stress especially in connection with feedback, increased confidence, better personal understanding, and consistency, as some of the benefits of engaging with the same instructor throughout the practicum process.

Practice Styles and Relationships

A relationship with a proficient practitioner is the basis for a rewarding practicum experience (Bogo 2015; Brodie & Williams, 2013; Chapman et al 2011; Ferrier-Kerr, 2009; Hatcher et al. 2012). Smith et al. (2015) reported that "capable supervision results in students feeling more confident, competent, and empowered" (p. 526). Ferrier-Kerr (2009), in examining the relationships of teacher education students and their supervisors in practicum settings, determined that the working relationship established during practicum experiences is a significant part of the learning and development process. This author also determined that these student-supervisor relationships need to be fostered in a purposeful manner. Ferrier-Kerr therefore suggested that in order to support cognitive development and learning outcomes,

students and supervisors must be "involved in establishing professional relationships [where] they identify their beliefs and understandings, and implement specific practices from informed perspectives" (p. 790). Ferrier-Kerr further states that establishing a professional relationship is a "crucial aspect of the practicum experience and critical to the learning that occurs throughout" (Ferrier-Kerr, 2009, p. 791).

In examining the nature and substance of practicum relationships, Ferrier-Kerr (2009) studied five skill areas in practice that students deemed as being important to their learning: personal connectedness, role interpretation, supervision strategies, collaboration, and reflection. These five areas are described by Ferrier-Kerr as follows:

1. Personal Connectedness is defined by students as the ability of the supervisor to make connections with the student, engage in personal and working conversations, as well as help students deal with challenges while feeling recognized, valued, and acknowledged. Ferrier-Kerr found that this connectedness empowered both parties, provided a working foundation, and led to a better understanding of practice over time.
2. Supervisors contribute to the understanding of practice roles (i.e. role interpretation) by defining roles and responsibilities, articulating expectations, and purposefully influencing students' practice. This overt explanation of practice fostered student-supervisor trust, decreased ambiguity in the practicum setting, built respect and rapport, and increased confidence for both parties.
3. Supervision strategies that students appreciated, included the initial adoption of expert and novice roles, that later shifted with developing competence. Other factors included supporting students' decision making, offering advice and encouragement, as well as mentoring students in practice. According to the results of the study, these strategies reduced

misunderstandings, provided a secure base for development, and made consultation and collaboration easier.

4. Students felt supervisors who could work collaboratively with them fostered a variety of practice abilities: planning interventions, building on learning, reflecting on learning needs, and linking theory to practice. This collaborative style was purported to promote self-awareness, led to practice improvement, and enhanced the learning environment.
5. Being able to critically examine practice was another ability that students felt was important to their learning experience. Supervisors, who could purposefully reflect on complex situations, re-examine their own beliefs and practices, and who could pose questions to students were also identified as important for student learning. Skills acquisition that was reported to be connected to this reflective style of interaction included promoting self-awareness, developing habits of self-reflection, and grounding knowledge of practice.

Ferrier-Kerr (2009) concluded that emphasizing collaborative practice in practicum placements established an interactive learning partnership.

Guidance for the Supervisory Process

Transparent and accurate communication is essential prior to and during field placement to ensure student and host needs and goals can be addressed (Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2015; McElwee et al., 2002; Miehls et al., 2013). Miehls et al. pointed out that, with increasing student numbers and expanding academic requirements, practicum placements can create extra demands for host organizations. A lack of clarity surrounding practicum course instructors' and site supervisors' roles may place even more demands on practicum supervisors (Brannon, 2014; Keough, 2017; Miehls et al., 2013). Although Brannon (2014) reports that

establishing and clearly outlining practicum placement objectives continues to be an issue in field settings, these concerns can be mitigated with guidance from the academic program.

Hatcher et al. (2012), while surveying practicum site coordinators, recommend writing explicit agreements to ensure that expectations and communication are clear and direct. These authors stated that "formal agreements are advisable [and should] cover the expected experience and duties of the student, how and how often evaluative feedback will be given, how communication will occur between the two parties, how problems with students will be dealt with, what records will be kept, and other salient matters" (p. 227).

Students support this formal approach, and even at the graduate level, indicated that they prefer a structured, clinical, and more directive style of supervision in the field (Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; McElwee et al., 2002). Students and their supervisors appreciated the process of working collaboratively to set clear goals with measureable outcomes and enjoyed the progression of learning and evaluating skills together (Miehls et al., 2013). Keough (2016) advises that direction from the academic program prior to the placement in the form of written learning outcomes provides students with direction, context, and transparency. He also notes that explicit learning outcomes have been correlated with skill acquisition and competency.

Interestingly, Miehls et al. (2013) discovered that at a graduate level, many social work students found the supervisory relationship to be unclear and somewhat poorly defined. It seems that students were not fully cognizant of the role of supervision in the field. Some students even indicated they were challenged in making and sustaining relationships with their supervisors and were unsure how and when to access supervision in their placements. These students also noted that they had simply not been exposed to

practice and/or clinical supervision prior to taking up their practicums and that few formal documents exist explaining how best to utilize supervision in the field (Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; Miehls et al., 2013).

As a result of their research, Miehls et al. (2013) state that "students lack adequate preparation about the function of supervision in social work practice, despite the role it plays in the practitioner's commitment to lifelong learning" (p. 129). They therefore posit a number of possible factors that contribute to a lack of clarity surrounding supervision content and focus: an absence of quality supervision in prior settings, a lack of value placed on supervisory roles in general, practitioners taking on supervisory roles early in their careers with little or no formal training, and little time or training to develop supervisory skills in general.

A further explanation of what might be lacking for supervisors is offered by Miehls et al. (2013) who reviewed supervisory roles in human services and found that most supervisors in the field had been promoted from within the agency, without training specific to mentoring and supervising in practice. Garfat et al. (2016) also wonder if supervisors themselves are unsure of what to do in their supervisory roles for a number of reasons, including never having experienced effective supervision in their career. These authors contend that supervision education is rather absent in the field of CYC and worry that supervision itself is last on the list of professional development tasks.

Supervision Requisites for Field Placements Summarized

The research that was analyzed above highlights the importance of defining standards that guide the supervisory process and indentified the supervisory styles that impart key practice abilities, and noted the requirement that supervisors should have the

time to model and demonstrate skills for students in practicum settings. These supervision elements have been repeatedly noted in the research as contributing to positive student learning and practice outcomes. These elements are best combined with a developmental and collaborative learning environment for optimal student performance. The final section of this literature review addresses the organizational processes of academic programs that have been established to be supportive for students and supervisors in practicum settings.

Academic Oversight

Consistency and strategic planning need to be part of the practicum process, and a coordinated learning plan that links the placement work with the academic structure and theory is necessary to offering students the best opportunities for a successful field placement (Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012). Nordstrand (2017) points out that good "supervision embodies core agency values" (p. 481) and contends that it is important to confirm that onsite support is being provided, and that the tasks assigned to students promote relevant learning.

In order to reduce the workload of the host site, while ensuring that the values of practice embedded in the educational program are upheld, a number of studies have considered how the academic program can support the practicum placement. This research shows that training and supervisory guidance, pre-planning and student preparation along with ongoing student support are all crucial organizational activities that academic programs can offer to students and supervisors (Carter et al., 2009; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Miehls et al, 2013; Nordstrand; 2017).

Training and Supervisory Support

Focusing on the tripartite supervisor - educational program - practicum course instructor relationship, and making the time to nourish this connection, is crucial to practicum planning

(Allen & Wright, 2014; Miehls et al, 2013). Strong involvement from the educational institution, and support in linking theory to actual client interactions has been determined to decrease educational confusion in practicum settings (Allen & Wright, 2014; Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; Ussher & Carss, 2014). Furthermore, this educational program to field connection ensures that practice in the setting aligns with classroom materials (Allen & Wright, 2014).

Many researchers strongly encourage academic institutions to support supervisors in various ways. Most field placements voluntarily commit to support student learning yet often report a lack of direction for the process (Allen & Wright, 2014; Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; Miehls et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2015; Ussher & Carss, 2014). Hatcher et al. (2015) attest that "most practicum training is provided by organizations external to the graduate program, over which it has limited control." (p. 221). Hatcher et al. and Wearne et al. (2013) state that academic programs must monitor placements to be sure that supervisors provide relevant experiences, adequate supervision, and informational feedback to students on site. Wearne et al. also note that multi-source feedback leads to quality student assessment. In addition, it has been noted that course instructors can help supervisors address any performance concerns (Keough, 2016).

Educational program support ensures that placement supervisors know the best ways to teach students in the field and is required to mitigate the demands and challenges of hosting students on site. Teaching supervisors how to support and encourage student learning is often required and appreciated (Bogo 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; Keough, 2017; Leeman, 2013; Miehls et al., 2013). Being available to assist supervisors as they learn and develop in their roles, offering supervisory training to assist in working with various students, creating supportive networks for the placement host, and making learning resources available online and in other formats are some of the ways that educational programs can support on-site placements (Allen &

Wright, 2014; Hatcher et al., 2012; Miehls et al., 2013; Ussher & Carss, 2014). Linking the competencies, values, and theoretical underpinnings that are taught in the educational program to those that prevail at the practicum site would also benefit the individuals who are involved (Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; Miehls et al., 2013; Ussher & Carss, 2014). Educational instructors can work with placement supervisors to ensure that students achieve educational objectives and provide appropriate learning parameters with evaluative tools to ensure optimal student development (Allen & Wright, 2013; Smith et al., 2015). Further to this guidance, Leeman (2013) suggests that "schools must take a more proactive role in closing the gaps in training and content that some practica simply may not be able to provide" (p. 268).

Embedding coursework into the practicum placement enhances student learning and development and helps to foster the educational connection (Allen & Wright, 2013). To support supervisors, several researchers have proposed adjunctive curriculum and programming, and also advocate that educational programs ensure that students are well prepared and trained prior to being placed in practicums (Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; Leeman, 2013; Miehls et al, 2013; Ussher & Carss, 2014).

Leeman (2013) recommends group work supervision as a way to fill the gaps caused by the limits of time and economic resources for educational programs and practicum settings alike. In this kind of supervision, "learners can take part in a mindful deconstruction of their work, make meaning of the clinical choices that they have made, consider them from different perspectives under the aegis of an [instructor], and then head back into the clinical encounter with enhanced awareness of some new tools" (p. 269). Reflecting on her personal educational journey, this author also notes that group oversight taught her the skills of supervision and the importance of supporting student learning. Ostinelli (2015) agrees that supporting supervisors is

crucial to student learning and also suggests that seminar style classes for student discussion and debriefing can help expand learning and ensure that students receive enough educational feedback, assistance in solving problems, and help in general to ensure learning targets are being met. Cooper and Ord (2014) note that education is always evolving and propose that classroom learning needs to be applied in placement settings to ensure practice is rooted in knowledge, and to assist students in being able to articulate their own understanding of theory as it relates to practice. The authors then contend that these functional skills are necessary to promote lifelong learning.

Pre-planning and Student Preparation

McElwee et al. (2002) examined practicum supervision in Ireland and found that prior to practicum placement a substantial amount of planning was required to ensure an effective learning situation. These authors proposed that, when analyzing a possible placement, students' individual learning needs and the contributions students can offer to settings need to be reviewed. Another factor that should be considered prior to placement is a review of the clients who may be meeting with students to ensure that students are capable of practicing competently, effectively, and ethically with these clients (McElwee et al., 2002; Mumm, 2006).

McElwee et al. (2002) also advocate that the pre-planning process should involve securing a supervisor with relevant qualifications for students and their educational goals. After securing sites and supervisors, the authors assert that meetings should be arranged for students, instructors, and supervisors to discuss and clarify expectations of the placement and supervision process and suggest that during these meetings various roles, policies, limitations of the placement, and other pertinent details should be addressed. After all this,

the crucial next step, proposed by McElwee et al., is to define how student supervision sessions will be conducted, including formal, informal, and other communication methods. Finally, the authors state that negotiating how feedback and evaluation is going to be structured is also an important part of the pre-planning process.

Practicums that take place in multidisciplinary settings, as is common in CYC educational programs, may create additional confusion for students especially at locations where practice roles and supervision norms are varied. Klein (2015) completed a small-scale study with social work students to determine if students in interdisciplinary placements understood their roles and the collaborative aspects of practice in supervision. Klein noted that multidisciplinary placements did provide students with opportunities to engage in collaborative settings and practice working from a team perspective. Students from this study also reported improved skills in documentation, a better understanding of practice roles, and an increase in respect for other practice paradigms.

On the other hand, Klein's (2015) study revealed that students could feel unprepared to manage things in these more complex settings. Some students reported that they were unsure of the various professional roles in the agency, and that they were not able to effectively consider and discuss the different roles and the implications for practice. However, those students who had been provided with preparatory training that was geared to working in multidisciplinary placement settings indicated that this training contributed to their successful experience in these complex, inter-professional, placements. From the data gathered in this study, Klein recommends that,

> The supervision social work interns receive while in placement should include a discussion of the team participatory process, how decisions are made and feedback

> on team observation. The internship experience will be enhanced by an evaluation of the flow of communication on the team, and the role of the leader in managing interdisciplinary processes. Learning how decisions are made, the skill set of other professionals, and how to relate to each person's role will be important for future employment success. (p. 700)

To better understand how practicum sites manage students, Hatcher et al. (2012) surveyed professional supervisors to study current practicum policies and practices in psychology graduate programs. Hatcher et al. hypothesized that most graduate practicum sites are "committed to training, offer adequate supervision, provide a range of experiences, and provide adequate feedback regarding student progress" (p. 221). Yet, although these field placements were offering a solid core of training, with effective communication to the placement program, Hatcher et al. found that hosts that participated in this study often employed few direct supervision practices, experienced a lack of time for supervision, and felt that students could have been better prepared for their practicum placement. These authors also found that that structure and function of the practicum site was often unknown to the students.

Miehls et al. (2013) found more evidence of a lack of preparation for practicum and noted that students were underprepared to work with boundary violations, the clinical anxieties that they experienced on site, and with the student-supervisors relationship structure itself. This echoes McElwee et al.'s (2002) earlier findings that placement-based learning requires considerable planning and preparation by educational programs prior to the placement; a lack of preparation can result in educational gaps for students' learning plans and problematic placements where students do not meet the expectations of the agency. Other student proficiencies that need attention prior to practicum placement include preparing students to

engage in reciprocal feedback with the supervisor, addressing ways to deal with the education and power differences on site, and developing adequate conflict resolution skills (Miehls et al., 2013).

To ensure that practicum sites meet educational goals and meet explicit practicum requirements, especially at advanced levels of practice, Hatcher (2012) proposed seven guidelines.

1. Organized practicum experience overseen by graduate program,
2. Shared written training plans,
3. Service-related activities and face to face client contact,
4. Supervision frequency requirements (p. 227).
5. Supervision by a licensed psychologist,
6. Duration/intensity of experience at practicum site,
7. Training in a psychological service setting (p. 228).

According to Hatcher, the intention of the above guidelines is to address the need for graduate training programs to find sites that align with student learning goals, manage the practicum training overall, provide written training plans to supervisors, ensure there is adequate time to actually work with clients and receive feedback, confirm that supervisors have adequate training and knowledge to work with students, and train students in settings that they are likely to practice in, or transfer skills from, upon graduation.

As Keough (2016) found, clearly articulated learning goals are beneficial because from the outset, these goals offer an overt and agreed upon direction that fits with the learning context and sets the stage for learning and reflexive exercises, which may be undertaken at various times in practicum. As a result, Keough advised that schools of CYC

should implement a more formal pre-evaluation process where student readiness for practicum placement could be formally evaluated. Additionally, his review of practicums in CYC pointed out that little to no 'gate-keeping' occurred even if student concerns were revealed. For example, students were promoted to the next fieldwork placement, and not delayed, or failed, even when lack of skill, concerning behaviours and/or practice incompetence was observed.

Ongoing Student Support

Along with pre-planning and student preparation, ongoing student support from the educational program is required in practicum settings (Ussher & Carss, 2014). Opportunities for students to connect with peers and instructors during practicum placements are a required learning activity and support the onsite learning (Ostinelli; 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; Ussher & Carss, 2014). This extended community of practice helps foster a deeper understanding of how others experience practice and promotes practice efficacy and competence while providing students with a safe place to air concerns (Ussher & Carss, 2014). Engaging in conversations with a broader community provides opportunities to further reflect and continue to construct knowledge and develop a sense of practice identity. These connections also provide students with the chance to explore areas of practice they find challenging in greater depth while they are in a safe, familiar, and supportive environment (Ostinelli; 2015; Ussher & Carss, 2014).

Leeman (2013) studied the effects of a "faculty-facilitated consultation group that was created for MSW students in an academic setting as a response to the paucity of group work supervision and training available in many field placements" (p. 266). The group was created to meet observed and requested supervision needs of master's level students. Prior to creating the group, Leeman heard student concerns which he describes as follows:

> . . . fear, feelings of inadequacy, a lack of support from supervisors and management, hidden agency agendas, agency cultures that are ambivalent about group work, marginalization of interns' voices, and interns being entrusted to facilitate groups with high risk clients without adequate group work training. (p. 267)

Although Leeman's (2013) study focused on group work specifically, the concerns noted are similar to concerns that students have expressed in a variety of practicums (Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; McElwee et al., 2002; Miehls et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2015). Leeman (2013) proposed shifting some of the learning responsibility back to educational programs and suggested that creating classroom-based supervision opportunities for practicum students could result in more consistent and predictable supervision standards for learners, and possibly alleviate situations where students feel overwhelmed, alone, and/or inhibited in practice.

While this literature review focuses on in-person supervision, it is recognized that some students may require or benefit from other types of supervision, especially in conjunction with the onsite mentoring process. Engagement with a variety of practitioners is likely to offer students a number of learning situations and create positive learning opportunities (Bogo, 2015; Ussher & Carss, 2014; Miehls et al., 2013).

Remote supervision has emerged with technological changes and the ease of connecting online and through other communication-based conference setups (Ussher & Carss, 2014; Wearne et al., 2013). Students completing degrees online, individuals living in remote areas, and students with disabilities may benefit from this alternative mode of engagement. Ussher and Carss (2014) found that simple phone calls from instructors provided in-depth and valuable learning opportunities as well. Connecting online also reduced time required for supervision and provided students with regular access to professional supervision and quality feedback. Wearne

et al. (2013) also proposed the use of remote access to instructors and, in examining remote clinical supervision with doctors-in-training, made several recommendations to maximize educational outcomes utilizing online supervision. These recommendations, although focused on remote learning, align perfectly with those outlined for in-person supervision:

- students' ability and goals must be matched with the setting,
- collaborative relationships should be promoted,
- working roles should be established clearly,
- information sharing should be defined and delineated,
- expectations and responsibilities should be conveyed to supervisors,
- supervisors need to be amenable to this role,
- educational institutions need to oversee placements,
- instructors need to establish supportive protocols,
- and educational programs need to provide ongoing support for supervisors.

In overseeing students, educators should be aware that community placement hosts may or may not offer students enough time for learning and/or effective support. While instructors can review the potential work environment of the setting to determine if the site is a good fit for the students involved, students may also have questions about the hosts' views on learners and learning, and should be invited to consider the nature and culture of the host site (Bogo 2015; Chui, 2010; McElwee, 2002; Miehls et al., 2013; Ussher & Carss, 2014).

Ussher and Carss (2014) note that the practicum experience should include the expertise and engagement of the educational institution and complement the placement learning. If a practicum setting is less than ideal when it comes to fostering a positive environment, mitigation strategies may be considered for the setting (McElwee, 2002; Miehls et al., 2013). Some students

may not be ready to learn in some realms. For example, a work site with high caseloads and few resources may not offer students enough one-to-one supervision time on site and may not meet particular student expectations. With these possibilities in mind, instructors can determine student readiness, review student goals and career plans, offer extra supports, and/or facilitate at least one supportive connection at the placement (Chui, 2010; McElwee, 2002; Miehls et al., 2013; Ussher & Carss, 2014). On the other hand, if students have particular hopes of working in more structured and legally framed fields of human services work (e.g. child protection, youth custody) creating strategies for working in these environments may be a goal of student learning. These placements may be particularly suitable for advanced students who wish to work on self-care and self-management strategies while building skills and experience in their intended career area (Bogo 2015; Leeman, 2013; Miehls et al., 2013).

Supervision Requisites Summarized

In order to foster successful practicum placements that facilitate student development, educational programs need to support field placements in a variety of ways. Some of the supportive mechanisms that have been highlighted in current research include the provision of ongoing student support (with options at the practicum setting and within the classroom), engaging in pre-planning and practicum preparation with student skills and strengths in mind, and offering training and oversight for the site placement supervisors.

Conclusion

The research that has been reviewed here suggests that the learning environment, combined with clear supervision protocols and relevant academic oversight contribute to a successful practicum placement. A practicum environment that promotes student growth, incorporates collaborative relationships, positive learning opportunities**,** time to observe and

debrief with experienced practitioners, and incorporates actual practice with clients is required for effective student learning and development. Attributes of supervisors that contribute to positive student outcomes include present supervisors who have time to model and mentor, supervisors who can model professionalism in practice settings, and supervisors who are able to clearly guide students' on-site experiences. Lastly, educational programs that request practicum placements need to be prepared to offer training and academic support, to engage in planning and student preparation prior to the placement, and to provide ongoing student and supervisory support.

Field experiences that includes goal orientated learning and pay attention to factors that create growth and change in students, are more likely to meet tangible learning outcomes (Bogo, 2015; Garfat et al., 2016). Student assessment is another important part of the learning process. The next chapter in this project focuses on feedback and assessment in human services practicum placements and reviews the benefits and limitations of a variety of formal and informal assessment methods.

CHAPTER 2:

A Review of the Literature on Practicum Assessment Modalities

McElwee et al.'s (2002) description of on-site learning encapsulates the notion that "practicum supervision is a process that must be seen as an active, participative partnership between the student, the college and the field practicum supervisors, offering stimulation of new learning and structured feedback on work practices" (p. 271). Their description while eloquent may leave instructors and supervisors with questions about how to best structure feedback and assessment in practicum settings. Some answers to these questions are emerging in human services research (Bogo, 2015; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Miehls et al., 2013). Practicum students require evaluation and feedback in a variety of forms and on an ongoing basis (Bogo, 2015; Rodger et al., 2011).

Research has shown that students are open and receptive to constructive criticism and appreciate supervisor input (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Miehls et al., 2013). Chui (2010) contends that "it is essential to tackle the practical problem of how, if possible, a student’s performance can be defined in terms of specific and concrete assessment criteria" (p. 172). In practice, assessment protocols are riddled with difficulties related to assessing personal growth and educational gains for individual learners who enter practicums with different sets of skills and practice abilities, and work in a myriad of settings (Bogo, 2015; Rodger et al., 2011; Miehls, et al., 2013). At a more advanced level of practice, graduate students may have clear learning targets and aim to work in settings that enhance and expand their current practice capabilities, but assessing these advanced learning goals and skills adds to the complexity of providing feedback that stimulates professional development (Goodman, Knight & Khudododov, 2014; Miehls, et al., 2013).

Tillema, Smith, and Leshem (2011) consider the impact of assessment in a mentoring situation from another point of view. These authors draw attention to the fact that assessments in practice impact student-supervisor relationships. Yet, the influence of this practice has barely been studied, particularly in relation to how an evaluative process may affect the learning and development of students in general. Tillema et al. describe the conflicting goals of assessment in learning:

> . . . assessment has a dual purpose; on the one hand to establish attainment of learning objectives and professional standards, and on the other hand to scaffold and promote development and growth in the profession. Assessment not only is a means to certification and qualification but it is also a tool for learning. Formative assessment, also known as assessment for learning, is often in conflict with summative assessment or assessment of learning. It is still a matter of debate whether these different goals can be served with a common set of assessment tools. (p. 141)

Tillema et al. suggest that formative assessments need to be prioritized in student-supervisor relationships, and that assessment protocols should be grounded in a collaborative process that is explicit and discussed in advance by the involved participants.

Defining effective feedback practices that are currently utilized in practicum settings, as well as exploring specific factors that make evaluation a challenge, are both required in order to continue to foster effective supervision practices (Bogo, 2015; Chui 2010; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Miehls et al., 2013). Research that systematically evaluates assessment methods in practicum settings is still emerging (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Miehls et al., 2013; Zeira et al., 2010). The literature review in this chapter explores assessment in the realm of practicum learning, and

reviews models and methods that are currently used to assess a variety of human services students.

Assessment Models in Practicum Settings

Practicum placements should offer students opportunities to engage in activities with the objective of connecting, learning, and developing through intentional exposure to therapeutic transactions that incorporate a variety of growth promoting strategies including risk-taking, experimentation, self-reflection, intentional conversations, and constructive feedback (Bogo, 2015; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Garfat et al., 2016; McElwee at al., 2002; Tillema, 2011). The assessment models that are described below incorporate the above activities.

Developmental Models of Assessment. Supervision in practice often includes developmental models of assessment. These models emphasize the evolving supervision needs of students and supervisors as they develop competence and confidence in practice (Garfat, Fulcher & Freeman, 2016; Everett et al., 2011; Hill, Crowe & Gonsalvez, 2016). These developmental measures presume that professional development follows a series of stages of increasing competence in practice skills (Everett et al., 2011; Hill et al., 2016). While navigating these sequential stages, students must manage developmental challenges such as increasing their skills and abilities in more complex situations, forming professional practice identities, building confidence in a variety of work related situations, and practicing with less constant or present supervision. Supervision interventions in this model match the developmental level and experience of students and offer a framework to evaluate students' progress over time (Allen & Wright, 2014; Everett et al., 2011; Garfat et al., 2016; Hill et al., 2016)

The overarching goal of developmental supervision is to provide students with individual, concrete, effective, personally tailored evaluation and feedback in order to promote learning

(Chui, 2010; Charles, 2016; Everett et al., 2011; Hill et al., 2016) Everett et al. researched developmental models of supervision and gathered information from graduate students and their supervisors. In general, these authors discovered that supervisors do adapt their supervision style to the needs and developmental level of students in practicum. Additionally, the authors noted the behaviours of supervisors initially supported a safe and secure environment, and as students progressed, supervisors encouraged more autonomy and freedom in the work setting.

Competencies Based Assessment. Competencies-based approaches in education and training have been extended to many realms of human services work. Competency or objectives-based assessments evaluate practice related to specific, pre-determined, competencies involving a variety of knowledge-based domains (Falender & Shafranske, 2004; Gonsalvez, Oades, & Freestone, 2002; Hill et al., 2016). Models of supervision that follow concrete lists of competencies can help with assessments and provide a framework for systematizing student performance. Then again, competency-based evaluations can still be problematic in less structured environments, can be less sensitive to individual development, and/or less applicable to certain work-place settings (Gonsalvez et al., 2002; Hill et al., 2016).

Whether assessments are based on developmental models, or competency lists, it is known that the reliability and validity of assessment is improved by pre-defining criteria and work-related expectations (Gonsalvez et al., 2002; Hill et al., 2016). Cooper & Ord (2014) state that in practice settings it is necessary to create “assessment methods which assess the application of knowledge rather than its acquisition” (p. 522). Current research demonstrates that there are several methods to enhance assessment and evaluation of student performance in work related settings (Allen & Wright, 2014; Everett et al., 2011; Garfat et al., 2016; Hill et al., 2016).

Feedback. Feedback is a critical part of assessment in practicum. Effective feedback is direct, specific, based upon concrete observations, timely, and respectful. There are many models of feedback and assessment used in practicum placements, and new models to evaluate student learning are still being proposed (Bogo, 2015; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Hatcher, 2015; Miehls et al., 2013). Passi (2016) notes that "it is necessary for students' performance to be effectively monitored and evaluated in order to check that adequate standards are being reached from colleges' perspectives as well as students'" (p. 272). The tools with which feedback can be provided can be informal and unstructured and formal and structured in nature, and require various amounts of time and different levels of expertise to implement. As well, it has been shown that students benefit from feedback that comes in different formats (Charles, 2016; McElwee, 2002). A review of assessment options that have been studied, from informal to formal, along with the known benefits and limitations of each method is discussed below.

Informal Assessments

Informal assessments include a variety of techniques used in the field to promote student learning. Some models are interactive and require participation from supervisors, students, and possibly their practicum course instructors (Bogo, 2015; Brannon, 2014; Hatcher et al., 2012, Hill et al., 2016). Other assessments can be completed off-site and are generally self-reflective in nature (Brannon, 2014; Bulger, 2006; McFarland, Saunders & Allen, 2009). Informal assessments are directed towards the facilitation of student learning and are used by instructors and supervisors to encourage practitioner development and growth. They can also be used to identify student strengths and weakness concerning their field work, and to help students reach the next level of practice ability (Bogo, 2015; Brannon, 2014; Domakin & Forrester, 2018; Hatcher et al., 2012; Tillema, 2011). The informal assessments that are reviewed in this paper

include ongoing informal dialogue, capturing teachable moments, group supervision, and educational or classroom support. The benefits and limitations of each practice, which have been discussed in current research, are presented along with a definition of the informal assessment in the realm of human services practice.

Ongoing Informal Dialogue

Ongoing informal dialogue defined. Shute (2008) defines "formative feedback ... as information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behavior for the purpose of improving learning" (p. 154). Ongoing informal dialogue, or formative feedback, includes the reflective and intentional conversations that happen between students, supervisors, instructors, and other individuals that encourage student learning at practicum sites. Informal dialogue can take place casually as the student works at the site and can include scheduled sessions that provide students with opportunities to seek and receive feedback (Ruiz-Primo, 2011). Learning conversations in general require respect, mutual trust, and a willingness to listen and risk one's opinions (Brannon, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Domakin &Forrester, 2018; Mumm, 2009; Ruiz-Primo, 2011; Shute, 2008).

Social work students in Mumm's (2006) study defined informal dialogue or discussion as the "student or the field instructor raises questions about 'what to do next' or 'how to do it.' The field instructor and the student then problem solve together. This differs from lecture in that there is the opportunity for interchange" (p. 80). In Mumm's particular study, such dialogue was reported as being used about six times per month. Along the same lines, Bogo (2016) reported that "instruction based on students' practice generally consists of *mutual reflective dialogues*, provision of feedback and coaching, and future planning" (p. 320, italics in original).

Ruiz-Primo (2011) studied the role of instructional dialogues in assessing students' learning in educational realms and found that informal dialogue can be used as an effective assessment tool. Ruiz-Primo posits that engaging in deliberate conversations with students makes student thinking transparent, and by doing so, student knowledge can be questioned, examined, and shaped constructively. Overall, it has been found that informal dialogue with students can reveal their strengths and challenges in conceptual, practical and social domains, and provide evidence of their practice abilities (Brannon, 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Domakin &Forrester, 2018; Mumm, 2006).

How often informal dialogue occurs during practicum likely depends on the time and availability of supervisors on site (Hatcher at al., 2012; Nordstrand, 2017). Interactions with supervisors, peers, and other workers at the practicum can offer students' opportunities to discuss practice and receive feedback; these casual conversations can be a good way for students to supplement learning as well (Hatcher at al., 2012; Garfat et al., 2016; Miehls et al., 2013; Nordstrand, 2017). Many human services settings are multi-faceted and offer less direct supervision as students gain competency; this leads to informal dialogue being based on student observations, thoughts, and reflections instead (Hatcher at al., 2012: Garfat et al., 2016; Miehls et al., 2013; Nordstrand, 2017).

Benefits of ongoing informal dialogue. Discussion and dialogue are commonly used learning techniques that can be employed by experienced and less experienced supervisors. Students report that ongoing and meaningful dialogue is a helpful part of learning process (Mumm, 2006; Shute 2008). This practice builds supervisor to student relationships, which can lead to increased student confidence and trust (Garfat et al., 2016; Miehls et al., 2013; Shute, 2008). Informal dialogue can be embedded in strengths-based and developmentally responsive

protocols (Garfat et al., 2016). This type of learning also values student and supervisor knowledge, while empowering student choice in practice (Bogo, 2016). In her research, Shute confirms that informal dialogue "has been shown in numerous studies to improve students' learning and enhance teachers' teaching to the extent that the learners are receptive and the feedback is on target (valid), objective, focused, and clear" (p. 182).

Informal dialogue-based assessment can include many of the casual verbal interactions that students and supervisors engage in throughout the students' time at the placement and can focus on any subject that students and supervisors choose to discuss (Ruiz-Primo, 2011). Supervisors can gather information on students' conceptual understanding as well as practical knowledge application through informal dialogue and can compare and contrast this information with student performance over time. Shute (2008) concludes that "formative feedback might be likened to "a good murder" in that effective and useful feedback depends on three things: (a) motive (the student needs it), (b) opportunity (the student receives it in time to use it), and (c) means (the student is able and willing to use it)" (p. 175).

Limitations of ongoing informal dialogue. The use of informal dialogue as a means of assessment possibly poses certain challenges for the supervisor (Hatcher et al, 2012; Shute 2008). Shute noted that effective formative feedback needs to be objective, explicit, and on target. Miehls et al. (2013) found that effectively delivery of feedback required supervisors to have strong communication skills and be able to support student learning and problems. Supervisors must also be able to resolve conflict, create relationships that can support courageous conversations, and lastly, deal with the power imbalances inherent in student/supervisor relationships (Miehls et al., 2013; Shute 2008). Furthermore, for the most efficacious conversations, supervisors need to create the time necessary to converse with

students in a meaningful way, and to actually observe students' practice to ensure that the dialogue is not reflecting solely on students' understanding of their practice (Hatcher at al., 2012: Garfat et al., 2016; Miehls et al., 2013; Nordstrand, 2017).

With the intention of linking theory to practice underlying the practicum model, Bogo (2015) determined that supervisors who use this method need to be able to articulate their own practice as it relates to theory while also being able to relay other contextual underpinnings of their field of practice to students. This involves an ability to reflect on one's own practice along with having an up-to-date understanding of theory in practice as it relates to the work setting (Bogo, 2015; Gursansky &Le Sueur, 2012; Shute 2008). Human services work, and the theories that guide it, are continually being revised and expanded; Gursansky and Le Sueur reported that "practice teachers found it difficult to keep abreast of developments in theory and research" (p. 920). Allen & Wright (2014), Bogo, (2015) and Brannon (2014) noted similar supervisor concerns when it came to staying abreast of theories that influence practice in the field. Bogo (2015) and Gursansky and Le Sueur posit that delivering theoretical knowledge that would benefit supervisors in the field would likely require a commitment from educational programs prior to, and during, student placements. (In fact, some universities produce 'cheat sheets' of theories, models, and perspectives of their educational programs for field supervisors (Augsberg University, 2018).)

Capturing 'Teachable Moments'

Capturing 'teachable moments' defined. A teachable moment is a natural opportunity to offer a brief explanation about practice in context or to pause and reflect on practice and intervention options with students as these students are working with clients (Lateef, 2013; Mumm 2006; Vallero, 2003; Valverde, 2013). Vallero states "in a sense, a teachable moment is

a real-time case study" (p. 103). The teachable moment, which is unplanned and informal, requires a sample of student practice to discuss while the supervisor provides the guidance and helps to interpret the meaning of the moment, in the context of the interaction, with students (Lateef, 2013; Vallero, 2003). An example from Valverde follows:

In 2012, while on a student exchange in Israel, Valverde (2013) a professor of law and eight students were caught in a dangerous situation. Valverde and the students were unexpectedly required to live under tight security in a zone of active warfare that included sirens, incoming rocket fire, hiding in 'safe shelters', and witnessing the aftermath of the political unrest through the stories of Israeli citizens. While the program they were a part of was designed to teach students about social justice and empathy, for the professor and students the overseas trip turned in to a series of teachable moments about human rights, children trapped in war zones, political strife, and client advocacy.

Valverde (2013) found that as a result of being immersed in completely unplanned for and very challenging experiences "the greatest take-away from the [exchange student] experience, however, is that we all understand now, more than ever, the need not only to process and find meaning in what we have learned but also to continue questioning, reflecting and learning" (p. 316). Some of the most meaningful learning from this exchange was derived from the fact that students had to explore and reflect upon the teachable moments, and then reorient their mental schemas to align with new information. Because they were immersed in such a harrowing environment, had to work with their own safety and loss of freedom and rights, and exposed to a variety frames of reference in the situation, these students had the opportunity to "observe the promotion of social justice ethics and values at all levels, from the institutional to the individual" (p. 288). Valverde now watches for similar moments in ordinary situations in

order to offer students teachable moments in their educational journeys. As he puts it, "real-life advocacy is confusing, intimidating, unpredictable and messy, and our students need to know this" (p. 289-290).

Benefits of capturing 'teachable moments.' Lateef (2013), who conducted his research in a medical setting, examined the benefits of embedding fourth year students within multi-disciplinary teams in emergency departments with the intention of providing students with numerous teachable moments. 'Practicing' medicine is heralded as the primary teaching method in this dynamic field. In Lateef's study, students were assigned to small groups with professionals willing to model and mentor students; the intention was to offer students opportunities to job shadow a variety of professionals as well as take hands-on and leadership roles in practice. In this active learning role, students were observed managing patient care, engaging in verbal and non-verbal interactions with professionals and patients, and performing other daily tasks including charting. In this embedded program learners were observed closely and provided with continuous encouragement and feedback. This "less formal setting tests the students' ability to grasp these teachable moments and make full use of what is acquired, coupled with reflection and review" (p. 81). This process received positive reviews from students and professionals and has been deemed a good way for students to embark on their new practice roles without getting lost in a busy working domain.

Limitations of capturing 'teachable moments.' Recognizing and capturing teachable moments is a high-level skill related to teaching, counselling, CYC and other human services work (Lateef, 2013; Miehls et al, 2013; Vallero 2003; Valverde, 2013). These opportunity-based learning moments need to happen in a timely and sensitive manner, while also delivering knowledge-based content that is relevant to the individual student. Seizing teachable moments

takes time, and effective communication and practice skills (Lateef, 2013; Vallero, 2003; Valverde, 2013).

Mumm (2006), in researching field teaching strategies, concluded that students found it most helpful to talk about skills, then observe the supervisor using those skills in context first, rather than observing the supervisor in practice prior to discussing the skills or intervention choices they may be about to witness. For many of the teaching techniques surveyed in this study, supervisors reported using them at a higher level than students reported experiencing them. Mumm found students perceived that they were exposed to learning by written materials and modeling less than the supervisors reported using them. Furthermore, considerable discrepancies were reported in the use of teachable moments, co-counseling, process recordings, lecturing, and role playing in practicum settings with students reporting lower frequencies of all the techniques that were being studied. Despite the acknowledged value to be found in teachable moments, Miehls et al. (2013) noted in their research that students, even at a master's level of learning, preferred "clear, structured and directive style of supervision rather than unstructured approaches, ambiguous directives and 'learning by doing'" (p. 131). It is possible that, without overtly discussing the practice of capturing teachable moments and explaining the process to students in advance, students may not recognize that teachable moments are being used to facilitate learning and assess student performance; in fact, students might not even recognize that the learning exchange has occurred.

Guided Self-Reflection

Guided self-reflection defined. Guided self-reflection, typically written by students in response to assigned topics, is a learning process that encourages students to reflect on personal experiences in the practicum (Allen & Wright, 2014; Husu et al, 2008; Jones & Ryan, 2014;

McFarland et al., 2009; Mingun & Fortune, 2013). The primary goal of self-reflection in practicum is for students is to gain insight into their current practice strengths and deficits, and to improve the way they practice in the field. These reflective exercises can also be used to support the application of theory in practice (Husu et al., 2006; McFarland et al., 2009; Mingun & Fortune, 2013). The subject matter students reflect on may be specific to their learning plan and goals, can include an analysis of educational curricula and learning outcomes, may review pre-determined competency and skill areas, and can consider the principles and ideologies that are embedded in the field placement (Husu et al, 2006; McFarland et al., 2009; Mingun & Fortune, 2013). Some methods used to facilitate this reflection process include journaling, asking for feedback from others at the practicum site, and video recordings of students practicing with clients. Students' compilations of these kinds of assignments are then reviewed by supervisors and/or instructors to assess student learning and growth (Allen & Wright, 2014; Husu et al, 2008; McFarland et al., 2009; Mingun & Fortune, 2013).

Benefits of guided self-reflection. McFarland et al. (2009) created a study to review the use of self-reflection in order to improve the use of positive guidance skills when working with children. These authors discovered that students found the process of goal setting and self-rating helpful to the learning process, and that reflection likely assisted students on focusing on the acquisition of positive guidance skills throughout the practicum. The students in the McFarland et al. study learned to tailor their skills to the individual needs of children through regular self-reflection exercises, and supervisors' evaluations of these reflections helped students reflect more accurately on their practice abilities.

Mingun and Fortune (2013) studied masters level social work student in field placements to determine whether participatory activities that involve observation, practicing, and self-

reflection are related to students' performance over the course of practicum. As a result of their research, Mingun and Fortune suggest that "reflection is the glue that brings together practice experience and classroom theories to provide optimal learning and development experiences. People involved in reflective practice are committed to both problem finding and problem solving" (p. 656). These authors found that self-reflection exercises facilitate student understanding of their unique practice perspectives, help them recognize their on-site skills and abilities, and aids them in understanding their own process of thinking and knowing.

Keough (2016) who examined educational practices in CYC practicum settings, proposes that self-reflective exercises based on learning outcomes "may assist students by giving them context and transparency regarding practicum goals prior to learning/reflective exercises" (p. 132). Keough also noted that providing students with learning outcomes at the beginning of the practicum and reflecting on them at regular intervals during the placement would assist in making the process clear and intentional.

Limitations of guided self-reflection. Although the authors in the section above view self-reflection as a useful practicum activity, this does not at the same time suggest that self-reflection is a particularly effective or reliable assessment tool (Herrero et al., 2011; McFarland et al., 2009; Mingun & Fortune, 2013). As McFarland et al. clearly stated, they "did not find that thoroughness of self-reflection was related to guidance skills or amount of improvement" (p. 505). Gursansky and Le Sueur (2012) studied the discrepancies between rhetoric and practice in social work practicum learning and concluded that self-reflection contributes to students developing effective practice and interventions skills. On the other hand, these authors do caution that what may be most difficult to assess is that students have been instructed well enough on the practice of self-reflection to be able to use this skill with expanding levels of

insight in more challenging and complex settings. Gursansky and Le Sueur also wonder whether maturing practitioners will continue to use reflection skillfully in their future endeavours and continue to use reflection as a tool to enhance and improve practice skills once they are employed.

Additionally, McFarland et al. (2009) found that students' reflection based self-assessments of their work did not necessarily agree with those of their supervisors in that initially students frequently gave themselves higher scores than their supervisors did, but by the end of practicum, students frequently assigned themselves lower scores than those assigned by their supervisors. McFarland et al. suggest that this may be a result of two possibilities: students may be over confident in their abilities at the beginning of practicum, prior to feedback, or supervisors may rate students lower in the initial stages of practice to ensure there is room for student improvement.

Jones and Ryan (2014) studied online self-reflection in structured and non-structured formats and concluded that students did not actually reflect upon their work (that is analyze and examine what they were doing) but tended to simply note the content of their practice (i.e. they described the situation and setting). According to Parsons and Stephenson (2005), "most students, in providing reflections on their school experiences, treat reflection as a descriptive task, reporting on events, rather than as an analytical task in which they identify reasons for successes and difficulties for which they can then construct approaches for improvement" (as cited in Jones & Ryan, 2014, p. 144).

Adding to previous research, Jones and Ryan (2014) studied an intervention targeted at improving the depth and breadth of student self-reflection in practicum settings. These researchers placed students in one of two online discussion groups: "an unstructured personal

blog space and a structured threaded discussion forum where discussion topics guided them to reflect on their practicum experiences in relation to theoretical components of their studies" (p. 132). This study did find a significant increase in the quantity of contributions made in the unstructured blog format although there was a tendency to diarise the daily practicum events rather than reflect on theory and practice. Some learning enhancement was also noted with the group that engaged in more directive, reflection-based discussion.

Like others noted above, Jones and Ryan (2014) also found that students had limited capacity for process reflections (linking practice to theory) and that students did not go on to link the learning to the curriculum or premise level (Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Herrero et al., 2011; McFarland et al., 2009; Mingun & Fortune, 2013). The authors also discovered that providing specific topics to reflect on in the structured forums germinated little change in student discussion and did not necessarily lead to an increase in critical reflection by students. A final concern that Jones and Ryan posed converged on the supervisors themselves:

> The level of expert facilitation and the form that this facilitation takes also need serious consideration . . . lecturers need to consider their role throughout the reflection period. They need to ensure that they pose questions to deepen individual critical reflection, model reflective thinking as well as offer the encouragement and affirmation that [students] appear to need. (p. 144)

In essence, the authors felt that students had little capacity to critically self-reflect on their own practice in field settings.

Group Supervision

Group supervision defined. Group supervision is defined as an organized process where a field supervisor is given a group of students to work with in a practicum placement. Typically,

there are designated working times during the placement where the group comes together to review and expand their practice abilities (Zeira & Schiff, 2010). The supervisor in this role is generally considered to be an individual with considerable experience in the field of practice (Carter et al., 2009; Sussman, Bogo, & Globerman, 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010). Currently, social work and psychology placements are actively using group supervision with up to 75% of Canadian practicum placements engaging in this practice (Sussman et al., 2007). Zeira and Schiff note that, although there is a trend toward using group supervision in relation to practicum learning, there is currently little empirical evidence on its advantages or disadvantages. The available research on this approach is examined below.

It has been suggested that this style of supervision may be an effective learning tool for helping students to develop and enhance professional values, acquire knowledge and skills, and reflect on their practice based interventions (Carter et al., 2009; Sussman et al., 2007). The learning opportunities that are reported to be unique to a group process are the interrelated influences generated by supervisors and peers in these learning situations (Carter et al., 2009; Chui, 2010; Sussman et al., 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010).

The findings of Carter et al.'s (2009) concept mapping of group supervision identified helpful factors in group learning environments. As in one to one supervision, students perceive certain elements as conducive to productive learning:

- Competent and positive supervisors with an open and validating style and time to guide students;
- Acquiring objective knowledge through direct teaching, assigned readings, and observation of and by the supervisor;

- Opportunities that invoke interpersonal awareness, emotional insight, while promoting individual goals, and personal development;
- And supportive work sites with constructive feedback and learning opportunities.

The one differing variable in this study was the distinct role of peer impact in the learning environment. Overall, peer to peer interactions were well received especially when groups provided validation, positive feedback, and mutual support. Carter et al. also found that there were possible detrimental aspects of group supervision but that these areas of challenge could be mitigated with a strong understanding of group dynamics by students and supervisors, and with skilled facilitation techniques of the supervisor that influences and guides student interactions.

Carter et al.'s (2009) survey also contained some advice for group supervisors. In group learning environments, supervisors need to focus on two main tasks: facilitating a group process with students and attending to specific supervision needs of individuals in the program. Additionally, while pursuing these two main tasks, group supervisors need to develop a culture that leads to student development and learning while working with a variety of students with different needs and abilities.

Benefits of group supervision. As Sussman et al. (2007) point out, "proponents of group supervision promote this approach stating that it can offer students the opportunity to share knowledge, discuss differing perspectives, learn about group dynamics, experiment with new behaviors, recognize the universality of their concerns, and develop more accurate self-appraisals" (p. 63). The findings of their research ascertained some of the benefits of group supervision in field placements:

- supervisors are able to work with more students in the field,
- the process saves time, especially at the orientation stage of practicum,

- students are able to learn from peers with a variety of theoretical orientations,
- the group environment empowers students in articulating their thoughts and needs more readily,
- and by working together, group skills could be developed that would enhance individual practice abilities.

Additionally, Carter et al. (2009) indicated that supervisors who were able to balance the dynamic of being supportive and challenging resulted in positive supervisory experiences.

Zeira and Schiff (2010) outline several practical advantages of group supervision and suggest that the trend toward group supervision is influenced by budgetary constraints and other limited resources (time, organization, supervisor numbers, etc.) which universities and practicum sites are all facing. Further to this, group supervision may help prepare students for group practice, an area where students have indicated they do not feel they have received adequate instruction (Goodman et al., 2014).

Zeira and Schiff (2010) studied group supervision models in social work practice. Student perceptions of supervision were evaluated in four realms: evaluation of supervisors, interventions with clients, development of professional values, and satisfaction with their experience over all. The study revealed some interesting findings:

> The only significant differences between students receiving group supervision and those receiving individual supervision lay in the students' evaluation of their field instructors, specifically, in their perception of the content of the supervision and of the students' relationships with their field instructors. We found no significant differences between the groups in their assessment of the supervision structure and setting. (p. 432)

The authors affirmed that they found no significant differences in the other group-based domains they studied.

Researchers have suggested that group supervision can promote peer learning in a safe, group based, setting (Carter et al., 2009; Chui, 2010; Sussman et al., 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010). In taking the potential benefits a step further, it is also possible that students can identify parallel processes between peer group work and work with clients to further professional growth (Carter et al., 2009; Sussman et al., 2007). Furthermore, being or becoming aware of parallel processes in group settings, and discussing the relational interactions with supervisors, may allow students to become more aware of how they center themselves in therapeutic interactions (Carter et al., 2009; Chui, 2010; Sussman et al., 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010).

Limitations of group supervision. There appear to be a number of challenges to the use of group work for learning, and subsequently implications for group supervision as an assessment tool (Goodman et al., 2014; Sussman et al., 2007). Several researchers have demonstrated that there are obstacles to learning when group supervision is utilized (Bogo, 2015; Chui, 2010; Goodman et al., 2014; Jones & Ryan, 2014; Sussman et al., 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010). Some students feel overly criticised in group settings and report that it is difficult to learn with an audience. This discomfort with the group process itself may inhibit student progress and confidence with practice (Goodman et al., 2014; Sussman et al., 2007).

Sussman et al. (2007) studied group supervision in practicum from both students' and supervisors' perspectives. In their literature review, Sussman et al. found that the few studies that had been completed had "not identified how group supervisors recognize and address critical incidents in learning groups, how effective they perceive their strategies to have been, and what factors they perceive contribute to successful supervision groups" (p. 65). Supervisors and

students understood that the benefits of group supervision required trust and safety being built into the group experience at the beginning of the process; yet all of the supervisors in this study reported that, despite considerable efforts on their part, internal and external challenges to facilitating a trusting environment hampered the establishment of a safe learning experience.

The internal attributes cited as barriers to group learning in Sussman et al.'s (2007) study arose out of the attitudes and behaviour of participants. For example, some students felt less competent than their peers, other students felt frustrated with their group mates, and other students were only willing and able to reveal their potential practice vulnerabilities in one to one sessions. Some of the external factors that supervisors identified as posing problems included different levels of student experience and education, students with assorted approaches to practice, and students who entered the group at various times during the program. Agreeing with the factors identified by supervisors, students also added negative peer histories, and the range of competency and professionalism in the group, as obstructions to learning from group supervision.

Beyond what is noted above, the supervisors in Sussman al.'s (2007) study reported that students who acted as consultants or experts rather than learners, students who did not take risks, and students who are more dominant than peers and are unable to consider and respect other students' efforts made supervision more difficult. These supervisors made a number of attempts to redirect these students but reported little in the way of productive change for the group even though they tried to deal with these issues in one -to-one supervision sessions. In the end, supervisors noticed that the negative behaviours that they were trying to deal with contributed to group members being more guarded, sharing less information, and providing less feedback to each other (Sussman al, 2007).

Zeira and Schiff (2010), who also studied group supervision in practicum settings, compared cohorts of students in one-to-one or group supervision. These authors found that students' perceptions of their supervisors' evaluation of the students' practice, the enhancement of their professional values, or their general satisfaction with practicum experiences could not be distinguished based on these students' supervision format (one-to-one or group). However, the format did matter where self-disclosure during supervision was concerned. Students in group supervision gave lower evaluations specific to the learning environment and reported that it was harder to reveal their weaknesses and address their negative thoughts and feelings. Additionally, students in group supervision reported that their relationships with supervisors were less satisfactory. Zeira and Schiff reasoned that when students see themselves being dealt with as members of a group rather than as unique individuals with various strengths and shortcomings, those students with less experience or more anxiety were not able to fully benefit from the reflections of others (Zeira & Schiff, 2010).

While studying group work education in classrooms and the field, Goodman et al. (2014) surveyed masters level social work students who were specializing in one of four areas: clinical practice, group work, community practice, and organizational management. A noteworthy finding of this study was that the majority of students reported being dissatisfied with their academic preparation for working in groups in practice. Students in this study had a number of opportunities to work with other students but did not feel they had been prepared for the discrepancies in power and relational conflicts in groups prior to working in these practicum settings. Thus, Goodman et al. concluded that the course work in the social work program that they studied had not adequately prepared students for working in groups: "virtually all students

entered the field with marginal academic support in the method, even though the reality was that a majority of them had group experiences as part of their field practicum" (p. 73).

In general, researchers have indicated that the content of supervision sessions can also challenge supervisors and students when the focus is on administrative issues, when time is limited, and when sharing stories detracts from the reflection and learning process. Furthermore, certain kinds of students, especially those who are resistant and challenging, can compromise the group's benefits. The extant research on all this had shown that some students have less capacity for insightful self-reflection, working with others, and are not able to provide effective feedback to other participants and that this negatively affects those with whom they have been placed into groups (Carter et al., 2009; Goodman et al., 2014; Sussman et al., 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010).

In some studies, it was noted that the supervisors themselves struggled to facilitate an effective and positive group environment (Sussman et al., 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010). In order to be effective a supervisor must have strong facilitation abilities, be able to support a variety of learning styles, work with different competency levels, and concurrently manage conflict or tensions in the group (Sussman et al., 2007). Additionally, supervisors need to continually manage the boundaries between individual supervision and group supervision, which can be a challenge to navigate in real time situations (Sussman et al., 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010). A group that is not performing well may inhibit student participation, limit the range of feedback and engagement, and not allow for students to develop practice skills in an effective manner (Carter et al., 2009; Goodman et al., 2014; Sussman et al., 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010).

Group preparedness is another contributor to success. If students are not ready to work as constructive group members, and they have not been taught how contribute to the group while meeting their personal needs in group supervision, supervisors may spend an inordinate amount

of time in a teaching role, rather than facilitating learning (Carter et al., 2009; Goodman et al., 2014; Sussman et al. 2007; Zeira & Schiff, 2010). Another finding in this body of research was that the group supervision in practicum settings did not reduce the costs associated with fieldwork supervision due to the training requirements and the demands for practicum course instructor-to-supervisor mentoring time (Zeira & Schiff, 2010).

Informal Evaluations Summarized

Gursansky and Le Sueur (2012) state that informal assessments can support the advancement of effective intervention skills and aid in developing practitioner insight in field settings. With this in mind, informal assessments can be a fundamental part of student instruction and skills acquisition and help students continue to identify their practice related strengths and weaknesses while increasing their confidence and competence in practicum settings.

On the other hand, research has shown that informal processes may pose challenges for students and their supervisors and instructors. Since students have concrete expectations with regard to supervision and evaluation, less formal approaches may leave students feeling unsure about their performance and unable to review and evaluate their learning accurately without professional support (Carter et al., 2009; Goodman et al., 2014; Sussman et al., 2007). Cooper and Ord (2014), Chui (2010), and Hatcher et al. (2012) all revealed contradictions with regard to employing informal evaluations to assess student performance and concluded that this may be a result of unclear assessment methods and criteria. Eliminating or reducing these inconsistencies in evaluation would be exceptionally difficult to do while using mostly informal assessment modalities. Therefore, the evaluation of student performance by more formal methods is also required to ensure that practicum learning outcomes are realized (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Hatcher et al., 2012). The next section explores formal assessment methods that may be combined with

less formal methods in order to generate more reliable student performance measures (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Hatcher et al., 2012).

Formal Assessments

Formalized assessments evaluate student performance through the use of clearly documented learning outcomes, grading rubrics, and pre-defined competencies (Amerikaner & Rose, 2012; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Keough, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017). The information that follows focuses on formal assessment methods that are representative of common practice in most practicum settings. Direct observation, surveying of audio or video recordings, standardized measures of assessment, participatory assessment, and student portfolios are discussed and the benefits and limitations of each process are briefly outlined. While there are many forms of formal evaluation, these assessment protocols were discussed and evaluated in the literature reviewed and currently used in many human service settings (Amerikaner & Rose 2012; Hauer, 2016; Keough, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017).

Direct Observation

Direct observation defined. As a mode of assessment, direct observation can identify students' area of strength and challenge, support the provision and content of feedback, and provide students with information that helps them to address learning targets and improve their practice (Amerikaner & Rose 2012; Hauer, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017). LaDonna et al. define direct observation as

> the active process of watching learners perform in order to develop an understanding of how they apply their knowledge and skills to clinical practice. Direct observation can serve either summative or formative purposes, and it may be used in a variety of

> settings, ranging from formalised assessment contexts . . . to informal coaching-oriented contexts in which assessment is not the express goal. (p. 499)

Direct observation therefore works as an interactional strategy that serves two main purposes: student assessment and as a basis for providing constructive feedback (Amerikaner & Rose, 2012; Kogan et al., 2012; LaDonna et al., 2017). In researching direct observation in residency programs, La Donna et al. (2017) found that direct observation is an effective method for assessing students who are rehearsing or performing work related tasks. This method enabled supervisors to provide feedback to help learners identify the skills that they are able to perform at acceptable levels and improve their abilities where skills may be lacking. La Donna et al. and other researchers report that direct observation offers supervisors the opportunity to actually monitor students while they are working with clients in field settings, and to see what students actually do, as opposed to what they report that they do in practice (Amerikaner & Rose, 2012; Hauer, 2016; Kogan et al., 2012). Even though this method of assessment can contribute to student discomfort and anxiety, it is generally considered an important assessment and educational tool (Amerikaner & Rose, 2012; Hauer, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017).

Benefits of direct observation. Amerikaner and Rose (2012) provide several key reasons to utilize direct observation in practicum settings: to teach and mentor students, to evaluate student skills and competencies, to provide information to the academic program and other involved parties about student performance, to promote the well-being of students, and to ensure that clients are receiving quality services.

Kogan et al. (2012) describe direct observation as a tool that is essential to informing students about what they are doing well and what requires improvement. By actually observing practice, immediate and concrete feedback can be offered with the intention of improving student

performance. Importantly, direct observation is an assessment method that leaves students with clear knowledge that the evaluative interaction occurred, unlike informal evaluations where supervisor and student opinions differed in this domain (Carter et al., 2009; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Hatcher, 2012; Miehls et al., 2013). Several research studies that speak to direct observation in practicum highlight the fact that students are dissatisfied with the amount of feedback they receive that is based on supervisors formally observing their practice (Chui, 2010; Cleak & Smith, 2012; Hatcher et al., 2012; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Leeman, 2013).

Chiu's (2010) study on evaluating field work performance discovered that students believed that assessments were not always fair due to the lack of time the supervisors spent observing actual practice. Subsequent researched that focused on direct observation indicates that students report increased confidence and improvement in their field skills when observation occurs regularly, and when they have a trusting relationship with their supervisor (Allen & Wright, 2014; LaDonna et al., 2017). Having a supervisor watch practice in action helped some students receive reassurance about their practice abilities and reduced self-doubt with respect to the ways they engaged in practice (LaDonna et al., 2017). Although direct observation can provoke anxiety in students, some individuals reported that the heightened anxiety they experienced when being observed simulated the stress of working with clients in the field and helped them develop skills and strategies to work with this challenge (LaDonna et al., 2017).

Limitations of direct observation. There are a number of challenges related to implementing direct observation as an assessment tool in practice settings (Amerikaner & Rose, 2012; Hauer, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017). A lack of time and resources in practicum placements limit the amount of time that can be allocated to directly observing students (Bogo, 2015; Carter et al., 2009; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Miehls et al., 2013). Brannon (2014) notes that it is hard to

create a fair evaluation of competence and skill based on infrequent observations, which research has confirmed tends to be an ongoing supervision challenge in human services placements (Amerikaner & Rose, 2012; Hauer, 2012; LaDonna et al., 2017; Miehls et al., 2013). There also appears to be considerable confusion for students and supervisors alike as to whether direct observation in practice is being used as an educational strategy or assessment tool (Amerikaner & Rose, 2012; Hauer, 2012; LaDonna et al., 2017). This confusion exacerbates the discomfort experienced by students and decreases the validity of this assessment method (LaDonna et al., 2017).

LaDonna et al.'s (2017) study unveiled several unintended and negative consequences related to direct observation.

1. The observer-effect. Having someone observe student work directly may alter the students' performance in several ways, which raises questions about the credibility of the observation and related feedback. This effect may also appear to improve student performance as students reported that they changed their practice style to please the observer as they were worried about their evaluation results. This phenomenon was originally termed the Hawthorne effect. [2]
2. Assessment versus learning. Students were often unclear whether direct observation was being used to evaluate student ability (summative assessment) or to provide information to support student learning (formative assessment). This lack of clarity left students

[2] The observer-effect, or Hawthorne effect, is described as the tendency for the person being observed to alter their behaviour due to the fact they are being watched. The original term appears to have been attributed to improvements in performance as a result of being observed. This behavioural response can pose challenges for researchers when it affects the accuracy of the data being collected (MBA Leaner, 2018). McCambridge, Witton and Elbournec (2014) systematically reviewed the Hawthorne effect in the literature and found that the term has not been operationalized in research and, over time, the Hawthorne effect has been attributed to a number of behavioural alterations that arise out of being observed. McCambridge et al. (2014) concluded "that there is no single Hawthorne effect" (p. 276) and determined that the conditions and effects of being observed require further study.

feeling unsure of the potential outcomes which provoked emotional discomfort and impacted their practice performance.

3. Impacts to the client-student relationship. The presence of an observer could impact the relationship and rapport that students had established with the people they were working with. When being watched, some students reverted to a more formal and less engaged practice style rather than working in natural ways that suited their personality.
4. Lack of authenticity. Students, recognizing the changes in their practice had questions about whether supervisors had observed an authentic version of their practice and so doubted that these supervisors were therefore able to provide them with feedback that was accurate.

In a study that focused on supervision, Kogan et al. (2012) studied the inherent challenges supervisors faced when tasked to provide students with feedback and described these as follows: the skills and experience supervisors have in conducting observations and providing constructive feedback can vary, and the time required to break down skills and understanding for students may not be feasible in all settings. These researchers also lamented the fact that direct observation inhibits autonomy in the moment, and possibly in future client interactions, has not yet been fully researched.

Allen and Wright (2014), Hauer (2016) and LaDonna et al. (2017) came to the same conclusion regarding direct observation as an assessment tool in field settings. When there is confusion about the role of direct observation between students and supervisors, and lack of clarity surrounding the purpose of direct observation when used in practicum, the efficacy of direct observation as assessment method may be called in to question. LaDonna et al. proposed a solution: "to avoid role ambiguity, to reduce uncertainty and performance anxiety and to mitigate

perceptions of inauthenticity, it is imperative for observers to clearly articulate if their purpose is to assess learners' medical expertise or to coach learners' professional development" (p. 507).

Hauer (2016), Kogan et al. (2012) and LaDonna et al. (2017) all conclude that direct observation in practice has to be further researched and evaluated and that a more comprehensive understanding of how direct observation influences learning is urgently needed. Ultimately, both Kogan et al. and LaDonna et al. recommend that direct observation is best used for formative, rather than summative assessment.

Reviewing Audio or Video Recordings

Reviewing audio or video recordings defined. Cory, Haynes, Moulton and Muratori (2010) who wrote *Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions: A Practical Guide* describe video or audio recording for supervision as a process where students arrange to record one or more meetings with their clients in order to view them in supervisory sessions. To use this assessment method, students must fully describe the process to all participants in advance, obtain formal consent to record the sessions, and arrange for time to review the recording with their supervisors, instructors, and/or peers (Cory et al., 2010). Many of the benefits and limitations of this assessment method mirror those that have been itemized in direct observation (Amerikaner & Rose, 2012; Hauer, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017); some additional considerations are documented next.

Benefits of reviewing audio or video recordings. Reviewing actual student work, rather than relying on student reports of what they do in practice, is important as part of a less-biased assessment approach (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Cory et al., 2010; Hatcher et al., 2012). Cory et al. state that video recording is useful and may be preferable to live supervision for a number of reasons: the interaction can be played multiple times for learning purposes, after watching the

video or hearing the recording, role playing to try alternative strategies can occur, and progress over time can be observed and compared using this method. Cooper and Ord and Hatcher et al. agree with the findings above and note additional benefits. These authors found that less experienced students were not always able to identify their areas of strengths and weakness, especially if the students had limited experience in this realm, and if they were working on new skills or engaging in increasingly complex situations. For these students, analyzing their recorded work with supervisors can support their learning, especially if this analysis takes place in a one-to-one, safe environment that does not interrupt the flow of their practice with clients (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Hatcher et al., 2012).

In clinical and mental health settings, videotaping may be one of the most common means of supervision (Huhra, Yamokokski-Maynhart & Prieto, 2008). Huhra et al. demonstrated that using recordings in clinical supervision brings students' perceptions of their practice abilities more in line with supervisors' evaluation of their performance. Recording counselling sessions in a developmental learning environment was beneficial to learning because it (a) increased level of students' self-awareness of their practice style and methods; (b) enhanced their sense of objectivity concerning their clinical work; (c) 'brought the client to life' for the supervisor; (d) provided fact-based and impartial information on client progress in therapy; (e) and promoted objectivity in evaluation (Huhra et al., 2008).

In studying a reflective supervision model that is used in challenging therapeutic environments, Remez (2016) situated such supervision as necessary to consistent support and pointed out a number of benefits that accrue from reviewing recordings with supervisors and/or practice-based teams. Remez stated that viewing practice work with supervisors encouraged growth and reflective capacity, facilitated the provision of quality care to clients, helped with

managing the emotions of students, and bolstered the mental well-being of therapists in general. Remez also made it clear that in order for this kind of supervision to be effective, supervisors needed to provide a nonjudgmental and supportive environment that is non-competitive in nature and ensure participants' safety and promote a secure connection between team members.

Further benefits of using recordings is that it allows assessors to view actual work (a form of direct observation), yet allows the person reviewing the work the flexibility to complete the task on their own timeline (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Cory et al., 2010; Hatcher et al., 2012). Part or all of student-client encounters can be assessed in this manner and selected extracts of recordings can be pulled from the original based on student or supervisor goals and targeted review areas (Cory et al.). Furthermore, supervisors or practicum course instructors can review the work with students, rewind and pause as needed, and offer feedback in an engaged and timely session, without the client being a witness to the process (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Hatcher et al., 2012; Miehls et al., 2013).

Limitations of reviewing audio or video recordings. Video or audio recording sessions can complicate the work that students do with clients (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Cory et al., 2010; Hatcher et al., 2012). Explaining the process can leave clients unsure of what the recordings are actually being used for and may affect the session adversely (akin to the observer effect) (Cory et al., 2010; LaDonna et al, 2017). Obtaining consent requires a formal process which can feel intrusive for the client, and the client can refuse should they not wish to be recorded. Furthermore, even when sessions are recorded, technical challenges may prevent the taping from being useable (Cory et al., 2010). Remez (2016) also noted that learners could be uncomfortable with the process, especially if they thought that negative repercussions could be an outcome of the assessment.

Hatcher et al. (2012) revealed that as little as 19 percent of practicum training sites studied used direct observation, including the review of audio or video recordings, and that many sites never used this type of evaluation at all. Instead, supervisors and instructors were relying on students' written and verbal reports about the services they were providing. The amount of time this process takes is likely a contributing factor to the lack of its use (Hatcher et al.). Additionally, it is possible that the lack of research in this area also compounds the issue as knowledge about the benefits and limitations has not yet been documented through valid and reliable data (LaDonna et al, 2017; Hatcher et al., 2012 Huhra et al., 2008).

Standardized Measures of Assessment

Standardized measures defined. Structured assessment involves the use of standardized assessment instruments to provide instructors, supervisors, and students with data on student performance (Tillema et al., 2011). Standardized assessments have the same format, questions, and evaluative processes for all the students who receive them (Roux, 2011; Tillema et al., 2011). Tillema et al. state that standardized assessment instruments are carefully designed tools that appraise the level of students' performance compared to pre-defined program standards. Standards-based assessments are designed to measure how well students have applied skills and/or mastered specific knowledge areas as outlined by their educational program. These assessments are presented in the same format for all students, which creates the possibility of comparing the relative performance of individual students or groups of students (Keough, 2016; Roux, 2011; Tillema et al., 2011).

Typically, standardized assessments are delivered at specific intervals in practicum placements - often at the beginning, middle, and end of the field placement. Student progress over time can be measured and reviewed collaboratively with these tools (Allen & Wright, 2013;

Brannon, 2014; Keough, 2016; Mingun & Fortune, 2013; Roux, 2011). There are several forms of assessment that fall in to the category of standardized measures. Some examples include student learning plans, competencies-based check lists, grading rubrics, and other prescriptive measures that are used to assess the performance of all students (Keough, 2016; Mingun & Fortune, 2013). In practicum, these methods can be used for formative comprehension (i.e. monitoring student learning to provide ongoing feedback) or summative learning purposes (i.e. evaluation and grading of student learning) (Freeman, 2013; Keough, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017).

Benefits of using standardized measures. Having a standard evaluative system makes it simpler for students and supervisors to assess their learning progress and goal attainment (Freeman, 2013; Keough, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017; Roux, 2011). Monitoring student performance several times during a field placement with standardized measurement instruments, can show progress and/or highlight challenges in learning overtime. Additionally, instructors can compare the development of students to others in the program (Freeman, 2013; Keough, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017).

While admitting that creating uniform ratings may be challenging when it comes to evaluating student skill levels in diverse field settings, several researchers are testing various standardized assessments with the hope of establishing reliable and valid assessment protocols to use in multiple educational settings (Bogo, 2015; Domakin & Forrester, 2018; Roux, 2011). The intention behind employing standardized measures in practicum settings is to reduce the subjectivity of assessment by making assessment a more evidence-informed, specific, and concrete evaluation process (Domakin & Forrester, 2018; Roux, 2011). Standardized assessment tools would also make it more feasible to assign grades for practicum students (Roux, 2011).

Limitations of using standardized measures. Since students practice in such diverse settings, standard evaluation forms would need to be designed to capture the various skills and/or competencies that are being evaluated and to fairly evaluate students in a range of settings (Charles, 2016; Domakin & Forrester, 2018; Freeman, 2013; Keough, 2016; Roux, 2011). Unfortunately, creating a specific set of criteria for every possible placement setting would be a formidable undertaking, and possibly unrealistic task (Brannon, 2014). Therefore, for standard evaluation forms to be a reliable and valid way of assessing and comparing student ability, best practice would require tailoring the forms to the type of placement setting or using them as informative tools rather than as grading rubrics (Brannon, 2014).

Tillema et al. (2011) note that a lack of clear guidelines and grading rules make standardized assessment difficult for those who supervise practice and point out that a lack of clear and specific direction about what to appraise compounds this issue. Students also report being confused by a lack of clarity and direction, when there is an absence of clearly defined feedback and marking criteria (Keough, 2016; LaDonna et al., 2017; Roux, 2011).

Brannon (2014) found that instructors and supervisors support the need for better assessment tools to evaluate student performance but agree that any official grades should be assigned by the educational program or through a collaborative process. Domakin and Forrester (2018) pointed out that marked or graded assessments of performance are generally avoided in human services as it is difficult to achieve consistency because of the variations in practice settings, range of student abilities, differences in supervisor training and experience, and the eclectic nature of client-student interactions. Ultimately, these researchers conclude with the statement that "the ability to deliver practice is perhaps the ultimate test for a social work

student: there can be no more authentic assessment task. That is why demonstrating skills in practice are (sic) widely regarded as the pinnacle of assessment practice" (p. 76).

Participatory Assessment

Participatory assessment defined. Participatory assessment (or triangulated assessment) involves students' input in the grading or evaluation process by amalgamating student reflections, supervisor input, and instructor oversight for comprehensive appraisals of student practice (Borders, Brown & Purqason, 2015; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Chui, 2010; Mumm 2014). This kind of assessment holds that the environment of practice is important to learning and that knowledge, thinking, and learning are actively situated in this experience. Assessing with a participatory approach allows for both description and judgement to be included (as opposed to just judgement of student information in written format) and respects the value and knowledge of all the participants (Cooper & Ord, 2014).

This contextual approach emphasizes the importance of the various participants, the culture, and the physical environment as part of the learning opportunity, and also allows room to consider the evolving interaction between all the participants on site (Durning & Artino, 2011). Participatory assessments are most effective when they are part of an on-going process of dialogue and partnership by the practicum participants (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Durning & Artino, 2011).

Rodríguez-Gómez et al. (2012) state that "recent research in the context of university learning insists on the need to develop the students' ability to regulate their own learning processes by means of active participation in assessment procedures . . . and advocate for the importance of the active participation of students in assessment processes" (p. 1). The presumption behind this approach is that through the attainment of self-evaluation skills, students

will be able to independently learn and think critically about how they engage in practice throughout their careers. Rodríguez-Gómez et al. state that effectively implementing participatory procedures requires that assessment protocols need to be regarded as a formative learning activity (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Rodríguez-Gómez et al., 2012).

Cooper and Ord (2014) studied a carefully constructed participatory process where a "critical review of practice"(p. 523) concentrated on a distinct piece of work completed by students at the practicum placement. Viewing students as active partners in the assessment process, the authors contend that effective student learning requires interactions between students and supervisors where students reflect on and assess their practice with others (and are concurrently assessed by others) in order to demonstrate their ability to critically review their own practice competence. Students are also encouraged to articulate their understanding of theory as it directly relates to their practice placement during their critical review (Rodríguez-Gómez et al., 2012; Cooper & Ord, 2014).

In Cooper and Ord's (2014) study, students reviewed their planning and delivery of services and critiqued their own practice skills during a meeting with supervisors and instructors present. At the end of this process participants decided on their marks, then negotiated for their final grades in an open and deliberate manner. (It is likely this process could be used without specific grading criteria and adapted to developmental or competencies-based assessments as well.) In engaging in this collaborative endeavour, learning and context are not separated and the focus is on the construction of knowledge over time (Borders et al., 2015; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Rodríguez-Gómez et al., 2012). Cooper and Ord state that

> the motivation to change our assessment regime also derives from a desire to challenge the assumption that we cannot accurately grade practice and therefore

> produce an assessment regime which better reflects students' actual abilities as practitioners. (p. 521)

The benefits of participatory assessment. The benefits of the participatory approach include the active involvement of students themselves, a demonstration of students' self-assessment ability in practice, the enhancement of student understanding and reflective development, as well as the opportunity to value the knowledge and ability of others (Borders et al., 2015; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Durning & Artino, 2011; Rodríguez-Gómez et al., 2012). Plus, this process gives students the opportunity to learn about self-evaluation in practice and develop long-term reflection strategies. Furthermore, the process is empowering for students and supervisors as the role of grading or evaluating work is offered to all participants, rather than being left to the academic institution alone. Rodríguez-Gómez et al. (2012) found that participatory assessment processes encourage students to:

- engage in reflexive, critical and independent thinking processes;
- build knowledge based on evaluating different solutions to different problems;
- learn self-sufficiency and direction of one´s own learning;
- practice discussion, debate, and negotiation in work place settings;
- and develop self-directed learning and self-confidence.

Along similar lines, Cooper and Ord (2014) discovered students preferred the active role in their assessments and appreciated the interactive, reflective process, and the sense of ownership and responsibility for their own learning outcomes. The participatory process also provided for work skills in action to be assessed, rather than relying on writing ability that is often a significant part of written reflective assessments.

The supervisors who engaged in participatory assessment also approved of the joint learning experience and were not concerned about the amount of time it required (an initial concern of the researchers) (Cooper & Ord, 2014). Both students and supervisors learned how to evaluate their practice, noticed that learning and context were not separate, and concurred that knowledge could actually be constructed as part of the learning experience. Lastly, Cooper and Ord noted that the process helped to build trust with supervisors and instructors, and that the final student/supervisor grades that were proposed aligned with the opinion of others.

The limits of using participatory assessment. While participatory assessment appears to offer many benefits, there are some challenges associated with the method. The obvious concern is the time and resources that are required to implement this kind of evaluation (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Rodríguez-Gómez et al., 2012). Rodríguez-Gómez et al. stated that participatory assessment practices are complex and require significant time and planning on the part of instructors and supervisors. Cooper and Ord (2014) noted that, when the final grades of students that engaged in the participatory assessment were compared to the grades of a control group, students appeared to have higher grades on average. These researchers attributed this grading difference to possible marking confidence, more accurate assessment, and marks that better reflect discrete student projects and their situated experience. On the other hand, the higher grades could be related to student bias and possibly due to the perceptible reflection on the supervisors' skills and engagement in the process (Cooper & Ord, 2014).

Student Portfolio

Student portfolio defined. In general, student portfolios involve a more formalized and structured approach to self-evaluation that contains an organized collection of items that demonstrate students' skills, practice ability, and knowledge (Husu, Toom, & Patrikainen, 2008;

Keough, 2016). The portfolio provides students with a means to demonstrate they have achieved learning objectives and met the required outcomes of the practicum placement (Joseph & Brennan, 2013; Keough, 2016).

For practicum purposes, a portfolio is a self-assessment and evaluation tool that demonstrates professional growth and goal achievement over time, while providing a framework for collaboratively assessing student growth and performance (Husu et al., 2008; Joseph & Brennan, 2013). Portfolios should contain materials that are connected to clearly stated goals, and to indicators that these goals are being met, and should contain evidence of students' reflections on their areas of strength and challenge and their professional development (Joseph & Brennen, 2013; Keough, 2016). Importantly, a portfolio can demonstrate student learning and the achievement of goals over time (Joseph & Brennen, 2013).

Benefits of student portfolios. There are a number of benefits to employing this person-centered learning tool (Husu et al., 2008). Husu et al. (2008) and Joseph and Brennen (2013) reported that in using student portfolios for assessment purposes, students can define and assess their own learning goals, demonstrate their growth and learning in a variety of ways, display their results in a many creative formats, and can use the portfolio to stimulate in depth conversations with their instructors and supervisors. Furthermore, with this personalized assessment method, students can incorporate their own philosophies, beliefs, and understanding of practice as they relate to it (Husu et al., 2008).

A well-designed portfolio describes students' learning opportunities and provides evidence that students have achieved their learning goals and are able to explain how their field work aligns with their course materials (Husu et al., 2008; Joseph & Brennen, 2013). This concrete approach is a way for practicum learners to demonstrate the acquisition of practice-

based skills and knowledge, as well as self-evaluate their areas of strength and confidence while highlighting practice areas that could be further improved (Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012).

In studying online video portfolios, Joseph and Brennan (2013) discovered other benefits of using portfolio for assessing students (in this case student teachers) in practicum settings. The researchers found that this assessment instrument provided supervisors and students with a common language that they could use for identifying and analyzing students' work. They also accentuated the fact that this kind of virtual evaluative tool could decrease the cost of time and travel, as well as facilitate supervision and assessment in remote practicum settings.

Learning portfolios can contain material that focuses on areas that allow students to demonstrate growth and competence. Students can be creative and capture moments of practice that are meaningful to them in a variety of ways (Husu et al., 2008). Because students compile samples of their work that they are sharing with supervisors, students dedicate the most time for the project, and can work on the portfolio away from the practicum setting (Husu et al., 2008; Joseph & Brennen, 2013). In evaluating the guided self-reflection that is a part of the portfolio process, Husu at al. reported that students are capable of formal self-evaluation on many levels: (a) students are able to reflect on and question their practice abilities; (b) they can examine the effect of social and cultural factors relevant to their practicum setting; (c) and students are able to consider the importance of self-reflection in their future practice. Gursansky and Le Sueur (2012) also note that portfolios can also be used by students to display their own unique identity and practice preferences in the field.

Limitations of student portfolios. As with any assessment tool (self-guided or otherwise), there are some limitations. A lack of evaluative research about the use of portfolios is problematic, and because self-assessment has generally been studied with qualitative methods,

the data that has been gathered is not generalizable (Luk, 2008). Additionally, different skill levels and practice experience of practicum students will affect the outcomes of self-assessment tools, as students with more experience will be able to reflect on a greater range of practice and therefore be more able to track their growth over time. Furthermore, a certain amount of personal skill and previous practice experience is required to critically examine one's own work, and view this from multiple standpoints (Husu et al., 2008; Luk, 2008). While self-reflection can stimulate insight and promote theoretical learning, continuing to develop skills in practice settings requires that students act upon the new information and incorporate this learning in their practice.

Luk (2008) states that for students to learn through reflective assessment they need to critically reflect on their practice in the field rather than simply describe their practice. According to Luk, self-assessments should

> reflect the practitioners' constant engagement in critical and multi-perspective interactions and reasoning with the contexts they were situated in. Reflections that only reveal technical and practical application of pre-learnt skills, or attempts to interpret and/or resolve conflicting issues from a single perspective will not be judged to be high-level reflections. (p. 626)

Husu et al.'s (2008) study points to similar findings. Their analysis shows that students must actively seek out the evidence of their learning, link it to prior knowledge, and then move forward with new knowledge and insight into their practice. In this way, students' prior ways of practice are reflected upon and possibly challenged, and as a result, new ways of thinking and practicing are integrated (Husu et al., 2008).

Another challenge associated with using portfolios as an assessment tool is the possible reservations supervisors or instructors may have when it comes to evaluating this creative and

reflective project (Husu et al., 2008; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Luk, 2008). Concerns over judging creative and writing skills, mixed with possible angst over measurement of how students' actual reflective skills are progressing, can create an emotional conundrum for the assessors themselves (Husu et al., 2008; Luk, 2008). While a grading rubric may eliminate some of this subjective doubt, the uniqueness of the submitted projects is likely to continue to confound the assessors who are working with these portfolios (Chui, 2010).

Gursansky and Le Sueur (2012) noted that student portfolios are not designed as a tool that can replace on site supervision and connections with instructors. These authors also point out that research "findings strongly support the use of portfolios in student learning but are doubtful of their value in student assessment" (p. 923). Gursansky and Le Sueur therefore highlight the need for inclusion of a variety of evaluative protocols, including activities, tutorials, and portfolios for effective review of practicum abilities. Lastly, they suggest that the creation of a portfolio is, in essence, driven by the need to demonstrate competency in the field and as a result of this may not present the most accurate understanding of self and learning.

Formal Assessments Summarized

This part of the literature review focused on formal assessments including direct observation, the viewing of audio or video recordings, standardized measures of assessment, participatory assessment, and student portfolios. This review showed that formalized assessments can be used as learning tools, or as grading devices, although whether or not to assign grades for field experiences appears to be contentious issue in human services (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Domakin & Forrester, 2018). Domakin and Forrester note that grading in human service practicums has been avoided "as it is difficult to achieve consistency between the variable contexts and requirements of real practice encounters" (p. 67).

Cooper and Ord (2014) found that the assessment modalities they researched were rather narrow and primarily focused on the reflective written work of students. Additionally, these authors noted that formal or standardized assessments were rarely used and that practice-based skills were not regularly observed being applied in the field. Hatcher et al. (2012) found similar concerns and stated that there was little use of formal or informal assessments to track student progress, and that supervisors reported that training to assess students was insufficient prior to student placement. Hatcher et al. (2012) further explain than relying on student verbal reports about their field work is a limited form of assessment, especially early in these students' careers. These authors highly recommend more direct observation methods for supervisory purposes. Given these findings, it is likely that administering a variety of assessments that include formal and informal evaluations will help students understand their practice strength and challenge areas, while continuing to gain practice competence in the field (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Hatcher et al., 2012).

Potential Practicum Assessment Topics Requiring Further Study

While more research needs to be done on effective practicum assessments in field settings, Bogo (2015) states that "we can say with some degree of confidence that, in conjunction with abundant conceptual writings and practice wisdom, we are moving towards a robust pedagogy for field education" (p. 319). Hatcher et al. (2012), at the end of their comprehensive study of practicum site coordinators, concluded that communication and relationships with supervisors appears to be positive overall, and some challenges in practicum settings should be expected.

At the same time, a number of issues related to practicum training emerged in the findings. If structured feedback is essential to student learning, the act of relaying observational

information needs to be a deliberate component of practicum placement (McElwee et al., 2002). Students have indicated that they appreciate the evaluation of their work during field placements, yet some students have expressed dissatisfaction with the process and type of feedback being received. Moreover, student concerns and anxieties about assessment in practicum outline the need for clear, explicit, and collaborative evaluation processes (Bogo, 2015; Hatcher et al., 2012; Keough, 2016; McElwee et al., 2002; Miehls et al., 2013; Tillema et al., 2011).

Beyond deciding which assessments work best for which students at what level of practice, other skill and resource limitations may impact assessment protocols. Bogo (2015) understands that "limited resources of time impact and constrain this crucial dimension" (p. 320). The personal styles and skill level of supervisors are also likely to influence feedback and assessment in practicum, and possibly impact the effectiveness of evaluative tools (Bogo, 2015; Chui 2010). Importantly, students may feel they haven't received adequate supervision to assess their work and wish to receive more input from instructors and supervisors while in practicum placements (Chui, 2010). Chui also brought up the point that instructors who do not spend time at the agency site may not fully appreciate the organizational and other constraints based on the settings' resource profile which could possibly impact student practice options and intervention choices.

It is possible that a lack of correspondence between supervisors and instructors may contribute to assessment challenges (Miehls et al., 2013). Valid assessments require regular communication involving students, supervisors, and instructors from the beginning to the end of practicum (Bogo, 2015; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012). This communication requires a considerable time commitment. Furthermore, clear objectives and concrete learning outcomes need to be predefined and monitored continuously throughout the placement (Brannon, 2014;

Chui, 2010; Cooper & Ord, 2014; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Hatcher et al., 2012; Miehls et al., 2013). McElwee et al. (2002) caution that, should student performance not monitored by instructors with specific standards in mind, students may complete practicums with a range of abilities.

Chui (2010), Cooper and Ord (2014), Hatcher et al. (2012), Kogan et al. (2012), and Zeira and Schiff (2010) all found a number of discrepancies in student assessment methods that they studied and offered the following possible reasons for the incongruities: the differing practice at practicum sites, focusing on informal learning, and placing less emphasis on rigorous methods of evaluation. Additionally, Chui (2010) and Hatcher at al. (2012) reported inconsistencies in the ways which supervisors and students applied assessment criteria and Roux et al. (2011) determined that evaluation procedures for most psychology programs were subjective and focused on more global characteristics of student performance, rather than program specific competencies. With that in mind, Roux et al. proposed that evaluation should include multi-method assessments to provide a more accurate picture of student outcomes; potential assessment methods could include qualitative and quantitative measures, information based on observation and recollection, portfolios, traditional exams, work samples, clinical write ups, and so forth.

Some settings may adapt well to formal assessment protocols, whereas some placements may require a more flexible and informal approach. For example, in CYC students practice in such a broad range of settings that working with a single assessment method is likely to pose considerable challenges. Perhaps it is therefore prudent to ensure that practicum students and supervisors are supported in learning via a number of formal and informal assessment modalities (Charles, 2016; Freeman 2013; Keough, 2016; McElwee et al., 2002).

In a study that evaluated practicum practices in CYC, Keough (2016) identified two notable areas worth considering when it comes to student assessment and related challenges. One finding confirmed that there is a broad range of instructors' qualifications; educators who were overseeing the practicum had credentials ranging from diplomas to master's degrees. The second finding involved the frequency of on-site supervision by the instructors, or the lack of it, and that supervision time and engagement on site generally declined with student advancement. This study also noted the vast differences in evaluation structure and methods between programs. Mumm (2006) previously noted similar findings with regard to supervisory skills in social work training. She pointed out that "80% of the field instructors in this study report that they supervise based on how they were supervised [and concluded that] it is the responsibility of both current field instructors and practice educators to use a variety of methods to teach skills" (Mumm, 2006, p. 88).

Maynard, Mertz, and Fortune (2015) and Zuchowski (2015) explored the use of 'off-site supervision' to reduce time, minimize placement setting demands, and financial strain involved with practicum placements. These arrangements refer supervision to people qualified in the field of practice, who do not work at the placement setting. These specially appointed professionals that supervise students at their placements and ensure that supervision and assessments meet the standards of the profession. This creative model of supervision is still in the early stages of exploration, and not yet proven to be an effective alternative to current supervision methods. The hope is that this method holds potential value in reducing the pressure on practicum setting supervisors (Maynard et al., 2015; Zuchowski, 2015).

Some studies have explored ways to enhance practicum with online tools. These have included studies on web-based blogs and portfolios (Venville, Cleak & Bould, 2017), web

enhanced supervision (Bulger, 2006), and other such supplementary methods. Interestingly, the research in this domain underscores the same requirements for all practicum placements that have been thoroughly reviewed in this document: clear goals and objectives, concrete learning plans and activities, and defined assessment models along with collaborative approaches (Bulger, 2006). Most of the research in this realm is in the preliminary stages and requires more study and interpretation.

Brannon (2014) highlights the need for continuing to explore assessment in field placements, including the delineation of assessment roles of instructors and supervisors. Brannon recommends uniform rubrics for evaluative purposes, which ironically, have been proven to be less effective in eclectic human services settings (Keough, 2016). On the other hand, Brannon's study does expose the fact that targeted research is still lacking in the domain of effective assessment in practicum settings. Other authors highlight the lack of research in this domain as well and ask future researchers to focus on evaluation methods that assess the application of knowledge, rather than just the acquisition of facts (Cooper & Ord, 2014).

Conclusion: Assessment Models in Practicum Settings

Several studies that have been reviewed above point out that assessment should be a part of a productive environment situated in a culture of learning, rather than grading. In other words, assessment tools should engage students, supervisors, and instructors in meaningful conversations that promote skill development while identifying areas that require additional learning and improvement (Allen & Wright, 2014; Bogo, 2015; Brannon, 2014; Chui, 2010; Domakin & Forrester, 2014; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012; Mumm, 2006; Rodríguez-Gómez et al., 2012; Tillema, 2011). Research has identified that a lack of understanding about how assessments are being used, and unclear criteria or performance standards on which students are

being evaluated can hinder learning (Chui, 2010; Miehls et al., 2013, 2013; Kogan 2012; Tillema, 2011). Tillema et al. propose that clearly articulating the role of assessment in practicum processes will facilitate the acceptance of critical feedback.

Tillema et al. (2011) reported that students, supervisors, and instructors "seem to have the most confidence in a mentor-guided, judgment-oriented approach to assessment that will provide students with further opportunities for improvement in performance and reflection" (p. 140). Furthermore, Cooper and Ord (2014), Rodríguez-Gómez et al. (2012) and Tillema et al. (2011) all concluded that student, supervisor, and instructor relationships are improved when assessment tools are positioned with the formative function of supporting learning and skill development in practice.

The effective determining of student competence and providing students, supervisors, and instructors with reliable evaluative, reflective, and learning measures have been identified as essential factors in the assessment of student performance in practicum (Chui, 2010; McElwee et al., 2002). Ideally, assessment is a long-term and ongoing activity (Bogo, 2015; Chui, 2010; McElwee et al., 2002). The timing and nature of the feedback offered, along with employing an assortment of assessment methods, is likely to offer students the best learning opportunities and involve a variety of ways to impart constructive information (Brannon, 2014; Chui, 2010; Rodríguez-Gómez et al., 2012; Tillema, 2011). Conceivably, the use of a variety of assessments methods in different settings, along with evaluations from several supervisors, will support a range of student learning styles and developmental abilities and promote desirable learning outcomes over time (Roux, 2011). This way, knowledge can be integrated and expanded in practicum placements, and students, supervisors, and instructors can continue to collaboratively

respond to an extensive range of changing and complex environments that are present in practice (Cooper & Ord, 2014; Gursansky & Le Sueur, 2012).

Practicum Supervision in Child and Youth Care:

A Guide for Site Supervisors

Sheila Awai, 2018

University of Victoria

Table of Contents

Guide for Site Supervisors

Introduction

The objective of this guide is to assist practicum supervisors as they create a learning environment that promotes student development and practice competence in field settings. Assessment models used in the field are also reviewed to clarify the purpose and role of various assessment methods used in practicum placements. The intention of the guide is to support community practitioners that have dedicated their time and skill to furthering the development and practice abilities of the next generation of students. The first section of the guide focuses on the learning environment, supervision requisites, and academic oversight that support practicum students and supervisors in the field. The second section outlines a variety of assessment tools used in human services practicum settings, as well as how and when those methods can best be applied to encourage and evaluate student learning.

This document is intended for informational purposes, and can be adapted to the particular practice setting as required. Prior to student placement, the planning process should include written agreements that clarify the roles and expectations of the supervisor and include descriptions of the assessment responsibilities during practicum.

The information contained herein was gathered from research based on practicums in a variety of human services settings including CYC, social work, psychology, nursing, and teaching. There are an incredibly diverse number of settings and situations that students may have the opportunity to learn in. Much of the research in this domain is still evolving and may not be generalizable, valid, and/or reliable. The guide was limited to what is currently known and what areas of practice have been formally reviewed and researched thus far. Some practices and assessment styles may be more suited to formal placements, and/or may require more time and resources that can be offered in all settings.

The Elements of a Formative Learning Environment

Supervisors can develop strategies for making deliberate and meaningful use of structured and impromptu opportunities for supervision that occur in practice. This kind of supervision practice is called a 'daily life events' approach and aligns well with the values of a developmental, person-centered learning environment. With this methodology in mind, supervisors impart a number of transferable skills to students on site.

Developmental underpinnings

Participating in practicum is an essential part of an educational experience and required to prepare competent, effective, and ethical practitioners. This hands-on learning experience also provides the foundations for continual learning and growth on and off the job site. Learning interactions between supervisors and students should be intentional, well thought-out and purposeful. Ideally, students are placed in the kind of service environments in which they intend to pursue their careers.

Through relational and direct supervision, students learn and become confident practitioners. In the early stages of practicum learning, student confidence is built by emphasizing strengths rather than focusing on deficit areas. In doing so, student concerns and anxieties can be minimized as they experience their on-site successes. Building upon students' strengths as they develop skills leads to competency in the field. This cooperative practice style helps foster personal growth and develops unique practice abilities at a pace that is suited to the particular individual.

To help students move theoretical ideas into experience, and facilitate the application of knowledge in field settings, students may begin their practicum training with predefined educational goals and learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are statements that describe

essential skills and abilities that students hope to achieve during placement. Ensuring that learning outcomes are met requires that students demonstrate their practice skills to supervisors during the practicum placement. Learning outcomes should be geared towards the developmental needs of practicum students at that given time. Fostering a developmental learning approach, requires collaborative relationships, positive learning environments, time to observe and debrief with experienced practitioners, and opportunities to practice with clients.

Collaborative Relationships

Optimizing learning and development in practicum settings requires a working alliance grounded in positive, productive working relationships. This working alliance is akin to the secure attachment that is foundational in human services practice. Mentoring and support from the supervisor fosters the development of practical skills. Factors that contribute to a successful working relationship include a non-judgemental and timely approach along with a positive and collaborative relationship. A step-by-step framework that helps establish a collaborative relationship includes:

1. Taking the time to discuss students' individual learning plans and goals to ensure that these are realistic and relevant to the students' career plans.
2. Ensuring that students demonstrate a high level of competence in the field.
3. Offering mental and emotional support, especially for students who are challenged in this domain.
4. Mentoring and modeling that helps students consider and develop skills to maintain a healthy work/life balance.

There are also a number of traits that are characteristic of effective supervisors. These personal qualities include the ability to role model, presenting with confidence, acting with professionalism, combined with being flexible, creative, positive, friendly, and accepting.
A supervisory relationship should include conscious interactions where active reflection on the part of both participants continues throughout the practicum. Supervision that takes place during natural practicum activities whereby students and supervisors can focus on interactions with clients 'in the moment' ensures that contextual understanding of practice is garnered.

Within a collaborative model, academic learning goals will need to be considered and supervisory roles will require adaptations to the range of student abilities. The skills of supervisors should also be considered as supervisors themselves can experience the same anxiety and performance related doubts that students experience. There are three levels or stages of supervision for students. In all three stages, an effective supervisor-student relationship is required, with the power balance and practice roles shifting as student competence develops.

At the first level or stage, supervisors adopt the expert role in order to help students execute safe client interactions while learning to practice skillfully and ethically. In this early level, supervisors maintain an authoritative professional stance, rather than a personal one, as this can help to establish a predictable and boundaried learning environment. With this approach students can become stuck in the subordinate role and therefore remain unsure of their abilities when the supervisor's external control subsides. The additional stages below prevent this relational dependency.

The second stage of professional development assumes that students have developed some mastery in their practice and will require less direct guidance from the supervisor. Support for learners at this stage requires that supervisors let go of the expert stance while enabling

students to apply their own skills and ideas in practice. This means that when engaging with students in the second stage, supervisors should encourage them to consider their own individualized, independent approaches rather than sticking with rigid practice paradigms.

During the third stage, a collegial relationship develops as the practitioners become more equal in their skills and practice abilities. At this stage, students are encouraged to act as competent workers that contribute to practice in leadership roles. At this point, having students design workshops and new programs, and engage in other challenging activities will help them continue to learn and grow as independent practitioners.

Although supervisory roles may shift as students develop practice proficiency, a collaborative relationship must continue to underpin the learning placement. Careful observation and adaptation will be required to support student learning goals and to determine appropriate tasks for students to manage. Development is not a linear process, and through the creation of a learning alliance, supervisors can assist students in moving through anxieties, increasing their confidence in their abilities as practitioners, and ensure that growth continues throughout the practicum placement.

Positive Learning Environments

Positive environments are foundational to a prosperous learning atmosphere. Belonging to an extended community enhances student learning; therefore, the entire placement site should be considered as part of the learning environment. Welcoming positive environments that view teaching and learning as beneficial for all parties include high expectations of students' ability and trust that they will contribute positively at the agency.

There are aspects of supervisory approaches that contribute to positive learning environments:

- Supervisors who promote and encourage risk-taking and reflection, and then provide constructive feedback.
- Supervisors that view mistakes as learning opportunities rather than a lack of ability.
- Supervisors who practice from a strength-based, non-judgmental approach.
- Supervisors who create an adaptive environment that allows for increasing responsibilities with demonstrated growth.
- Supervisors that accept responsibility, act assertively, pass on the language and culture of the profession, and are flexible yet consistent.
- Supervisors who promote the unique development of students and ensure that students have a voice in work-place interactions.

A quality learning environment contains many factors, which may or may not be present in every setting. Focusing on the environment itself prior to placement, and ensuring there are consistent routines and practices, support learning and student development.

Time to Observe and Debrief with Experienced Practitioners

In order to ensure they have the time and resources to support student learning and growth prior to site placement, potential supervisors need to be aware of the actual time and practice commitment that are required when agreeing to a field placement.To fully benefit from a practicum placement, students need access to and interactions with supervisors who are mentoring them. Modeling, providing information in a variety of forms, and assigning tasks, are regular supervisory activities in practicum placements. Regular reflective discussions are a crucial part of the learning process and require that supervisors actually access and observe student-client interactions during the students' placement. This 'quality time' is required for

student and supervisor collaboration and assessment. Student goals and plans also require time to evaluate achievements and examine areas of challenge.

Taking the time to meet and converse with supervisors, as well as observing and debriefing with practitioners who are completing actual interventions, helps students to reflect on and improve their own work. When students work with clients, opportunities to receive feedback on their practice is helpful to both students and their clients. Students are generally open and willing to engage with supervisors, especially if the feedback is offered the contexts in which they are working.

Debriefing with supervisors also provides students with the chance to discuss and rehearse interventions and receive feedback prior to student-client interactions. By practicing intervention options with students in advance, feedback is formulated on the actual demonstration of practice skills, and new or constructive information can be integrated and rehearsed again for learning purposes. Through these targeted practice examples, supervisors can ensure that students are practicing effectively and appropriately, while offering them opportunities to enhance abilities and troubleshoot problem areas.

Opportunities to Practice with Clients

Practicum settings are the ideal mechanism in which students can learn the application, integration, and the other discrete entities of a particular practice. Preparing effective practitioners requires not only learning about the knowledge base for the practice but also having opportunities to learn and integrate theory and apply it in their practice. Students report that the least effective method of promoting practice competence is lectures and appreciate watching their supervisors and other professionals in real-time situations instead. Using a variety of

learning experiences, while considering supervision strengths and abilities, is likely to produce effective student learning opportunities.

Developmental Learning Environment Summarized

Hands-on field experiences support student learning and outcomes by offering them opportunities to develop skills and apply classroom based-learning. In order for students to be able to apply their skills in practice settings, they must be able to engage in numerous guided and supervised interactions in the practicum setting. There are a number of elements that contribute to a developmental learning environment in practicum placement settings. In this section of the guide, some of the factors identified by students and supervisors that lead to favorable practice outcomes included the establishment of collaborative relationships, the creation of positive learning environments, the provision of time to observe and debrief with experienced practitioners, and the opportunity to actually practice with clients in the field. This kind of developmental learning environment parallels the values and approaches in educational settings and promotes congruent and continuous learning opportunities in the field. Having outlined factors in the learning environment that promote student learning, the next section focuses on the aspects of supervision that further enhance the learning experience of students.

Supervision Requisites for Effective Human Services Field Placements

When students are placed in community settings, they are likely to be exposed to a variety of working cultures and professional identities. The ability of human service practitioners to work in a number of diverse settings helps instructors align student goals and career trajectories with placement opportunities, and likely offers students an understanding of various roles in human services. The practice areas that have been determined to support practicum students can be categorized into three broad areas of focus: supervisors who have the time and

ability to model and mentor, supervisors who demonstrate practice standards and relationships, as well as supervisors who can communicate clearly and relay explicit guidelines for the practice setting.

Present Supervisors Who Have Time to Guide, Model, and Mentor

'Being available' is central to the role of practicum instructors and supervisors. The quality of the student/supervisor relationship has a key influence on students' learning and general level of satisfaction with the practicum placement. Access and availability to supervisors, more time for reflective conversations, and improved elucidation of the connections between theory and practice are required for optimal student learning. Constructive feedback and reflection, as well as troubleshooting challenges, requires time for meaningful conversations. Time is also required for the discussion and development of the supervisor-student relationship itself.

Communication and clarity in supervisor-student conversations is a pivotal part of the student-supervisor process. It is important to remember that even students who are mature, independent, and reasonably self-assured can find that the combination of academic rigor, continuous self-examination, and the acquisition and mastery of a new role can lead to doubts about practice abilities. A collaborative and open supervisory relationship can help reduce practice-based stress and minimize student doubt.

Practice Styles and Relationships

A relationship with a proficient practitioner is the basis for a rewarding practicum experience. Effective supervision results in students feeling more confident, competent, and empowered. The working relationship established during practicum experiences is a significant part of the learning and development process and needs to be fostered in a purposeful manner.

There are five skill areas in practice that students deemed as being important to their learning: personal connectedness, role interpretation, supervision strategies, collaboration, and reflection.

1. Personal Connectedness is defined by students as the ability of the supervisor to make connections with the student, engage in personal and working conversations, as well as help students deal with challenges while feeling recognized, valued, and acknowledged. This connectedness empowers both parties, provides a working foundation, and can lead to a better understanding of practice over time.
2. Supervisors contribute to the understanding of practice roles (i.e. role interpretation) by defining roles and responsibilities, articulating expectations, and purposefully influencing students' practice. This overt explanation of practice fosters student-supervisor trust, decreases ambiguity in practicum settings, builds respect and rapport, and increases the confidence of both parties.
3. Supervision strategies that students appreciated, included the initial adoption of expert and novice roles, that later shifted with developing competence. Other factors include supporting students' decision making, offering advice and encouragement, as well as mentoring students in practice. These strategies reduce misunderstandings, provide a secure based for development, and make consultation and collaboration easier.
4. Students felt supervisors who could work collaboratively with them fostered a variety of practice abilities including planning interventions, building on learning, reflecting on learning needs, and linking theory to practice. This collaborative style promotes self-awareness, leads to practice improvement, and enhances the learning environment.

5. Being able to critically examine practice is another ability that students feel is important to their learning experience. Supervisors, who can purposefully reflect on complex situations, re-examine their own beliefs and practices, and who can pose questions to students reinforce student learning. Skills acquisition that is connected to this reflective style of interaction includes promoting self-awareness, developing habits of self-reflections, and grounding knowledge of practice.

Guidance for the Supervisory Process

Transparent and accurate communication is essential prior to and during field placement to ensure student and host needs and goals can be addressed. With increasing student numbers and expanding academic requirements, practicum placements can create extra demands for the host organization. A lack of clarity surrounding practicum course instructors' and site supervisors' roles may place even more demands on practicum supervisors. Prior to practicum placement, written, explicit agreements should cover the expected experiences and duties of the student, how and how often evaluative feedback will be given, how communication will occur between the two parties, how problems with students will be dealt with, what records will be kept, and other important learning elements.

Students support this formal approach and indicate that they prefer a structured, clinical, and more directive style of supervision in the field. A well-defined supervisory relationship, with clear expectations and parameters, benefits student learning, even at a graduate level. At times, students require support to understand the role of supervision in the field and may need assistance in making and sustaining these work-based relationships. Fostering knowledge of how and when to access supervision in their placement also helps students engage more effectively in their learning role. Some students have not been

exposed to professional supervision and will benefit from clear direction or modeling on how best to utilize interact with supervisors in the field. Supervisors who are unsure of what to do in their supervisory roles can also seek guidance from experienced mentors and instructors from the learning program as well.

Supervision Requisites for Effective Human Services Field Placements Summarized

The importance of the supervisory role in practicum placements cannot be understated. Themes for effective supervision include supervisors who clearly communicate and define explicit guidelines and standards of the field setting, supervisors who uphold professional practice standards and supervisors who actually have the time to mentor students in practicum settings. These supervision elements contribute to positive student learning and practice outcomes. These elements are best combined with a positive learning environment for optimal student learning opportunities.

Academic Oversight

Consistency and strategic planning need to be part of the practicum process, and a coordinated learning plan that links the placement work with the academic structure and theory is necessary to offering students the best opportunities for successful learning outcomes. In order to reduce the workload of the host site, while ensuring that the values of practice embedded in the educational program are upheld, the academic program can support the practicum placement. Training and supervisory guidance, pre-planning and student preparation along with ongoing student support are all crucial organizational activities that the academic program can offer to students and supervisors.

Training and Supervisory Support

Focusing on the tripartite supervisor - educational program - practicum course instructor relationship, and making the time to nourish this connection, is a critical element of practicum placement. Strong involvement from the educational institution, and support in linking theory to actual client interactions has been determined to decrease educational confusion in practicum settings. Educational program support is required to mitigate the demands and challenges of hosting students on site. Teaching supervisors how to support and encourage student learning may also be offered and is often appreciated.

Being available to assist supervisors as they learn and develop in their roles, offering supervisory training to assist in working with various students, creating supportive networks for the placement host, and making learning resources available online and in other formats are some of the ways that the educational institution can support the on-site placement. Linking the competencies, values, and theoretical underpinnings that are taught in the educational program to those that prevail in the practicum site can also benefit the individuals who are involved. When educational programs support on-site supervision, educational instructors can work with placement supervisors to ensure that students achieve educational objectives and provide appropriate learning parameters with evaluative tools to ensure optimal student development.

Pre-planning and Student Preparation

Prior to practicum placement a substantial amount of planning is required to ensure an effective learning situation. When analyzing a possible placement, students' individual learning needs and the contributions students can offer to settings need to be reviewed. Another factor that should be considered prior to placement is a review of the clients who may be meeting with students to ensure that students are capable of practicing competently, effectively, and ethically with these clients.

The pre-planning process should involve securing a supervisor with relevant qualifications for students and their educational goals. After securing sites and supervisors, meetings should be arranged for students, instructors, and supervisors to discuss and clarify expectations of the placement and supervision process. During these meetings various roles, policies, limitations of the placement, and other pertinent details can be addressed. After all this, the crucial next step, is to define how student supervision and assessment sessions will be conducted, including formal, informal, and other communication methods. Finally, negotiating how feedback and evaluation is going to be structured is also an important part of the pre-planning process.

Practicums that take place in multidisciplinary settings may create additional confusion for students, especially at locations where practice roles and supervision norms are varied. Multidisciplinary placements provide students with opportunities to engage in collaborative settings and practice working from a team perspective. Students who practice in these settings report increased skills in documentation, a better understanding of practice roles, and an increase in respect for other practice paradigms. Some students can feel unprepared to manage things in these more complex settings. Preparation is part of a successful experience in these complex, inter-professional, placements; this involves helping students to understand the various professional roles in the agency, and considering and discussing the different roles and the implications for practice. The structure and function of the practicum site is also important to explain to students.

Placement-based learning requires considerable planning and preparation by the educational program and practice supervisors with students learning goals in mind. A lack of preparation can result in educational gaps for students' learning plans and problematic

placements where students do not meet the expectations of the agency. Other student proficiencies that need attention prior to practicum placement include preparing students to engage in reciprocal feedback with the supervisor, addressing ways to deal with the education and power differences on site, and developing adequate conflict resolution skills.

It is important for educational instructors to find sites that align with student learning goals, manage the practicum training overall, provide written training plans to supervisors, ensure there is adequate time to actually work with clients and receive feedback, confirm that supervisors have adequate training and knowledge to work with students, and train students in settings that students are likely to practice in, or transfer skills from, upon graduation. Clearly articulated learning goals are beneficial because from the outset, these goals offer an overt and agreed upon direction that fits with the learning context and sets the stage for the learning/reflexive exercises, which may be undertaken at various times in practicum - including the mid-point and end point evaluations.

Ongoing Student Support

Along with pre-planning and student preparation, ongoing student support from the educational program is also required for practicum learning. Opportunities for students to connect with peers and instructors during practicum placements are a required learning activity and support the onsite learning. This extended community of practice helps foster a deeper understanding of how others experience practice and promotes practice efficacy and competence while offering students with a safe place to air concerns. Engaging in conversations with a broader community provides opportunities to further reflect and continue to construct knowledge and develop a sense of practice identity. The connections also provide students with the chance

to explore areas of practice they find challenging in greater depth while they are in a safe, familiar, and supportive environment.

In overseeing students, educators should be aware that community placement hosts may or may not be able to offer students enough time for learning and/or effective support. While instructors can review the potential work environment of the setting to determine if the site is a good fit for the students involved, students may also have questions about the hosts' views on students and learning and should be invited to consider the nature and culture of the host site with instructors.

If a practicum setting is less than ideal when it comes to fostering a positive environment, mitigation strategies may be considered for the setting. Some students may not be ready to learn in some settings. For example, a work site with high caseloads and few resources may not offer students enough one-to-one supervision time on site and may not meet particular student expectations. With these possibilities in mind, instructors can determine student readiness, review student goals and career plans, offer extra supports, and/or facilitate at least one supportive connection at the placement. On the other hand, if students have particular hopes of working in more structured and legally framed fields of human services work (e.g. child protection, youth custody) creating strategies for working in these environments may be a goal of student learning. These placements may be particularly suitable for advanced students who wish to work on self-care and self-management strategies while building skills and experience in their career area.

Academic Oversight Summarized

In order to foster successful practicum placements that foster student development, educational programs need to support field placements in a variety of ways. Some of the

supportive mechanisms that have been highlighted include the provision of ongoing student support (with options at the practicum setting and within the classroom), engaging in pre-planning and practicum preparation with student skills and strengths in mind, and offering training and oversight for the site placement supervisors.

Conclusion: Practicum Elements that Support Learning

The learning environment, combined with clear supervision protocols and relevant academic oversight contribute to a successful practicum placement. Practicum experiences that include goal orientated learning and pay attention to factors that create growth and change in students, are more likely to produce tangible learning outcomes. Student assessment is another important part of the learning process. The next section in this guide focuses on feedback and assessment in human service practicum placements and reviews the benefits and limitations of a variety of formal and informal assessment methods.

Practicum Assessment Methods

The intention of practicum as part of a program of study is to benefit student learning by applying theoretical knowledge in practice settings, with support and supervision. Commitment from the agency and educational institution is required to provide a practicum placement that allows learners to acquire new skills and integrate classroom theory. Practicum students require evaluation and feedback in a variety of forms and on an ongoing basis. At a more advanced level of practice, graduate students may have clear learning targets and aim to work in settings that enhance and expand their current practice capabilities which require targeted feedback that continues to stimulate student development.

A partnership between students, supervisors, and instructors enables learning and enhances constructive feedback for students. The following section explores assessment in the realm of practicum learning, and reviews models and methods that are currently used to assess a variety of human service students. The type of assessments being used, along with the frequency and implementation of the method, are likely to vary with the course being offered, the academic institution, and with the individual instructors.

Developmental models of assessment. Supervision in practice often includes developmental models of assessment. These models of supervision emphasize the evolving supervision needs of students and supervisors as they develop competence and confidence in practice. These developmental measures presume that professional development follows a series of stages of increasing competence in practice skills. While navigating these sequential stages, students must manage developmental challenges such as increasing their skills and abilities in more complex situations, forming professional practice identities, building confidence in a variety of work related situations, and practicing with less constant or present supervision.

Supervision interventions, in this model, match the developmental level and experience of students and offer a framework to evaluate students' progress over time. The overarching goal of developmental supervision is to provide students with individual, concrete, effective, personally tailored evaluation and feedback in order to promote learning.

Competencies based assessment. Competencies-based approaches in education and training have been extended to many realms of human service work. Competency or objectives-based assessments encourage and evaluate practice related to specific, pre-determined, competencies involving a variety of knowledge-based domains. Models of supervision that follow concrete lists of competencies can help with general assessments and provide a framework for systematizing student performance.

Feedback. Feedback is a critical part of assessment in practicum. Effective feedback is direct, specific, based upon concrete observations, timely, and respectful. The tools with which feedback can be provided can be informal and unstructured and formal and structured in nature and require various amounts of time and different levels of expertise to implement. Students benefit from feedback that comes in a number of formats. The range of these approaches from informal to formal is discussed below.

Assessment options in practicum settings. Practicum placements should offer students opportunities to engage in activities with the objective of connecting, learning, and developing through intentional exposure to practice transactions that incorporate a variety of growth promoting strategies including risk-taking, experimentation, self-reflection, intentional conversations, and constructive feedback. The assessment models that are described below incorporate the above activities.

Informal Assessments

Informal assessments include a variety of techniques used in the field to promote student learning. Some models are interactive and require participation from supervisors, students, and possibly their practicum course instructors. Other assessments can be completed off-site and are generally self-reflective in nature. Informal assessments are directed towards the facilitation of student learning and are used by instructors and supervisors to encourage practitioner development and growth. They can also be used to identify student strengths and weakness with regard to their field work, and to help students reach the next level of practice ability. The informal assessments that are reviewed in this section include ongoing informal dialogue, capturing teachable moments, group supervision, and educational or classroom support. The benefits and limitations of each practice are presented along with a definition of the informal assessment in the realm of human services practice.

Ongoing Informal Dialogue

Ongoing informal dialogue defined. Ongoing informal dialogue, or formative feedback, includes the reflective and intentional conversations that happen between students, supervisors, instructors, and other individuals that are intended to promote student learning during practicum. Informal dialogue can take place casually as the student works at the site and can include scheduled sessions that provide students with opportunities to seek and receive feedback. Learning conversations in general require respect, mutual trust, and a willingness to listen and risk one's opinions.

Informal dialogue can be used as an effective assessment tool. Engaging in deliberate conversations with students makes student thinking transparent, and by doing so, student knowledge can be questioned, examined, and shaped constructively. Overall, it has been found

that informal dialogue can reveal students' strengths and challenges in conceptual, practical and social domains, and provide evidence of their practice abilities.

Interactions with supervisors, peers, and other workers at the practicum can offer students opportunities to discuss practice and receive feedback; these casual conversations can be a good way for students to supplement learning as well. Many human service settings are multi-faceted and offer less direct supervision as students gain competency; this leads to informal dialogue being based on student observations, thoughts, and reflections instead.

Benefits of ongoing informal dialogue. Discussion and dialogue are commonly used learning techniques that can be employed by experienced and less experienced supervisors. Students report that ongoing and meaningful dialogue is a helpful part of learning process. This practice builds supervisor to student relationships, which can lead to increased student confidence and trust. Informal dialogue can be embedded in strengths-based and developmentally responsive protocols and also values student and supervisor knowledge, while empowering student choice in practice.

Informal dialogue based assessment can include many of the casual verbal interactions that students and supervisors engage in throughout the students' time at the placement and can focus on any subject that students and supervisors choose to discuss. Supervisors can gather information on students' conceptual understanding as well as practical knowledge application through informal dialogue and can compare and contrast this information with student performance over time.

Limitations of ongoing informal dialogue. The use of informal dialogue as a means of assessment possibly poses certain challenges for the supervisor. Useful formative feedback needs to be objective, explicit, and on target. Effective delivery of feedback requires supervisors to

have strong communication skills and be able to support student learning and problems. Supervisors must also be able to resolve conflict, create relationships that can support courageous conversations, and lastly, deal with the power imbalances inherent in student/supervisor relationships. Furthermore, for the most efficacious conversations, supervisors need to create the time necessary to converse with students in a meaningful way, and to actually observe students' practice to ensure that the dialogue is not reflecting solely on students' understanding of their practice.

With the intention of linking theory to practice underlying the practicum model, supervisors who use this method need to be able to articulate their own practice as it relates to theory while also being able to relay other contextual underpinnings of their field of practice to students they are supporting. This involves an ability to reflect on one's own practice along with having an up-to-date understanding of theory in practice approaches that they are supervising. Human service work, and the theories that guide it, are continually being revised and expanded. On the other hand, supervisors can ask instructors to supply an outline of the theoretical knowledge that would benefit practicum students and supervisors in the placement.

Capturing 'Teachable Moments'

Capturing 'teachable moments' defined. A teachable moment is a natural opportunity to offer a brief explanation about practice in context or to pause and reflect on practice and intervention options with students as students are working at the placement. The teachable moment, which is unplanned and informal, offers a sample of student practice to discuss while the supervisor provides the guidance and helps to interpret the meaning of the moment, in the context of the interaction with students.

Benefits of capturing 'teachable moments.' In this active learning role, students can be observed closely and provided with continuous encouragement and feedback. This less formal setting offers students the ability to grasp teachable moments and engage in reflections and conversations that promotes learning.

Limitations of capturing 'teachable moments.' Recognizing and capturing teachable moments is a high-level skill related to teaching, counselling, CYC, and other human service work. These opportunity-based learning moments need to happen in a timely and sensitive manner, while also delivering knowledge-based content that is relevant to the individual learner. Seizing teachable moments takes time, and effective communication and practice skills. It is possible that, without overt discussion of the utility of capturing teachable moments and explaining the process to students in advance, students may not recognize that teachable moments are being used to facilitate learning and assess student performance; in fact, students might not even recognize that the learning exchange has occurred.

Guided Self-Reflection

Guided self-reflection defined. Guided self-reflection, typically written by students in response to assigned topics, is a learning process that encourages students to reflect on personal experiences in the practicum. The primary goal of self-reflection in practicum is for students to gain insight into their current practice strengths and deficits, and to improve the way they practice in the field. These reflective exercises can also be used to support the application of theory in practice.

The subject matter students reflect on may be specific to their learning plan and goals, can include an analysis of educational curricula and learning outcomes, may review pre-determined competency and skill areas, and can consider the principles and ideologies that are

embedded in the field placement. Some methods used to facilitate this reflection process include journaling, asking for feedback from others at the practicum site, and video recordings of students practicing with clients. Students' compilations of these kinds of assignments are then reviewed by supervisors and/or instructors to assess student learning and growth.

Benefits of guided self-reflection. Students find the process of goal setting and self-rating helpful to the learning process, and reflection likely assists students on focusing on the acquisition of positive guidance skills throughout the practicum. Supervisors' evaluations of these practice skills can also help students reflect more accurately on their practice abilities. Self-reflection exercises facilitate student understanding of their unique practice perspectives, help them recognize their on-site skills and abilities, and aid them in understanding their own process of thinking and knowing.

Limitations of guided self-reflection. What may be most difficult to assess with guided self-reflection is that students have been instructed well enough on the practice of self-reflection to be able to use this skill with expanding levels of insight in more challenging and complex settings. Additionally, students' reflection based self-assessments of their work may not necessarily agree with those of their supervisors. Furthermore, students may be over or under confident in their practice capabilities in practicum.

Another challenge can include the fact that some students do not actually reflect upon their work (that is analyze and examine what they were doing) but tend to simply note the content of their practice (i.e. they describe the situation and setting). Students can treat reflection as a descriptive task, reporting on events, rather than as an analytical task in which they identify reasons for successes and difficulties for which they can then construct approaches for improvement. In addition, students may have limited capacity for process reflections (linking

practice to theory) and students may not go on to link the learning to the curriculum or premise level.

Group Supervision

Group supervision defined. Group supervision is defined as an organized process where a field supervisor is given a group of students to work with in a practicum placement. Typically, there are designated working times during the placement where the group comes together to review and expand their practice abilities. Supervisors in this role are generally considered to be individuals with considerable experience in their field of practice. In group learning environments, supervisors need to focus on two main tasks: facilitating a group process with students and attending to specific supervision needs of individuals in the program. Additionally, while pursuing these two main tasks, group supervisors need to develop a culture that leads to student development and learning while working with a variety of students with different needs and abilities.

This style of supervision may be an effective learning tool for helping students to develop and enhance professional values, acquire knowledge and skills, and reflect on their practice-based interventions. The learning opportunities that are reported to be unique to a group process are the interrelated influences generated by supervisors and peers in these learning situations.

As in one to one supervision, students perceive certain elements as conducive to productive learning:

- Competent and positive supervisors with an open and validating style and time to guide students.
- Acquiring objective knowledge through direct teaching, assigned readings, and observation of and by the supervisor.

- Opportunities that invoke interpersonal awareness, emotional insight, while promoting individual goals, and personal development.
- Supportive work sites with constructive feedback and learning opportunities.

Overall, peer to peer interactions are well received especially when groups provide validation, positive feedback, and mutual support. While there are possible detrimental aspects of group supervision, these areas of challenge can be mitigated with a strong understanding of group dynamics by students and supervisors, and with skilled facilitation techniques of the supervisor that influence and guide students' interactions.

Benefits of group supervision. Group supervision can offer students opportunities to share knowledge, discuss differing perspectives, learn about group dynamics, experiment with new behaviors, recognize the universality of their concerns, and develop more accurate self-appraisals. Some of the benefits of group supervision in field placements include:

- Supervisors being able to work with more students in the field.
- The process saves time, especially at the orientation stage of practicum.
- Students are able to learn from peers with a variety of theoretical orientations.
- The group environment empowers students in articulating their thoughts and needs more readily.
- By working together, group skills could be developed that would enhance individual practice abilities.
- Group supervision may help prepare students for group practice, an area where students have indicated they do not feel they have received adequate instruction.

Group supervision can promote peer learning in a safe setting. It is also possible that students can identify parallel processes between peer group work and work with clients to further

professional growth. Finally, being or becoming aware of parallel processes in group settings, and discussing the relational interactions with supervision, may allow students to become more cognizant of how they center themselves in therapeutic interactions.

Limitations of group supervision. There appear to be a number of challenges to the use of group work for learning, and subsequently implications for group supervision as an assessment tool. There are obstacles to learning when group supervision is utilized. Some students feel overly criticised in group settings and report that it is difficult to learn with an audience. This discomfort with the group process itself may inhibit student progress and confidence with practice. Supervisors and students understand that the benefits of group supervision require trust and safety being built into the group experience at the beginning of the process; yet internal and external challenges to facilitating a trusting environment can hamper the establishment of a safe learning experience.

The internal attributes cited as barriers to group learning are associated with the attitudes and behaviour of participants; for example, some students feel less competent than their peers, other students felt frustrated with their group mates, and other students were only willing and able to reveal their potential practice vulnerabilities in one to one sessions. Some of the external factors that can pose challenges include different levels of student experience and education, students with assorted approaches to practice, and students who enter the group at various times during the program. Negative peer histories, and the range of competency and professionalism in the group, can also be obstructions to learning from group supervision.

Beyond what is noted above, students who act as consultants or experts rather than learners, students who do not take risks, and students who are more dominant than peers and are unable to consider and respect other students' efforts make supervision more difficult. These

negative behaviours can contribute to group members being more guarded, sharing less information, and providing less feedback to each other. Moreover, the content of supervision sessions can also challenge supervisors and students when the focus is on administrative issues, when time is limited, and when sharing stories detracts from the reflection and learning process.

In order to provide effective group management, supervisor must have strong facilitation abilities, be able to support a variety of learning styles, work with different competency levels, and concurrently manage conflict or tensions in the group. Additionally, supervisors need to continually manage the boundaries between individual supervision and group supervision, which can be a challenge to navigate in real time situations. A group that is not performing well may inhibit student participation, limit the range of feedback and engagement, and not allow for students to develop practice skills in an effective manner.

Informal Evaluations Summarized

Research has shown that informal processes may pose challenges for students and their supervisors and instructors. Since students have concrete expectations with regard to supervision and evaluation, less formal approaches may leave students feeling unsure about their performance and unable to review and evaluate their learning accurately without significant support. With this in mind, reflexive exercises and dialogue can be a key part of self-assessment and skills acquisition, but the evaluation of student performance by more formal methods is also required to ensure that practicum learning outcomes are realized. The next section explores formal assessment methods that may be combined with less formal methods in order to generate more reliable student performance measures.

Formal Assessments

Formalized assessments evaluate student performance through the use of clearly documented learning outcomes, grading rubrics, and pre-defined competencies. This section focuses on formal assessment methods that are representative of common practice in most practicum settings. Direct observation, surveying of audio or video recordings, standardized measures of assessment, participatory assessment, and student portfolios are reviewed and the benefits and limitations of each process are briefly outlined.

Direct Observation

Direct observation defined. As a mode of assessment, direct observation can identify students' area of strength and challenge, support the provision and content of feedback, and provide students with information that helps them to address learning targets and improve their practice. Direct observation is an active process where supervisors watch students engage in practicum work in order to gain an understanding of how they apply skills and knowledge to practice. Direction observation can be used for formative purposes (monitoring and providing feedback on skills) or for summative purposes (evaluation of learning for assessment purposes). Direct observation therefore works as an interactional strategy that serves two main purposes: student assessment and as a basis for providing constructive feedback.

Direct observation is an effective method for collecting information about students who are rehearsing or performing work related tasks so that supervisors can provide feedback to help students identify skills that they are able to perform at acceptable levels and improve their abilities where skills may be lacking. This assessment method also offers supervisors the opportunity to actually monitor students while they are working with clients in field settings, and to see what students actually do, as opposed to what they report that they do in practice. Even

though this method of assessment can contribute to student discomfort and anxiety, it is generally considered an important assessment and educational tool.

Benefits of direct observation. There are several key reasons to utilize direct observation in practicum settings: to teach and mentor students, to evaluate student skills and competencies, to provide information to the academic program and other involved parties about student performance, to promote the well-being of students, and to ensure that clients are receiving quality services. In essence, direct observation as a tool that can help to inform students about what they are doing well and what requires improvement. By actually observing practice, immediate and concrete feedback can be offered with the intention of helping students learn.

Students report increased confidence and improvement in their field skills when observation occurs regularly, and when they have a trusting relationship with their supervisor. Having a supervisor watch practice in action helped some students gain relief from self-doubt about the way in which they practice and receive reassurance about their practice abilities. Although direct observation can provoke anxiety in students, some individuals reported that the heightened anxiety they experienced when being observed simulated the stress of working with clients in the field and helped them develop skills and strategies to work with this challenge.

Limitations of direct observation. There are a number of challenges related to implementing direct observation as an assessment tool in practice settings. A lack of time and resources in practicum placements limit the amount of time that can be allocated to directly observing students. It is hard to create a fair evaluation of competence and skill based on infrequent observations, which tends to be an ongoing supervision challenge in human services placements.

There may be other unintended and negative consequences related to direct observation.

1. The observer-effect: Having someone observe student work directly may alter the students' performance in several ways, which raises questions about the credibility of the observation and related feedback. This effect may also appear to improve student performance as students report that they change their practice style to please observers as when they are worried about their evaluation results.
2. Assessment versus learning: Students were often unclear whether direct observation was being used to evaluate student ability (summative assessment) or to provide information to support student learning (formative assessment). This lack of clarity left students feeling unsure of the potential outcomes which provoked emotional discomfort and impacted their practice performance.
3. Impacts to the client-student relationship: The presence of an observer could impact the relationship and rapport that students had established with the clients they are working with. When being watched, some students reverted to a more formal and less engaged practice style rather than working in natural ways that suited their personality.
4. Lack of authenticity: Students may have questions about whether supervisors have observed an authentic version of their practice and may doubt that supervisors are therefore able to provide them with feedback that is accurate.

Reviewing Audio or Video Recordings

Reviewing audio or video recordings defined. Video recording for supervision is a process where students arrange to video record one or more of their meetings with their clients in order to view them in supervisory sessions. To use this assessment method, students must fully describe the process to all participants in advance, obtain formal consent to record the sessions,

and arrange for time to review the video or audio recording with their supervisors, instructors, and/or peers. Many of the benefits and limitations of this assessment method mirror those that have been itemized in direct observation; some additional considerations are documented next.

Benefits of reviewing audio or video recordings. Reviewing actual student work, rather than relying on student reports of what they do in practice, is important as part of a less-biased assessment approach. Video recording is useful and may be preferable to live supervision for a number of reasons: the interaction can be played multiple times for learning purposes, after watching the video or hearing the recording, role playing to try alternative strategies can occur, and progress over time can be observed and compared using this method. In order for this kind of supervision to be effective, supervisors need to provide a nonjudgmental and supportive environment that is non-competitive in nature, and ensure participants' safety and promote a secure connection between team members.

Recording counselling sessions in a developmental learning environment is beneficial to learning because it (a) increases level of students' self-awareness of their practice style and methods; (b) enhances their sense of objectivity concerning their clinical work; (c) 'brings the client to life' for the supervisor; (d) provides fact-based and impartial information on client progress in therapy; (e) and promotes objectivity in evaluation.

Additionally, video supervision can support less experienced students who are not always able to identify their areas of strengths and weakness, especially if they have limited experience in this realm, and if they were working on new skills or engaging in increasingly complex situations. For these students, analyzing their recorded work with supervisors can support their learning, especially if this analysis takes place in a one-to-one, safe environment that does not interrupt the flow of their practice with clients. It is possible that viewing video recordings in

clinical supervision brings students' perceptions of their practice abilities more in line with supervisors' evaluation of their performance.

Limitations of reviewing audio or video recordings. Video or audio recording sessions can complicate the work that students do with clients. Explaining the process can leave clients unsure of what the recordings are actually being used for and may affect the session adversely (akin to observer effect). Obtaining consent requires a formal process which can feel intrusive for the client, and the client can refuse should they not wish to be recorded. Furthermore, even when sessions are recorded, technical challenges may prevent the taping from being useable. Students can be uncomfortable with the process, especially if they think that negative repercussions could be an outcome of the process. Lastly, the amount of time this process takes is likely a contributing factor to the lack of its use.

Standardized Measures of Assessment

Standardized measures defined. Structured assessment involves the use of standardized assessment instruments to provide instructors, supervisors, and students with data on student performance. Standardized assessments have the same format, questions, and evaluative processes for all the students who receive them. In general, standardized assessment instruments are carefully designed tools that appraise the level of students' performance compared to pre-defined program standards. These uniform assessments are designed to measure how well students have applied skills and/or mastered specific knowledge areas as outlined by their educational program.

Typically, standardized assessments are delivered at specific intervals in practicum - often at the beginning, middle, and end of the field placement. Student progress over time can be measured and reviewed collaboratively with these tools. There are several forms of assessment

that fall in to the category of standardized measures. Some examples include student learning plans, competencies-based check lists, grading rubrics, and other prescriptive measures that are used to assess the performance of all students. In practicum, these methods can be used for formative comprehension (i.e. monitoring student learning to provide ongoing feedback) or summative learning purposes (i.e. evaluation and grading of student learning).

Benefits of using standardized measures. Having a standard evaluative system makes it simpler for students and supervisors to evaluate their learning progress and goal attainment. Evaluating student performance several times during a field placement with standardized measurement instruments, can show progress and/or highlight challenges in learning overtime. Additionally, instructors can compare the development of students to others in the program.

The intention behind employing standardized measures in practicum settings is to reduce the subjectivity of assessment by making assessment a more evidence-informed, specific and concrete evaluation process. Standardized assessment tools would also make it more feasible to assign grades for practicum students.

Limitations of using standardized measures. Since human services students practice in such diverse settings, standard evaluation forms would need to be designed to capture the various skills and/or competencies that are being evaluated and to fairly evaluate students in a range of settings. Unfortunately, creating a specific set of criteria for every possible placement setting would be a formidable undertaking, and possibly unrealistic task. Therefore, for standard evaluation forms to be a reliable and valid way of assessing and comparing student ability, best practice would require tailoring the forms to the type of placement setting or using them as informative tools rather than as grading rubrics.

Inadequate guidelines and grading rules along with a lack of clear and specific direction about what to appraise, can make standardized assessment difficult for those who supervise practice. Students also report being confused by a lack of clarity and direction, when there is an absence of clearly defined feedback and marking criteria. Marked or graded assessments of performance are generally avoided in human services as it is difficult to achieve consistency because of the variations in practice settings, range of student abilities, differences in supervisor training and experience, and the eclectic nature of client-student interactions.

Participatory Assessment

Participatory assessment defined. Participatory assessment (or triangulated assessment) involves students' input in the grading or evaluation process such that student reflections, supervisor input, and instructor oversight are amalgamated for comprehensive assessments of student practice. This kind of assessment holds that the environment of practice is important to learning and that knowledge, thinking, and learning are actively situated in this experience. Assessing with a participatory approach allows for both description and judgement to be included (as opposed to just judgement of student information in written format) and respects the value and knowledge of all the participants.

This contextual approach emphasizes the importance of the various participants, the culture, and the physical environment on the learning opportunity, and also allows room to consider the evolving interaction between all the participants on site. Participatory assessments are most effective when they are part of an on-going process of dialogue and partnership by the practicum participants. The presumption behind this approach is that through the attainment of self-evaluation skills, students will be able to independently learn and think critically about how they engage in practice throughout their careers.

The benefits of participatory assessment. The benefits of the participatory approach include the active involvement of students themselves, a demonstration of students' self-assessment ability in practice, the enhancement of student understanding and reflective development, as well as the opportunity to value the knowledge and ability of others. Plus, this process gives students the opportunity to learn about self-evaluation in practice and develop long-term reflection strategies. The process is empowering for students and supervisors as the role of grading or evaluating work is offered to all participants, rather than being left to the academic institution alone. Participatory assessment processes encourage students to:

- engage in reflexive, critical and independent thinking processes;
- build knowledge based on evaluating different solutions to different problems;
- learn self-sufficiency and direction of one´s own learning;
- practice discussion, debate, and negotiation in work place settings;
- and develop self-directed learning and self-confidence.

Students may prefer active roles in their assessments and can appreciate the interactive, reflective process, and the sense of ownership and responsibility for their own learning outcomes. The participatory process also provides for work skills in action to be assessed, rather than relying on writing ability that is a significant part of written reflective assessments. Supervisors who engage in participatory assessment also approve of the joint learning experience. Both students and supervisors can learn how to evaluate their practice, notice that learning and context are not separate, and may agree that knowledge can actually be constructed as part of the learning experience.

The limits of using participatory assessment. While participatory assessment appears to offer many benefits, there are some challenges associated with the method. The obvious

concern is the time and resources that are required to implement this kind of evaluation. Participatory assessment practices are complex and require significant time and planning on the part of instructors and supervisors. At times, the final grades of students that engage in participatory assessment are higher than average. This grading difference may be attributed to possible marking confidence, more accurate assessment, and/or marks that better reflect discrete student projects and their situated experience.

Student Portfolio

Student portfolio defined. Student portfolios involve a more formalized and structured approach to self-evaluation. Through an organized collection of items that exhibit students' skills, practice ability, and knowledge, the portfolio provides students with a means to demonstrate they have achieved learning objectives and met the required outcomes of the practicum placement.

For practicum purposes, a portfolio is a self-assessment and evaluation tool that demonstrates professional growth and goal achievement over time, while providing a framework for collaboratively assessing student growth and performance. The portfolio should contain materials that are connected to clearly stated goals, provide indicators that these goals are being met, and should contain evidence of students' reflections on their areas of strength and challenge and their professional development. Importantly, a portfolio can demonstrate student development and the achievement of goals over time.

Benefits of student portfolios. There are a number of benefits to employing this person-centered learning tool. In using student portfolios for assessment purposes, students can define and assess their own learning goals, demonstrate their growth and learning in a variety of ways, display their results in a variety of creative formats, and can use the portfolio to stimulate in

depth conversations with their instructors and supervisors. Furthermore, with this personalized assessment method, students can incorporate their own philosophies, beliefs, and understanding of practice as they relate to it.

A well-designed portfolio describes students' learning opportunities and provides evidence that students have achieved their learning goals and are able to explain how their field work aligns with their course materials. This concrete approach is a way for practicum students to demonstrate the acquisition of practice-based skills and knowledge, as well as self-evaluate their areas of strength and confidence and highlight practice areas that could be further improved. This assessment instrument can also provide supervisors and students with a common language that they can use for identifying and analyzing students' work.

Students can be creative and capture moments of practice that are meaningful to them in a variety of ways. Because students compile most of the documents and artifacts that they are sharing with supervisors, students dedicate the most time for the project, and can work on the portfolio away from the practicum setting. In evaluating the guided self-reflection that is a part of the portfolio process, students are can self-evaluate their practice competence on many levels: (a) students are able to reflect on and question their practice abilities; (b) they can examine the effect of social and cultural factors relevant to their practicum setting; (c) and students can consider the importance of self-reflection in their future practice. Portfolios can also be used by students to display their own unique identity and practice preferences in the field.

Limitations of student portfolios. As with any assessment tool (self-guided or otherwise), there are some limitations. Different skills levels and practice experience of practicum students will affect the outcomes of self-assessment tools, and students with more experience will be able to reflect on a greater range of experiences and therefore be more able to

track their growth over time. Additionally, a certain amount of personal skill and previous practice experience is required to critically examine one's own work, and view this from multiple standpoints.

Importantly, for students to learn through reflective assessments they need to critically reflect on their practice in the field rather than simply describe their practice. Students must actively seek out evidence of their learning, link it to prior knowledge, and then move forward with new knowledge and insight into their practice. In this way, students' prior ways of practice are reflected upon and possibly challenged, and as a result new ways of thinking and practicing are integrated. Being driven by the need to demonstrate competency in the field, the portfolio may not present the most accurate understanding of self and learning.

Another challenge associated with using portfolios as an assessment tool is the possible reservations supervisors or instructors may have when it comes to evaluating this creative and reflective project. Concerns over judging creative and writing skills, mixed with possible angst over measurement of how students' actual reflective skills are progressing, can create an emotional conundrum for the assessors themselves. While a grading rubric may eliminate some of this subjective doubt, the uniqueness of the submitted projects is likely to continue to confound the supervisors and instructors who are assessing these portfolios.

Conclusion: Assessment Models in Practicum Settings

Assessment tools should engage students, supervisors, and instructors in meaningful conversations that promote skill development while identifying areas that require additional learning and improvement. Student, supervisor, and instructor relationships are improved when assessment tools are positioned with the formative function of supporting learning and skill development in practice. Structured feedback is essential to student learning, and the act of

relaying observational information needs to be a deliberate component of practicum placement. Students have indicated that they appreciate the evaluation of their work during field placements. Moreover, student concerns and anxieties about assessment in practicum outline the need for clear, explicit, and collaborative evaluation processes.

Formalized assessments can be used as learning tools, or as a grading device, although whether or not to assign grades for field experiences appears to be contentious issue in human services. Direct observation methods for supervisory purposes are highly recommended for student assessment. On the other hand, it is likely that administering a variety of assessments that include formal and informal evaluations will help students understand their practice strength and challenge areas, while continuing to gain practice competence in the field. Valid assessments require regular communication involving students, supervisors, and instructors from the beginning to the end of practicum. This communication requires a considerable time commitment. Furthermore, clear objectives and concrete learning outcomes need to be predefined and monitored continuously throughout the placement.

Some settings may adapt well to formal assessment protocols, whereas some placements may require a more flexible and informal approach. For example, in CYC students practice in such a broad range of settings that working with a single assessment protocol is likely to pose considerable challenges. Perhaps it is therefore prudent to ensure that practicum students and supervisors are supported in learning via a number of formal and informal assessment modalities.

The timing and nature of the feedback offered, along with employing an assortment of assessment methods, is likely to offer students the best learning opportunities and involve a variety of ways to impart constructive information. Conceivably, the use of a variety of assessments methods in different settings, along with evaluations from several supervisors, will

support a range of student learning styles and developmental abilities and promote desirable learning outcomes over time. This way, knowledge can be integrated and expanded in practicum placements, and students, supervisors, and instructors can continue to collaboratively respond to an extensive range of changing and complex environments that are present in practice.

References

Allen, J. M. & Wright, S. E. (2014) Integrating theory and practice in the pre-service teacher education practicum. *Teachers and Teaching, 20*(2), 136-151. DOI: 10.1080/13540602.2013.848568

Amerikaner, Martin & Rose, Terra. (2012) Direct observation of psychology supervisees' clinical work: A snapshot of current practice. *The Clinical Supervisor, 31*(1), 61-80. DOI: 10.1080/07325223.2012.671721

Augsburg University. (2018). Theories, models and perspectives - Cheat sheet for field instructors. Retrieved from https://web.augsburg.edu/socialwork/msw/pdfs/cheatsheet.pdf

Bogo, Marion. (2015). Field education for clinical social work practice: Best practices and contemporary challenges. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 43*(3), 317-324. DOI: 10.1007/s10615-015-0526-5.

Borders, DIAnne, Brown, Jennifer, & Purqason, L. (2015). Triadic Supervision with Practicum and Internship Counseling Students: A Peer Supervision Approach. *The Clinical Supervisor, 34*(2), 232-248. DOI: 10.1080/07325223.2015.1027024.

Brannon, S. (2014). Assessment in fieldwork courses: What are we rating? *Journal of Education for Library & Information Science, 55*(4), 274-302.

Brodie, Ian & Williams, Val. (2013).Lifting the lid: Perspectives on and activity within student supervision.*Social Work Education, 32*(4), 506–522. DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2012.678826

Bulger, Sean M. Physical Educator. (2006). Maintaining Connections: A Web-Enhanced Approach to Undergraduate Internship Supervision. *Physical Educator, 63*(3), 114-125.

Carter, John W., Goodyear, Rodney K., Enyedy, Karen Chicca, Arcinue, Ferdinand, & Puri, Neera Nijhawan. (2009). Concept mapping of the events supervisees find helpful in group supervision. *Training & Education in Professional Psychology, 3*(1), 1-9. DOI: 10.1037/a0013656.

Chapman, Russell A., Baker, Stanley B., Nassar-McMillan, Sylvia C. &Gerler Jr., Edwin R. (2011). Cybersupervision: Further examination of synchronous and asynchronous modalities in counseling practicum supervision. *Counselor Education & Supervision, 50*(5), 298-313.

Charles, C. (2016). Connecting child and youth practice and supervision: Another piece of the puzzle. In Charles, C., Freeman, J. & Garfat, T. (Eds.), *Supervision in child and*

youth care practice. Cape Town, South Africa: Pretext Publishing. ISBN 978-1-928212-22-5

Chui, Ernest W. T. (2010). Desirability and feasibility in evaluating fieldwork performance: Tensions between Supervisors and Students. *Social Work Education, 29*(2), 171-187. DOI: 10.1080/02615470902912219.

Cleak, H. & Smith, D. (2012). Student satisfaction with models of field placement supervision. *Australian Social Work, 65*(2), 243-258.

Cooper, Susan & Ord, Jon. (2014). Developing 'know how': a participatory approach to assessment of placement learning. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 66*(4), 518-536. DOI: 10.1080/13636820.2014.948906.

Cory, G., Haynes, R., Moulton, P. & Muratori, M. (2010). *Clinical Supervision in the Helping Professions: A Practical Guide. Second Edition.* Alexandria, VA: American Psychological Association.

Domakin, Alison & Forrester, Donald. (2018). Putting practice at the heart of social work education: can practice skills be reliably graded by different markers in child and family social work contexts? *Social Work Education, 37*(1), 66-77. DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2017.1379478.

Durning, Steven J. & Artino, Anthony R. (2011). Situativity theory: A perspective on how participants and the environment can interact: AMEE Guide no. 52. *Medical Teacher, 33*(3), 188-199. DOI: 10.3109/0142159X.2011.550965

Everett, Joyce E., Miehls, Dennis, DuBois, Carolyn & Garran, Ann Marie. (2011). The Developmental Model of Supervision as Reflected in the Experiences of Field Supervisors and Graduate Students. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 31*(3), 250-264. DOI: 10.1080/08841233.2011.580245.

Falender, Carol A.; Shafranske, Edward P. (2017). Competency-based Clinical Supervision: Status, Opportunities, Tensions, and the Future. *Australian Psychologist, 52*(2), 86-93. DOI: 10.1111/ap.12265.

Ferrier-Kerr, J. (2009). Establishing professional relationships in practicum settings. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(6), 790-797.

Freeman, J. (2013). The field of Child and Youth Care: Are we there yet? *Child & Youth Services, 34*(2), 100-111. DOI: 10.1080/0145935X.2013.785875.

Garfat, T., Fulcher, L. and Freeman, J. (2016). A daily life events approach to Child and Youth Care supervision. In Charles, C., Freeman, J. &Garfat, T. (Eds.), *Supervision in child and youth care practice*. Cape Town, South Africa: Pretext Publishing. ISBN 978-1-928212-22-5

Goodman, Harriet, Knight, Carolyn & Khudododov, Khudodod. (2014). Graduate social work students' experiences with group work in the field and the classroom. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 34*(1), 60-78. DOI: 10.1080/08841233.2013.866615.

Gonsalvez, Craig J.; Freestone, John. Field supervisors' assessments of trainee performance: Are they reliable and valid? *Australian Psychologist, 42*(1), 23-32. DOI: 10.1080/00050060600827615.

Gursansky, Di & Le Sueur, Eddie. (2012). Conceptualising field education in the twenty-first century: Contradictions, challenges and opportunities. *Social Work Education, 31*(7), 914-931. DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2011.595784.

Hatcher, Robert L., Grus, Catherine L., Wise, Erica H., Mangione, Lorraine & Emmons, Luli. (2012). Inside the practicum in professional psychology: A survey of practicum site coordinators. *Training & Education in Professional Psychology, 6*(4), 220-228. DOI: 10.1037/a0029542.

Hauer, Karen E. (2016). Elevating the value of direct observation for learning: the limits of autonomy. *Medical Education, 50*(10), 994-996. DOI: 10.1111/medu.13141.

Herrero, P., del Henar, M., Condon, B., Lorenzo, J. (2011). Assessment of Pedagogy Practicum in the process of transition from undergraduate to the degree. *Revista de Docencia Universitaria, 9*(2), 71-96.

Hill, Hamish R. M.; Crowe, Trevor P.; Gonsalvez, Craig J. (2016). Reflective dialogue in clinical supervision: A pilot study involving collaborative review of supervision videos. *Psychotherapy Research, 26*(3), 263-278. DOI: 10.1080/10503307.2014.996795.

Huhra, Rachel L.; Yamokokski-Maynhart, Cynthia A.; Prieto, Loreto R. (2008). Reviewing Videotape in Supervision: A Developmental Approach. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*(4), 412-418.

Husu, Jukka, Toom, Auli, & Patrikainen, Sanna. (2008). Guided reflection as a means to demonstrate and develop student teachers' reflective competencies. *Reflective Practice, 9*(1), 37-51. DOI: 10.1080/14623940701816642.

Jones, Mellita & Ryan, Josephine. (2014). Learning in the practicum: engaging pre-service teachers in reflective practice in the online space. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 42*(2), 132-146. DOI: 10.1080/1359866X.2014.892058.

Joseph, Gail & Brennan, Carolyn. (2013). Framing Quality: Annotated Video-Based Portfolios of Classroom Practice by Pre-service Teachers. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 41*(6), 423-430. DOI: 10.1007/s10643-013-0576-7.

Keough, M. (2016). Sailing through the fog: Practicums in Canadian child and youth education. *Relational Child and Youth Care, 29*(3), 123-136.

Klein, E. (2015). Supervision of social work interns as members of a multidisciplinary team. *Research on Social Work Practice, 25*(6), 697-701.

Kogan, Jennifer R; Conforti, Lisa N; Bernabeo, Elizabeth C; Durning, Steven J; Hauer, Karen E; Holmboe, Eric S. (2012). Faculty staff perceptions of feedback to residents after direct observation of clinical skills. *Medical Education, 46*(2), 201-215. DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2923.2011.04137.x.

LaDonna, Kori A, Hatala, Rose, Lingard, Lorelei, Voyer, Stephane & Watling, Christopher. (2017). Staging a performance: learners' perceptions about direct observation during residency. *Medical Education, 51*(5), 498-510. DOI: 10.1111/medu.13232.

Lateef, Fatimah. (2013). Embedding Medical Students in the Emergency Department: The Teachable Moments. *Education in Medicine Journal, 5*(2), 78-82. DOI: 10.5959/eimj.v5i2.147.

Leeman, D. (2013). In the boat with only one oar: The creation and adventures of an MSW consultation group. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 33*(3), p. 266-279.

Luk, Jasmine. (2008). Assessing teaching practicum reflections: Distinguishing discourse features of the “high” and “low” grade reports. *System 36*(4), 624-641. DOI: 10.1016/j.system.2008.04.001.

Maynard, Sarah P., Mertz, Linda K. P. & Fortune, Anne E. (2015). Off-Site Supervision in Social Work Education: What Makes It Work? *Journal of Social Work Education, 51*(3), 519-534. DOI: 10.1080/10437797.2015.1043201.

MBA Learner. (2018). Hawthorne Effect - What is it? – A Detailed Guide. Retrieved from https://mbalearner.com/hawthorne-effect/.

McCambridge,J., Witton, J, & Elbournec, D.(2014). Systematic review of the Hawthorne effect: New concepts are needed to study research participation effects. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology, 67*(3), 267-277. DOI: 10.1016/j.jclinepi.2013.08.015

McElwee, C., O’Reilly, P. & McKenna, s. (2002). From moth to butterfly: Thoughts on student practica supervision from education and practice. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 31*(4), 269–281. DOI:10.1023/A:1016307510527

McFarland, Laura, Saunders, Rachel &Allen, Sydnye. (2009). Reflective Practice and Self-Evaluation in Learning Positive Guidance: Experiences of Early Childhood Practicum Students. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 36*(6), 505-511. DOI: 10.1007/s10643-009-0315-2.

Miehls, Dennis, Everett, Joyce, Segal, Cara & du Bois, Carolyn. (2013). MSW students' views of supervision: Factors contributing to satisfactory field experiences. *Clinical Supervisor, 32*(1), 128-146. DOI: 10.1080/07325223.2013.782458.

Mingun, Lee & Fortune, Anne E. (2013). Do We Need More "Doing" Activities or "Thinking" Activities in the Field Practicum? *Journal of Social Work Education, 49*(4), 646-660. DOI: 10.1080/10437797.2013.812851.

Mumm, Ann Marie. (2006). Teaching social work students practice skills. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 26*(3/4), 71-89. DOI: 10.1300/J067v26n03-05.

Nordstrand, M. (2017). Practice supervisors' perceptions of social work students and their placements – an exploratory study in the Norwegian context. *Social Work Education The International Journal, 36*(5), 481-494. DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2017.1279137.

Ostinelli, P. (2015). The essential first CYC practicum. *Relational Child & Youth Care Practice, 28*(3), 36-40.

Passi, V. (2016).The importance of mentoring during educational supervision. *Perspectives on Medical Education, 5*(4), 195-196. DOI: 10.1007/s40037-016-0291-3.

Remez, Andrea. (2016). The Building Blocks Reflective Supervision Model. *Journal of Infant, Child & Adolescent Psychotherapy, 15*(2), 120-123. DOI: 10.1080/15289168.2016.1168118.

Rodger, S., Cate Fitzgerald, C., Davila, W., Millar, F. and Allison, H. (2011). What makes a quality occupational therapy practice placement? Students' and practice educators' perspectives? *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 58*(3), 195–202. DOI: 10.1111/j.1440-1630.2010.00903.x.

Rodríguez-Gómez, Gregorio; Ibarra-Sáiz, Maria Soledad; Gallego-Noche, Beatriz; Gómez-Ruiz, Miguel-Ángel; Quesada-Serra, Victoria. (2012). Student voice in learning assessment: a pathway not yet developed at university. *Revista Electrónica de Investigación y Evaluación Educativa, 18*(2), 1-21. DOI: 10.7203/relieve.18.2.1985.

Roux, Pieter, Podgorski, Carol, Rosenberg, Tziporah, Watson, William H. & Mcdaniel, Susan. (2011). Developing an Outcome-Based Assessment for Family Therapy Training: The Rochester Objective Structured Clinical Evaluation (ROSCE). *Family Process, 50*(4), 544-560. DOI: 10.1111/j.1545-5300.2011.01375.x.

Ruiz-Primo, Maria Araceli. (2011). Informal formative assessment: The role of instructional dialogues in assessing students' learning. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 37*, 15-24. DOI:10.1016/j.stueduc.2011.04.003

Ryerson University. (2018). Faculty of Community Services School of Child and Youth Care. Retrieved from https://www.ryerson.ca/cyc/

Shute, Valerie J. (2008). Focus on Formative Feedback. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(1), 153-189.

Smith, Debra, Cleak, Helen &Vreugdenhil, Anthea. (2015). "What are they really doing?" An exploration of student learning activities in field placement. *Australian Social Work, 68*(4), 515-531. DOI: 10.1080/0312407X.2014.960433.

Stark, M. D., Garza, Y., Bruhn, R., & Ane, P. (2015). Student perceptions of sandtray in solution-focused supervision. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health 10*(1), 2-17. DOI-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1080/15401383.2014.917063

Sussman, Tamara, Bogo, Marion, & Globerman, Judith. (2007). Field Instructor Perceptions in Group Supervision: Establishing Trust Through Managing Group Dynamics. *Clinical Supervisor, 26*(1/2), 61-80. DOI: 10.1300/J001v26n01.06.

Tillema, Harm H., Smith, Kari, & Leshem, Shosh. (2011). Dual roles - conflicting purposes: a comparative study on perceptions on assessment in mentoring relations during practicum. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 34*(2), 139-159. DOI: 10.1080/02619768.2010.543672.

University of Victoria [UVIC]. (2017). School of Child and Youth Care. Retrieved from https://www.uvic.ca/hsd/cyc/

Ussher, Bill & Carss, Wendy. (2014). Strengthening practicum conversations: Enhancing professional learning and development through returning lecturer supervisions. *Australian Journal of Education, 58*(3), 248-261. DOI: 10.1177/0004944114537051.

Vallero, Daniel A. (2003). Teachable Moments and the Tyranny of the Syllabus: September 11 Case. *Journal of Professional Issues in Engineering Education & Practice, 129*(2), 100-106.

Valverde, Jennifer Rosen. (2013). Hindsight is 20/20: Finding teachable moments in the extraordinary and applying them to the ordinary. *Clinical Law Review, 20*(1), 267-316.

Venville, Annie; Cleak, Helen; Bould, Emma. (2017). Exploring the Potential of a Collaborative Web-based E-portfolio in Social Work Field Education. *Australian Social Work, 70*(2), 185-196. DOI: 10.1080/0312407X.2017.1278735.

Wearne S; Dornan T; Teunissen PW; & Skinner T. (2013). Twelve tips on how to set up postgraduate training via remote clinical supervision. *Medical Teacher, 35*(11), p. 891-894.

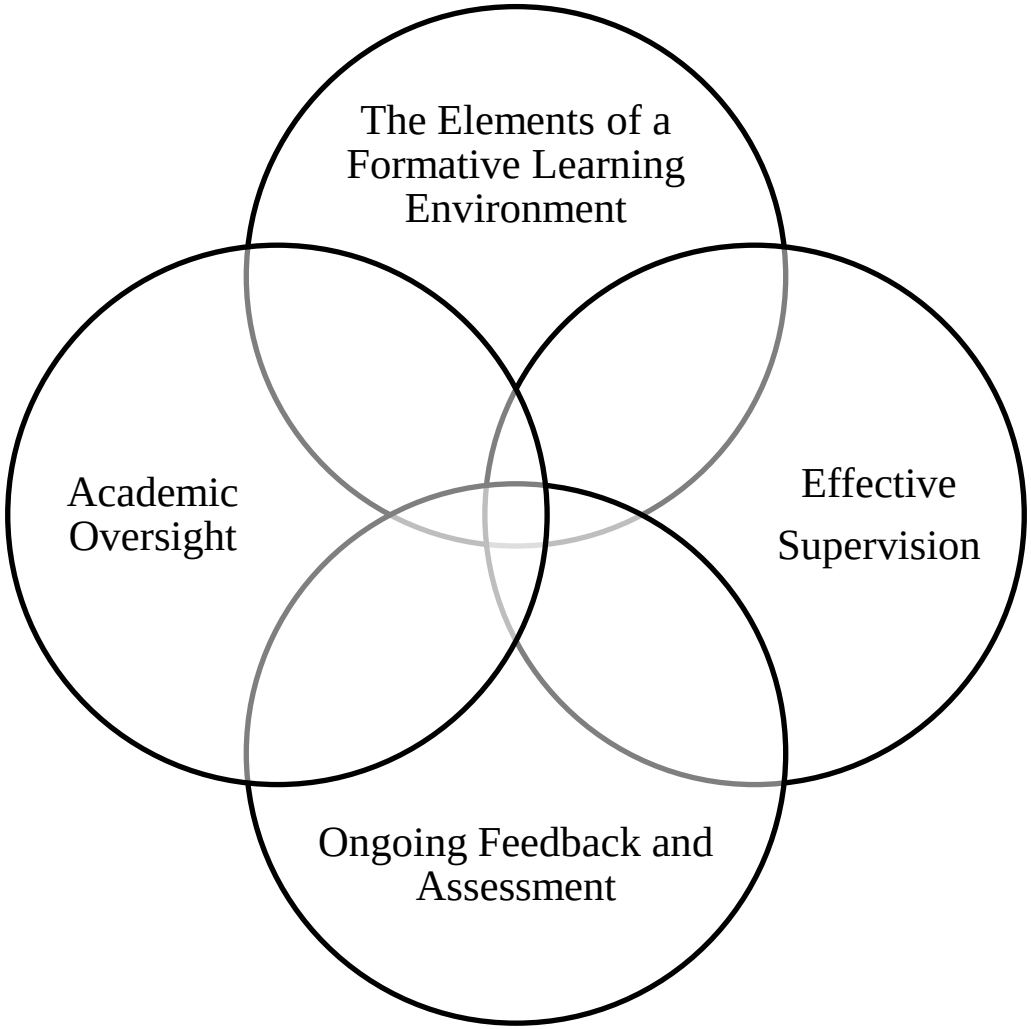
Zeira, Anat& Schiff, Miriam. (2010). Testing group supervision in fieldwork training for social work students. *Research on Social Work Practice, 20*(4), 427-434. DOI: 10.1177/1049731509332882.

Zuchowski, Ines. (2015). Being the university: Liaison persons' reflections on placements with off-site supervision. *Social Work Education, 34*(3), 301-314. DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2015.1005070.

Appendix A:

Formatted Guide for Supervisors

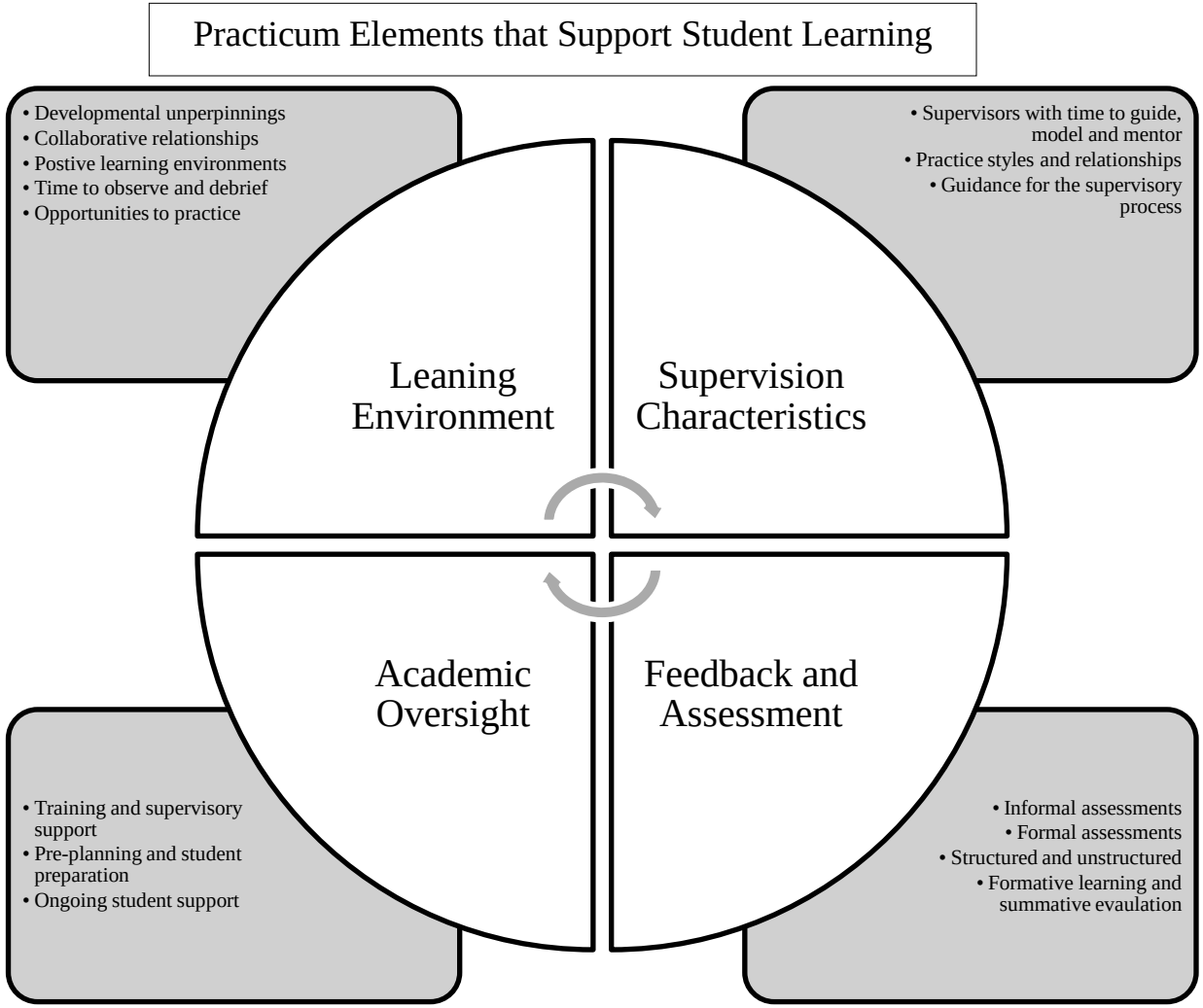
Practicum Supervision in Child and Youth Care: A Guide for Site Supervisors



Practicum Supervision in Child and Youth Care: A Guide for Site Supervisors

The purpose of this guide is to assist practicum supervisors as they create a learning environment that promotes student development and practice competence in field settings. The intention of the guide is to support community practitioners that have dedicated their time and skill to furthering the development and practice abilities of the next generation of students.

The first section of the guide focuses on the learning environment, supervision requisites, and academic oversight that support practicum students and supervisors in the field. The second section outlines a variety of assessment tools used in human services practicum settings, as well as how and when those methods can best be applied to encourage and evaluate student learning.



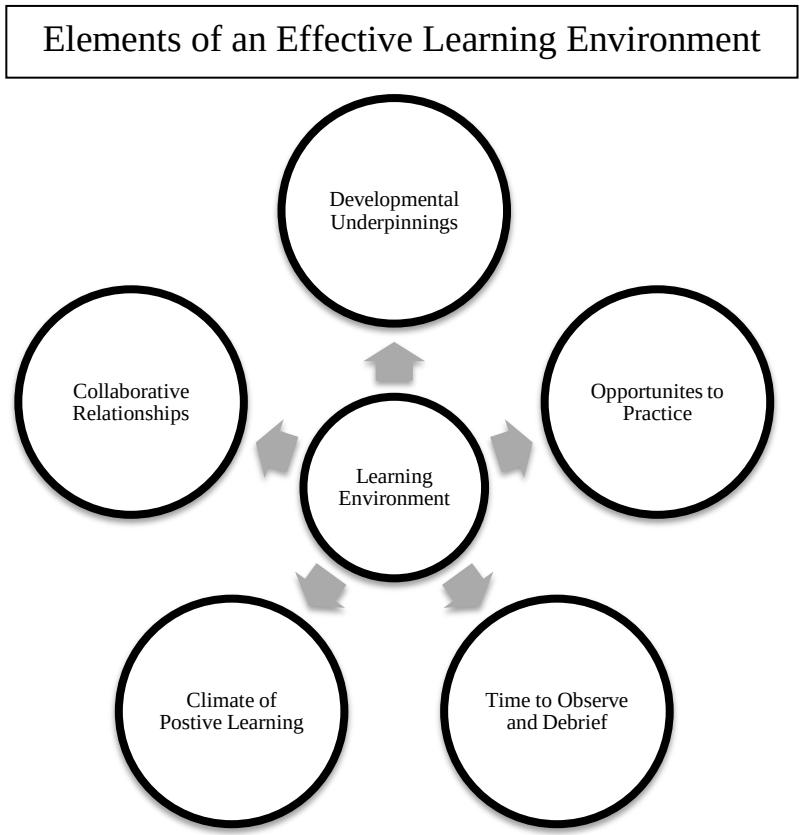
Practicum Learning Environment

Participating in practicum is an essential part of an educational experience and required to prepare competent, effective, and ethical practitioners. This hands-on learning experience also provides the foundations for continual learning and growth on and off the job site. Learning interactions between supervisors and students should be intentional, well thought-out and purposeful.

Developmental underpinnings

Through relational and direct supervision, students learn and become confident practitioners. In the early stages of practicum learning, student confidence is built by emphasizing strengths rather than focusing on deficit areas. In doing so, student concerns and anxieties can be minimized as they experience their on-site successes. Building upon students' strengths as they develop skills leads to competency in the field. This cooperative practice style helps foster personal growth and develops unique practice abilities at a pace that is suited to the particular individual.

To help students move theoretical ideas into experience, and facilitate the application of knowledge in field settings, students may begin their practicum training with predefined educational goals and learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are statements that describe essential skills and abilities that students hope to achieve during placement. Ensuring that learning outcomes are met requires that students demonstrate their practice skills to supervisors during the practicum placement. Learning outcomes should be geared towards the developmental needs of practicum students at that given time. Fostering a developmental learning approach, requires collaborative relationships, positive learning environments, time to observe and debrief with experienced practitioners, and opportunities to practice with clients.



Collaborative Relationships

Optimizing learning and development in practicum settings requires a working alliance grounded in positive, productive working relationships. Mentoring and support from the supervisor fosters the development of practical skills. Factors that contribute to a successful working relationship include a non-judgemental and timely approach along with a positive and collaborative relationship. A step-by-step framework that helps establish a collaborative relationship includes:

1. Taking the time to discuss students' individual learning plans and goals to ensure that these are realistic and relevant to the students' career plans.
2. Ensuring that students demonstrate a high level of competence in the field.
3. Offering mental and emotional support, especially for students who are challenged in this domain.
4. Mentoring and modeling that helps students consider and develop skills to maintain a healthy work/life balance.

There are also a number of traits that are characteristic of effective supervisors. These personal qualities include the ability to role model, presenting with confidence, acting with professionalism, combined with being flexible, creative, positive, friendly, and accepting.

Within a collaborative model, academic learning goals will need to be considered and supervisory roles will require adaptations to the range of student abilities. There are three levels or stages of supervision for students. In all three stages, an effective supervisor-student relationship is required, with the power balance and practice roles shifting as student competence develops.

At the first level or stage, supervisors adopt the expert role in order to help students execute safe client interactions while learning to practice skillfully and ethically. In this early level, supervisors maintain an authoritative professional stance, rather than a personal one, as this can help to establish a predictable and boundaried learning environment.

The second stage of professional development assumes that students have developed some mastery in their practice and will require less direct guidance from the supervisor. Support for learners at this stage requires that supervisors let go of the expert stance while enabling students to apply their own skills and ideas in practice.

During the third stage, a collegial relationship develops as the practitioners become more equal in their skills and practice abilities. At this stage, students are encouraged to act as competent workers that contribute to practice in leadership roles.

Although supervisory roles may shift as students develop practice proficiency, a collaborative relationship must continue to underpin the learning placement. Careful observation and adaptation will be required to support student learning goals and to determine appropriate tasks for students to manage. Development is not a linear process, and through the creation of a learning alliance, supervisors can assist students in moving through anxieties, increasing their confidence in their abilities as practitioners, and ensure that growth continues throughout the practicum placement.

Positive Learning Environments

Positive environments are foundational to a prosperous learning atmosphere. Belonging to an extended community enhances student learning; therefore, the entire placement site should be considered as part of the learning environment. Welcoming positive environments include high expectations of students' ability and trust that they will contribute positively at the agency.

There are aspects of supervisors that contribute to positive learning environments:

- Practitioners who promote and encourage risk-taking and reflection, and then provide constructive feedback.
- Supervisors that view mistakes as learning opportunities rather than a lack of ability.
- Supervisors who practice from a strength-based, non-judgmental approach.
- Practitioners who create an adaptive environment that allows for increasing responsibilities with demonstrated growth.
- Mentors that accept responsibility, act assertively, pass on the language and culture of the profession, and are flexible yet consistent.
- Supervisors who promote the unique development of students and ensure that students have a voice in work-place interactions.

A quality learning environment contains many factors, which may or may not be present in every setting. Focusing on the environment itself prior to placement, and ensuring there are consistent routines and practices, support learning and student development.

Time to Observe and Debrief with Practitioners

Potential supervisors need to be aware of the actual time and practice commitment that are required when agreeing to a field placement.To fully benefit from a practicum placement, students need access to and interactions with supervisors who are mentoring them. Modeling, providing information in a variety of forms, and assigning tasks, are regular supervisory activities in practicum placements. Regular reflective discussions are a crucial part of the learning process and require that supervisors actually access and observe student-client interactions during the students' placement. This 'quality time' is required for student and supervisor collaboration and assessment. Student goals and plans also require time to evaluate achievements and examine areas of challenge.

Taking the time to meet and converse with supervisors, as well as observing and debriefing with practitioners who are completing actual interventions, helps students to reflect on and improve their own work. When students work with clients, opportunities to receive feedback on their practice is helpful to both students and their clients. Students are generally open and willing to engage with supervisors, especially if the feedback is offered the contexts in which they are working.

Debriefing with supervisors also provides students with the chance to discuss and rehearse interventions and receive feedback prior to student-client interactions. Through targeted practice examples, supervisors can ensure that students are practicing effectively and appropriately, while offering them opportunities to enhance abilities and troubleshoot problem areas.

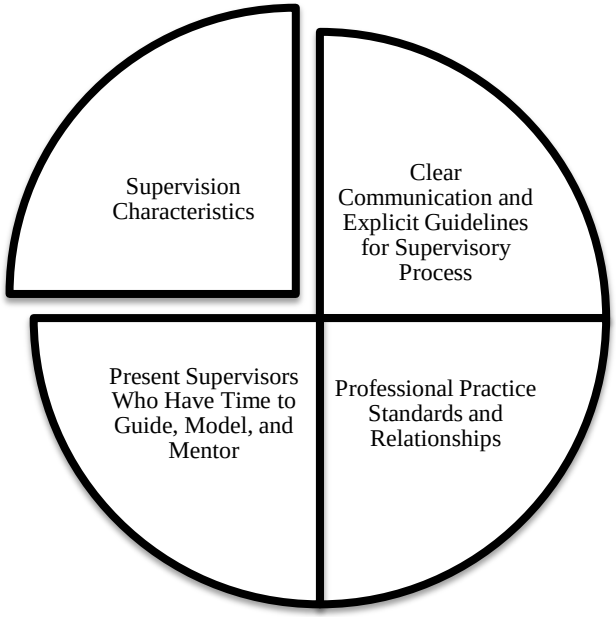
Opportunities to Practice with Clients

Practicum settings are the ideal mechanism in which students can learn the application, integration, and the other discrete entities of a particular practice. Preparing effective practitioners requires not only learning about the knowledge base for the practice but also having opportunities to learn and integrate theory and apply it in their practice. Students report that the least effective method of promoting practice competence is lectures and appreciate watching their supervisors and other professionals in real-time situations instead. Using a variety of learning experiences, while considering supervision strengths and abilities, is likely to produce effective student learning opportunities.

Developmental Learning Environment Summarized

Hands-on field experiences support student learning and outcomes by offering them opportunities to develop skills and apply classroom based-learning. In order for students to be able to apply their skills in practice settings, they must be able to engage in numerous guided and supervised interactions in the practicum setting. This kind of developmental learning environment parallels the values and approaches in educational settings and promotes congruent and continuous learning opportunities in the field.

Supervision Characteristics that Promote Learning in Practicum



When students are placed in community settings, they are likely to be exposed to a variety of working cultures and professional identities. The ability of human service practitioners to work in a number of diverse settings helps instructors align student goals and career trajectories with placement opportunities, and likely offers students an understanding of various roles in human services.

Present Supervisors Who Have Time to Guide, Model, and Mentor

'Being available' is central to the role of practicum instructors and supervisors. The quality of the student/supervisor relationship has a key influence on students' learning and general level of satisfaction with the practicum placement. Access and availability to supervisors, more time for reflective conversations, and improved elucidation of the connections between theory and practice are required for optimal student learning. Constructive feedback and reflection, as well as troubleshooting challenges, requires time for meaningful conversations. Time is also required for the discussion and development of the supervisor-student relationship itself.

Communication and clarity in supervisor-student conversations is a pivotal part of the student-supervisor process. It is important to remember that even students who are mature, independent, and reasonably self-assured can find that the combination of academic rigor, continuous self-examination, and the acquisition and mastery of a new role can lead to doubts about practice abilities. A collaborative and open supervisory relationship can help reduce practice-based stress and minimize student doubt.

Practice Styles and Relationships

A relationship with a proficient practitioner is the basis for a rewarding practicum experience. Effective supervision results in students feeling more confident, competent, and empowered. The working relationship established during practicum experiences is a significant part of the learning and development process and needs to be fostered in a purposeful manner.

There are five skill areas in practice that students deemed as being important to their learning:

1. Personal Connectedness is defined by students as the ability of the supervisor to make connections with the student, engage in personal and working conversations, as well as help students deal with challenges while feeling recognized, valued, and acknowledged. This connectedness empowers both parties, provides a working foundation, and can lead to a better understanding of practice over time.

2. Supervisors that contribute to the understanding of practice roles (i.e. role interpretation) by defining roles and responsibilities, articulating expectations, and purposefully influencing students' practice. This overt explanation of practice fosters student-supervisor trust, decreases ambiguity in practicum settings, builds respect and rapport, and increases the confidence of both parties.

3. Supervision strategies that students appreciated, included the initial adoption of expert and novice roles, that later shifted with developing competence. Other factors include supporting students' decision making, offering advice and encouragement, as well as mentoring students in practice. These strategies reduce misunderstandings, provide a secure based for development, and make consultation and collaboration easier.

4. Students felt supervisors who could work collaboratively with them fostered a variety of practice abilities including

planning interventions, building on learning, reflecting on learning needs, and linking theory to practice. This collaborative style promotes self-awareness, leads to practice improvement, and enhances the learning environment.

5. Being able to critically examine practice is another ability that students feel is important to their learning experience. Supervisors, who can purposefully reflect on complex situations, re-examine their own beliefs and practices, and who can pose questions to students reinforce student learning. Skills acquisition that is connected to this reflective style of interaction includes promoting self-awareness, developing habits of self-reflections, and grounding knowledge of practice.

Guidance for the Supervisory Process

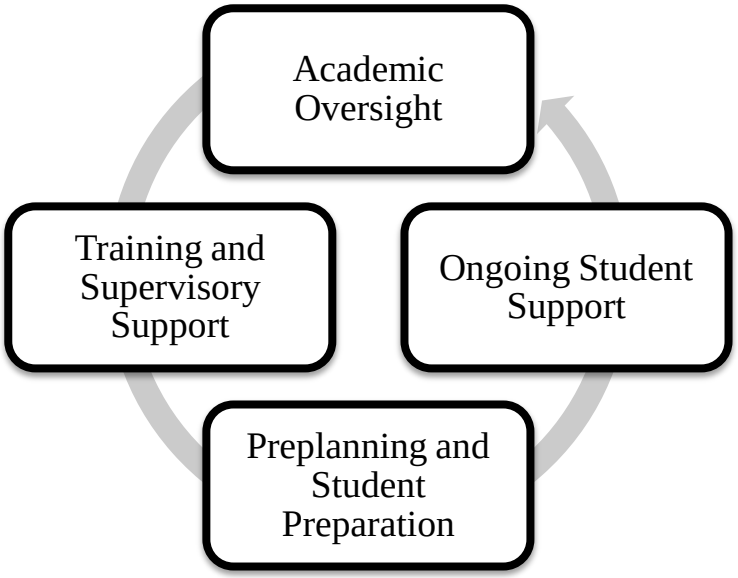
Transparent and accurate communication is essential prior to and during field placement to ensure student and host needs and goals can be addressed. With increasing student numbers and expanding academic requirements, practicum placements can create extra demands for the host organization. A lack of clarity surrounding practicum course instructors' and site supervisors' roles may place even more demands on practicum supervisors. Prior to practicum placement, written, explicit agreements should cover the expected experiences and duties of the student, how and how often evaluative feedback will be given, how communication will occur between the two parties, how problems with students will be dealt with, what records will be kept, and other important learning elements.

Students support this formal approach and indicate that they prefer a structured, clinical, and more directive style of supervision in the field. A well-defined supervisory relationship, with clear expectations and parameters, benefits student learning, even at a graduate level. At times, students require support to understand the role of supervision in the field and may need assistance in making and sustaining these work-based relationships. Fostering knowledge of how and when to access supervision in their placement also helps students engage more effectively in their learning role. Some students have not been exposed to professional supervision and will benefit from clear direction or modeling on how best to utilize interact with supervisors in the field. Supervisors who are unsure of what to do in their supervisory roles can also seek guidance from experienced mentors and instructors from the learning program as well.

Supervision Requisites for Field Placements Summarized

The importance of the supervisory role in practicum placements cannot be understated. These supervision elements contribute to positive student learning and practice outcomes. These elements are best combined with a positive learning environment for optimal student learning opportunities.

Academic Oversight



Consistency and strategic planning need to be part of the practicum process, and a coordinated learning plan that links the placement work with the academic structure and theory is necessary to offering students the best opportunities for successful learning outcomes. In order to reduce the workload of the host site, while ensuring that the values of practice embedded in the educational program are upheld, the academic program can support the practicum placement.

Training and Supervisory Support

Focusing on the tripartite supervisor - educational program - practicum course instructor relationship, and making the time to nourish this connection, is quintessential to practicum planning. Strong involvement from the educational institution, and support in linking theory to actual client interactions has been determined to decrease educational confusion in practicum settings. Educational program support is required to mitigate the demands and challenges of hosting students on site. Teaching supervisors how to support and encourage student learning may also be offered and is often appreciated.

Being available to assist supervisors as they learn and develop in their roles, offering supervisory training to assist in working with various students, creating supportive networks for the placement host, and making learning resources available online and in other formats are some of the ways that the educational institution can support the on-site placement. Linking the competencies, values, and theoretical underpinnings that are taught in the educational program to those that prevail in the practicum site can also benefit the individuals who are involved. When educational programs support on-site supervision, educational instructors can work with placement supervisors to ensure that students achieve educational objectives and provide appropriate learning parameters with evaluative tools to ensure optimal student development.

Pre-planning and Student Preparation

Prior to practicum placement a substantial amount of planning is required to ensure an effective learning situation. When analyzing a possible placement, students' individual learning needs and the contributions students can offer to settings need to be reviewed. Another factor

that should be considered prior to placement is a review of the clients who may be meeting with students to ensure that students are capable of practicing competently, effectively, and ethically with these clients.

The pre-planning process should involve securing a supervisor with relevant qualifications for students and their educational goals. After securing sites and supervisors, meetings should be arranged for students, instructors, and supervisors to discuss and clarify expectations of the placement and supervision process. During these meetings various roles, policies, limitations of the placement, and other pertinent details can be addressed. After all this, the crucial next step, is to define how student supervision and assessment sessions will be conducted, including formal, informal, and other communication methods. Finally, negotiating how feedback and evaluation is going to be structured is also an important part of the pre-planning process.

Practicums that take place in multidisciplinary settings may create additional confusion for students, especially at locations where practice roles and supervision norms are varied. Multidisciplinary placements provide students with opportunities to engage in collaborative settings and practice working from a team perspective. Students who practice in these settings report increased skills in documentation, a better understanding of practice roles, and an increase in respect for other practice paradigms. Some students can feel unprepared to manage things in these more complex settings. Preparation is part of a successful experience in these complex, inter-professional, placements; this involves helping students to understand the various professional roles in the agency, and considering and discussing the different roles and the implications for practice. The structure and function of the practicum site is also important to explain to students.

Placement-based learning requires considerable planning and preparation by the educational program and practice supervisors with students learning goals in mind. A lack of preparation can result in educational gaps for students' learning plans and problematic placements where students do not meet the expectations of the agency. Other student proficiencies that need attention prior to practicum placement include preparing students to engage in reciprocal feedback with the supervisor, addressing ways to deal with the education and power differences on site, and developing adequate conflict resolution skills.

It is important for educational instructors to find sites that align with student learning goals, manage the practicum training overall, provide written training plans to supervisors, ensure there is adequate time to actually work with clients and receive feedback, confirm that supervisors have adequate training and knowledge to work with students, and train students in settings that students are likely to practice in, or transfer skills from, upon graduation. Clearly articulated learning goals are beneficial because from the outset, these goals offer an overt and agreed upon direction that fits with the learning context and sets the stage for the learning/reflexive exercises, which may be undertaken at various times in practicum - including the mid-point and end point evaluations.

Ongoing Student Support

Along with pre-planning and student preparation, ongoing student support from the educational program is also required for practicum learning. Opportunities for students to connect with peers and instructors during practicum placements are a required learning activity and support the onsite learning. This extended community of practice helps foster a deeper understanding of how others experience practice and promotes practice efficacy and competence while offering students with a safe place to air concerns. Engaging in conversations with a broader community provides opportunities to further reflect and continue to construct knowledge and develop a sense of practice identity. The connections also provide students with the chance to explore areas of practice they find challenging in greater depth while they are in a safe, familiar, and supportive environment.

In overseeing students, educators should be aware that community placement hosts may or may not be able to offer students enough time for learning and/or effective support. While instructors can review the potential work environment of the setting to determine if the site is a good fit for the students involved, students may also have questions about the hosts' views on students and learning, and should be invited to consider the nature and culture of the host site with instructors.

If a practicum setting is less than ideal when it comes to fostering a positive environment, mitigation strategies may be considered for the setting. Some students may not be ready to learn in some settings. For example, a work site with high case loads and few resources may not offer students enough one-to-one supervision time on site and may not meet particular student expectations. With these possibilities in mind, instructors can determine student readiness, review student goals and career plans, offer extra supports, and/or facilitate at least one supportive connection at the placement. On the other hand, if students have particular hopes of working in more structured and legally framed fields of human services work (e.g. child protection, youth custody) creating strategies for working in these environments may be a goal of student learning. These placements may be particularly suitable for advanced students who wish to work on self-care and self-management strategies while building skills and experience in their career area.

Supervision Requisites Summarized

In order to foster successful practicum placements that foster student development, educational programs need to support field placements in a variety of ways. Some of the supportive mechanisms that have been highlighted include the provision of ongoing student support (with options at the practicum setting and within the classroom), engaging in pre-planning and practicum preparation with student skills and strengths in mind, and offering training and oversight for the site placement supervisors.

Conclusion: Practicum Elements that Support Learning

The learning environment, combined with clear supervision protocols and relevant academic oversight contribute to a successful practicum placement. Practicum experiences that include goal orientated learning and pay attention to factors that create growth and change in students, are more likely to produce tangible learning outcomes.

Practicum Assessment Methods

The intention of practicum as part of a program of study is to benefit student learning by applying theoretical knowledge in practice settings, with support and supervision. Commitment from the agency and educational institution is required to provide a practicum placement that allows learners to acquire new skills and integrate classroom theory. Practicum students require evaluation and feedback in a variety of forms and on an ongoing basis. At a more advanced level of practice, graduate students may have clear learning targets and aim to work in settings that enhance and expand their current practice capabilities which require targeted feedback that continues to stimulate student development.

A partnership between students, supervisors, and instructors enables learning and enhances constructive feedback for students. The following section explores assessment in the realm of practicum learning, and reviews models and methods that are currently used to assess a variety of human service students.

Developmental models of assessment

Supervision in practice often includes developmental models of assessment. These models of supervision emphasize the evolving supervision needs of students and supervisors as they develop competence and confidence in practice. These developmental measures presume that professional development follows a series of stages of increasing competence in practice skills. While navigating these sequential stages, students must manage developmental challenges such as increasing their skills and abilities in more complex situations, forming professional practice identities, building confidence in a variety of work related situations, and practicing with less constant or present supervision. Supervision interventions, in this model, match the developmental level and experience of students and offer a framework to evaluate students' progress over time. The overarching goal of developmental supervision is to provide students with individual, concrete, effective, personally tailored evaluation and feedback in order to promote learning.

Competencies based assessment

Competencies-based approaches in education and training have been extended to many realms of human service work. Competency or objectives-based assessments encourage and evaluate practice related to specific, pre-determined, competencies involving a variety of knowledge-based domains. Models of supervision that follow concrete lists of competencies can help with general assessments and provide a framework for systematizing student performance.

Feedback

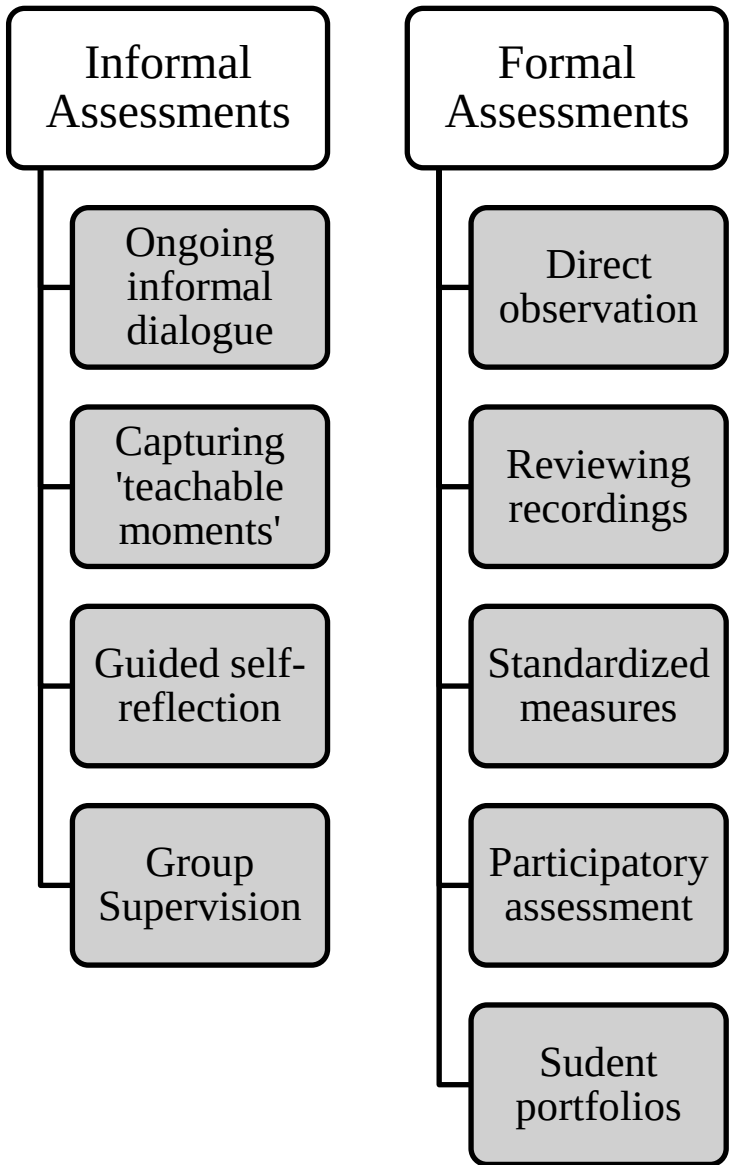
Feedback is a critical part of assessment in practicum. Effective feedback is direct, specific, based upon concrete observations, timely, and respectful. The tools with which feedback can be provided can be informal and unstructured and formal and structured in nature, and require various amounts of time and different levels of expertise to implement. Students benefit from feedback that comes in a number of formats. The range of these approaches from informal to formal is discussed below.

Assessment Options in Practicum Settings

Assessment tools should engage students, supervisors, and instructors in meaningful conversations that promote skill development while identifying areas that require additional learning and improvement. Student, supervisor, and instructor relationships are improved when assessment tools are positioned with the formative function of supporting learning and skill development in practice. Structured feedback is essential to student learning, and the act of relaying observational information needs to be a deliberate component of practicum placement. Students have indicated that they appreciate the evaluation of their work during field placements. Moreover, student concerns and anxieties about assessment in practicum outline the need for clear, explicit, and collaborative evaluation processes.

The timing and nature of the feedback offered, along with employing an assortment of assessment methods, is likely to offer students the best learning opportunities and involve a variety of ways to impart constructive information.

Conceivably, the use of a variety of assessments methods in different settings, along with evaluations from several supervisors, will support a range of student learning styles and developmental abilities and promote desirable learning outcomes over time. This way, knowledge can be integrated and expanded in practicum placements, and students, supervisors, and instructors can continue to collaboratively respond to an extensive range of changing and complex environments that are present in practice.



Informal Assessments

Informal assessments include a variety of techniques used in the field to promote student learning. Some models are interactive and require participation from supervisors, students, and possibly their practicum course instructors. Other assessments can be completed off-site and are generally self-reflective in nature. Informal assessments are directed towards the facilitation of student learning and are used by instructors and supervisors to encourage practitioner development and growth. They can also be used to identify student strengths and weakness with regard to their field work, and to help students reach the next level of practice ability. The informal assessments that are reviewed in this section include ongoing informal dialogue, capturing teachable moments, group supervision, and educational or classroom support. The benefits and limitations of each practice are presented along with a definition of the informal assessment in the realm of human services practice.

Ongoing Informal Dialogue

Ongoing informal dialogue defined. Ongoing informal dialogue, or formative feedback, includes the reflective and intentional conversations that happen between students, supervisors, instructors, and other individuals that are intended to promote student learning during practicum. Informal dialogue can take place casually as the student works at the site and can include scheduled sessions that provide students with opportunities to seek and receive feedback. Learning conversations in general require respect, mutual trust, and a willingness to listen and risk one's opinions.

Informal dialogue can be used as an effective assessment tool. Engaging in deliberate conversations with students makes student thinking transparent, and by doing so, student knowledge can be questioned, examined, and shaped constructively. Overall, it has been found that informal dialogue can reveal students strengths and challenges in conceptual, practical and social domains, and provide evidence of their practice abilities.

Interactions with supervisors, peers, and other workers at the practicum can offer students opportunities to discuss practice and receive feedback; these casual conversations can be a good way for students to supplement learning as well. Many human service settings are multi-faceted and offer less direct supervision as students gain competency; this leads to informal dialogue being based on student observations, thoughts, and reflections instead.

Benefits of ongoing informal dialogue. Discussion and dialogue are commonly used learning techniques that can be employed by experienced and less experienced supervisors. Students report that ongoing and meaningful dialogue is a helpful part of learning process. This practice builds supervisor to student relationships, which can lead to increased student confidence and trust. Informal dialogue can be embedded in strengths-based and developmentally responsive protocols and also values student and supervisor knowledge, while empowering student choice in practice.

Informal dialogue based assessment can include many of the casual verbal interactions that students and supervisors engage in throughout the students' time at the placement and can focus on any subject that students and supervisors choose to discuss. Supervisors can gather information on students'

conceptual understanding as well as practical knowledge application through informal dialogue and can compare and contrast this information with student performance over time.

Limitations of ongoing informal dialogue. The use of informal dialogue as a means of assessment possibly poses certain challenges for the supervisor. Useful formative feedback needs to be objective, explicit, and on target. Effective delivery of feedback requires supervisors to have strong communication skills and be able to support student learning and problems. Supervisors must also be able to resolve conflict, create relationships that can support courageous conversations, and lastly, deal with the power imbalances inherent in student/supervisor relationships. Furthermore, for the most efficacious conversations, supervisors need to create the time necessary to converse with students in a meaningful way, and to actually observe students' practice to ensure that the dialogue is not reflecting solely on students' understanding of their practice.

With the intention of linking theory to practice underlying the practicum model, supervisors who use this method need to be able to articulate their own practice as it relates to theory while also being able to relay other contextual underpinnings of their field of practice to students they are supporting. This involves an ability to reflect on one's own practice along with having an up-to-date understanding of theory in practice approaches that they are supervising. Human service work, and the theories that guide it, are continually being revised and expanded. On the other hand, supervisors can ask instructors to supply an outline of the theoretical knowledge that would benefit practicum students and supervisors in the placement.

Capturing 'Teachable Moments'

Capturing 'teachable moments' defined. A teachable moment is a natural opportunity to offer a brief explanation about practice in context or to pause and reflect on practice and intervention options with students as students are working at the placement. The teachable moment, which is unplanned and informal, offers a sample of student practice to discuss while the supervisor provides the guidance and helps to interpret the meaning of the moment, in the context of the interaction with students.

Benefits of capturing 'teachable moments.' In this active learning role, students can be observed closely and provided with continuous encouragement and feedback. This less formal setting offers students the ability to grasp teachable moments and engage in reflections and conversations that promotes learning.

Limitations of capturing 'teachable moments.' Recognizing and capturing teachable moments is a high-level skill related to teaching, counselling, CYC, and other human service work. These opportunity-based learning moments need to happen in a timely and sensitive manner, while also delivering knowledge-based content that is relevant to the individual learner. Seizing teachable moments takes time, and effective communication and practice skills. It is possible that, without overt discussion of the utility of capturing teachable moments and explaining the process to students in advance, students may not recognize that teachable moments are being used to facilitate learning and assess student performance; in fact, students might not even recognize that the learning exchange has occurred.

Guided Self-Reflection

Guided self-reflection defined. Guided self-reflection, typically written by students in response to assigned topics, is a learning process that encourages students to reflect on personal experiences in the practicum. The primary goal of self-reflection in practicum is for students to gain insight into their current practice strengths and deficits, and to improve the way they practice in the field. These reflective exercises can also be used to support the application of theory in practice.

The subject matter students reflect on may be specific to their learning plan and goals, can include an analysis of educational curricula and learning outcomes, may review pre-determined competency and skill areas, and can consider the principles and ideologies that are embedded in the field placement. Some methods used to facilitate this reflection process include journaling, asking for feedback from others at the practicum site, and video recordings of students practicing with clients. Students' compilations of these kinds of assignments are then reviewed by supervisors and/or instructors to assess student learning and growth.

Benefits of guided self-reflection. Students find the process of goal setting and self-rating helpful to the learning process, and reflection likely assists students on focusing on the acquisition of positive guidance skills throughout the practicum. Supervisors' evaluations of these practice skills can also help students reflect more accurately on their practice abilities. Self-reflection exercises facilitate student understanding of their unique practice perspectives, help them recognize their on-site skills and abilities, and aid them in understanding their own process of thinking and knowing.

Limitations of guided self-reflection. What may be most difficult to assess with guided self-reflection is that students have been instructed well enough on the practice of self-reflection to be able to use this skill with expanding levels of insight in more challenging and complex settings. Additionally, students' reflection based self-assessments of their work may not necessarily agree with those of their supervisors. Furthermore, students may be over or under confident in their practice capabilities in practicum.

Another challenge can include the fact that some students do not actually reflect upon their work (that is analyze and examine what they were doing) but tend to simply note the content of their practice (i.e. they describe the situation and setting). Students can treat reflection as a descriptive task, reporting on events, rather than as an analytical task in which they identify reasons for successes and difficulties for which they can then construct approaches for improvement. In addition, students may have limited capacity for process reflections (linking practice to theory) and students may not go on to link the learning to the curriculum or premise level.

Group Supervision

Group supervision defined. Group supervision is defined as an organized process where a field supervisor is given a group of students to work with in a practicum placement. Typically, there are designated working times during the placement where the group comes together to review and expand their practice abilities. Supervisors in this role are generally considered to be individuals with considerable experience in their field of practice. In group learning environments, supervisors need to focus on two main tasks: facilitating a group process with

students and attending to specific supervision needs of individuals in the program. Additionally, while pursuing these two main tasks, group supervisors need to develop a culture that leads to student development and learning while working with a variety of students with different needs and abilities.

This style of supervision may be an effective learning tool for helping students to develop and enhance professional values, acquire knowledge and skills, and reflect on their practice based interventions. The learning opportunities that are reported to be unique to a group process are the interrelated influences generated by supervisors and peers in these learning situations.

As in one to one supervision, students perceive certain elements as conducive to productive learning:
• Competent and positive supervisors with an open and validating style and time to guide students.
• Acquiring objective knowledge through direct teaching, assigned readings, and observation of and by the supervisor.
• Opportunities that invoke interpersonal awareness, emotional insight, while promoting individual goals, and personal development.
• Supportive work sites with constructive feedback and learning opportunities.

Overall, peer to peer interactions are well received especially when groups provide validation, positive feedback, and mutual support. While there are possible detrimental aspects of group supervision, these areas of challenge can be mitigated with a strong understanding of group dynamics by students and supervisors, and with skilled facilitation techniques of the supervisor that influence and guide students' interactions.

Benefits of group supervision. Group supervision can offer students opportunities to share knowledge, discuss differing perspectives, learn about group dynamics, experiment with new behaviors, recognize the universality of their concerns, and develop more accurate self-appraisals. Some of the benefits of group supervision in field placements include:
• Supervisors being able to work with more students in the field.
• The process saves time, especially at the orientation stage of practicum.
• Students are able to learn from peers with a variety of theoretical orientations.
• The group environment empowers students in articulating their thoughts and needs more readily.
• By working together, group skills could be developed that would enhance individual practice abilities.
• Group supervision may help prepare students for group practice, an area where students have indicated they do not feel they have received adequate instruction.

Group supervision can promote peer learning in a safe setting. It is also possible that students can identify parallel processes between peer group work and work with clients to further professional growth. Finally, being or becoming aware of parallel processes in group settings, and discussing the relational interactions with supervision, may allow students to become more cognizant of how they center themselves in therapeutic interactions.

Limitations of group supervision. There appear to be a number of challenges to the use of group work for learning, and subsequently implications for group supervision as an assessment tool. There are obstacles to learning when group

supervision is utilized. Some students feel overly criticised in group settings and report that it is difficult to learn with an audience. This discomfort with the group process itself may inhibit student progress and confidence with practice. Supervisors and students understand that the benefits of group supervision require trust and safety being built into the group experience at the beginning of the process; yet internal and external challenges to facilitating a trusting environment can hamper the establishment of a safe learning experience.

The internal attributes cited as barriers to group learning are associated with the attitudes and behaviour of participants; for example, some students feel less competent than their peers, other students felt frustrated with their group mates, and other students were only willing and able to reveal their potential practice vulnerabilities in one to one sessions. Some of the external factors that can pose challenges include different levels of student experience and education, students with assorted approaches to practice, and students who enter the group at various times during the program. Negative peer histories, and the range of competency and professionalism in the group, can also be obstructions to learning from group supervision.

Beyond what is noted above, students who act as consultants or experts rather than learners, students who do not take risks, and students who are more dominant than peers and are unable to consider and respect other students' efforts make supervision more difficult. These negative behaviours can contribute to group members being more guarded, sharing less information, and providing less feedback to each other. Moreover, the content of supervision sessions can also challenge supervisors and students when the focus is on administrative issues, when time is limited, and when sharing stories detracts from the reflection and learning process.

In order to provide effective group management, supervisor must have strong facilitation abilities, be able to support a variety of learning styles, work with different competency levels, and concurrently manage conflict or tensions in the group. Additionally, supervisors need to continually manage the boundaries between individual supervision and group supervision, which can be a challenge to navigate in real time situations. A group that is not performing well may inhibit student participation, limit the range of feedback and engagement, and not allow for students to develop practice skills in an effective manner.

Informal Evaluations Summarized

Research has shown that informal processes may pose challenges for students and their supervisors and instructors. Since students have concrete expectations with regard to supervision and evaluation, less formal approaches may leave students feeling unsure about their performance and unable to review and evaluate their learning accurately without significant support. With this in mind, reflexive exercises and dialogue can be a key part of self-assessment and skills acquisition, but the evaluation of student performance by more formal methods is also required to ensure that practicum learning outcomes are realized. The next section explores formal assessment methods that may be combined with less formal methods in order to generate more reliable student performance measures.

Formal Assessments

Formalized assessments evaluate student performance through the use of clearly documented learning outcomes, grading rubrics, and pre-defined competencies. This section focuses on formal assessment methods that are representative of common practice in most practicum settings. Direct observation, surveying of audio or video recordings, standardized measures of assessment, participatory assessment, and student portfolios are reviewed and the benefits and limitations of each process are briefly outlined.

Direct Observation

Direct observation defined. As a mode of assessment, direct observation can identify students' area of strength and challenge, support the provision and content of feedback, and provide students with information that helps them to address learning targets and improve their practice. Direct observation is an active process where supervisors watch students engage in practicum work in order to gain an understanding of how they apply skills and knowledge to practice. Direction observation can be used for formative purposes (monitoring and providing feedback on skills) or for summative purposes (evaluation of learning for assessment purposes). Direct observation therefore works as an interactional strategy that serves two main purposes: student assessment and as a basis for providing constructive feedback.

Direct observation is an effective method for collecting information about students who are rehearsing or performing work related tasks so that supervisors can provide feedback to help students identify skills that they are able to perform at acceptable levels and improve their abilities where skills may be lacking. This assessment method also offers supervisors the opportunity to actually monitor students while they are working with clients in field settings, and to see what students actually do, as opposed to what they report that they do in practice. Even though this method of assessment can contribute to student discomfort and anxiety, it is generally considered an important assessment and educational tool.

Benefits of direct observation. There are several key reasons to utilize direct observation in practicum settings: to teach and mentor students, to evaluate student skills and competencies, to provide information to the academic program and other involved parties about student performance, to promote the well-being of students, and to ensure that clients are receiving quality services. In essence, direct observation as a tool that can help to inform students about what they are doing well and what requires improvement. By actually observing practice, immediate and concrete feedback can be offered with the intention of helping students learn.

Students report increased confidence and improvement in their field skills when observation occurs regularly, and when they have a trusting relationship with their supervisor. Having a supervisor watch practice in action helped some students gain relief from self-doubt about the way in which they practice and receive reassurance about their practice abilities. Although direct observation can provoke anxiety in students, some individuals reported that the heightened anxiety they experienced when being observed simulated the stress of working with clients in the field and helped them develop skills and strategies to work with this challenge.

Limitations of direct observation. There are a number of challenges related to implementing direct observation as an assessment tool in practice settings. A lack of time and resources in practicum placements limit the amount of time that can be allocated to directly observing students. It is hard to create a fair evaluation of competence and skill based on infrequent observations, which tends to be an ongoing supervision challenge in human services placements.

There may be other unintended and negative consequences related to direct observation.

1. The observer-effect: Having someone observe student work directly may alter the students' performance in several ways, which raises questions about the credibility of the observation and related feedback. This effect may also appear to improve student performance as students report that they change their practice style to please observers as when they are worried about their evaluation results.
2. Assessment versus learning: Students were often unclear whether direct observation was being used to evaluate student ability (summative assessment) or to provide information to support student learning (formative assessment). This lack of clarity left students feeling unsure of the potential outcomes which provoked emotional discomfort and impacted their practice performance.
3. Impacts to the client-student relationship: The presence of an observer could impact the relationship and rapport that students had established with the clients they are working with. When being watched, some students reverted to a more formal and less engaged practice style rather than working in natural ways that suited their personality.
4. Lack of authenticity: Students may have questions about whether supervisors have observed an authentic version of their practice and may doubt that supervisors are therefore able to provide them with feedback that is accurate.

Reviewing Audio or Video Recordings

Reviewing audio or video recordings defined. Video recording for supervision is a process where students arrange to video record one or more of their meetings with their clients in order to view them in supervisory sessions. To use this assessment method, students must fully describe the process to all participants in advance, obtain formal consent to record the sessions, and arrange for time to review the video or audio recording with their supervisors, instructors, and/or peers. Many of the benefits and limitations of this assessment method mirror those that have been itemized in direct observation; some additional considerations are documented next.

Benefits of reviewing audio or video recordings. Reviewing actual student work, rather than relying on student reports of what they do in practice, is important as part of a less-biased assessment approach. Video recording is useful and may be preferable to live supervision for a number of reasons: the interaction can be played multiple times for learning purposes, after watching the video or hearing the recording, role playing to try alternative strategies can occur, and progress over time can be observed and compared using this method. In order for this kind of supervision to be effective, supervisors need to provide a nonjudgmental and supportive environment that is non-competitive in nature, and ensure participants' safety and promote a secure connection between team members.

Recording counselling sessions in a developmental learning environment is beneficial to learning because it (a) increases

level of students' self-awareness of their practice style and methods; (b) enhances their sense of objectivity concerning their clinical work; (c) 'brings the client to life' for the supervisor; (d) provides fact-based and impartial information on client progress in therapy; (e) and promotes objectivity in evaluation.

Additionally, video supervision can support less experienced students who are not always able to identify their areas of strengths and weakness, especially if they have limited experience in this realm, and if they were working on new skills or engaging in increasingly complex situations. For these students, analyzing their recorded work with supervisors can support their learning, especially if this analysis takes place in a one-to-one, safe environment that does not interrupt the flow of their practice with clients. It is possible that viewing video recordings in clinical supervision brings students' perceptions of their practice abilities more in line with supervisors' evaluation of their performance.

Limitations of reviewing audio or video recordings. Video or audio recording sessions can complicate the work that students do with clients. Explaining the process can leave clients unsure of what the recordings are actually being used for and may affect the session adversely (akin to observer effect). Obtaining consent requires a formal process which can feel intrusive for the client, and the client can refuse should they not wish to be recorded. Furthermore, even when sessions are recorded, technical challenges may prevent the taping from being useable. Students can be uncomfortable with the process, especially if they think that negative repercussions could be an outcome of the process. Lastly, the amount of time this process takes is likely a contributing factor to the lack of its use.

Standardized Measures of Assessment

Standardized measures defined. Structured assessment involves the use of standardized assessment instruments to provide instructors, supervisors, and students with data on student performance. Standardized assessments have the same format, questions, and evaluative processes for all the students who receive them. In general, standardized assessment instruments are carefully designed tools that appraise the level of students' performance compared to pre-defined program standards. These uniform assessments are designed to measure how well students have applied skills and/or mastered specific knowledge areas as outlined by their educational program.

Typically, standardized assessments are delivered at specific intervals in practicum - often at the beginning, middle, and end of the field placement. Student progress over time can be measured and reviewed collaboratively with these tools. There are several forms of assessment that fall in to the category of standardized measures. Some examples include student learning plans, competencies-based check lists, grading rubrics, and other prescriptive measures that are used to assess the performance of all students. In practicum, these methods can be used for formative comprehension (i.e. monitoring student learning to provide ongoing feedback) or summative learning purposes (i.e. evaluation and grading of student learning).

Benefits of using standardized measures. Having a standard evaluative system makes it simpler for students and supervisors to evaluate their learning progress and goal attainment. Evaluating student performance several times during a field placement with standardized measurement instruments, can show progress and/or highlight challenges in learning overtime.

Additionally, instructors can compare the development of students to others in the program.

The intention behind employing standardized measures in practicum settings is to reduce the subjectivity of assessment by making assessment a more evidence-informed, specific and concrete evaluation process. Standardized assessment tools would also make it more feasible to assign grades for practicum students.

Limitations of using standardized measures. Since human services students practice in such diverse settings, standard evaluation forms would need to be designed to capture the various skills and/or competencies that are being evaluated and to fairly evaluate students in a range of settings. Unfortunately, creating a specific set of criteria for every possible placement setting would be a formidable undertaking, and possibly unrealistic task. Therefore, for standard evaluation forms to be a reliable and valid way of assessing and comparing student ability, best practice would require tailoring the forms to the type of placement setting or using them as informative tools rather than as grading rubrics.

Inadequate guidelines and grading rules along with a lack of clear and specific direction about what to appraise, can make standardized assessment difficult for those who supervise practice. Students also report being confused by a lack of clarity and direction, when there is an absence of clearly defined feedback and marking criteria. Marked or graded assessments of performance are generally avoided in human services as it is difficult to achieve consistency because of the variations in practice settings, range of student abilities, differences in supervisor training and experience, and the eclectic nature of client-student interactions.

Participatory Assessment

Participatory assessment defined. Participatory assessment (or triangulated assessment) involves students' input in the grading or evaluation process such that student reflections, supervisor input, and instructor oversight are amalgamated for comprehensive assessments of student practice. This kind of assessment holds that the environment of practice is important to learning and that knowledge, thinking, and learning are actively situated in this experience. Assessing with a participatory approach allows for both description and judgement to be included (as opposed to just judgement of student information in written format) and respects the value and knowledge of all the participants.

This contextual approach emphasizes the importance of the various participants, the culture, and the physical environment on the learning opportunity, and also allows room to consider the evolving interaction between all the participants on site. Participatory assessments are most effective when they are part of an on-going process of dialogue and partnership by the practicum participants. The presumption behind this approach is that through the attainment of self-evaluation skills, students will be able to independently learn and think critically about how they engage in practice throughout their careers.

The benefits of participatory assessment. The benefits of the participatory approach include the active involvement of students themselves, a demonstration of students' self-assessment ability in practice, the enhancement of student

understanding and reflective development, as well as the opportunity to value the knowledge and ability of others. Plus, this process gives students the opportunity to learn about self-evaluation in practice and develop long-term reflection strategies. The process is empowering for students and supervisors as the role of grading or evaluating work is offered to all participants, rather than being left to the academic institution alone. Participatory assessment processes encourage students to:

• engage in reflexive, critical and independent thinking processes;
• build knowledge based on evaluating different solutions to different problems;
• learn self-sufficiency and direction of one´s own learning;
• practice discussion, debate, and negotiation in work place settings;
• and develop self-directed learning and self-confidence.

Students may prefer active roles in their assessments and can appreciate the interactive, reflective process, and the sense of ownership and responsibility for their own learning outcomes. The participatory process also provides for work skills in action to be assessed, rather than relying on writing ability that is a significant part of written reflective assessments. Supervisors who engage in participatory assessment also approve of the joint learning experience. Both students and supervisors can learn how to evaluate their practice, notice that learning and context are not separate, and may agree that knowledge can actually be constructed as part of the learning experience.

The limits of using participatory assessment. While participatory assessment appears to offer many benefits, there are some challenges associated with the method. The obvious concern is the time and resources that are required to implement this kind of evaluation. Participatory assessment practices are complex and require significant time and planning on the part of instructors and supervisors. At times, the final grades of students that engage in participatory assessment are higher than average. This grading difference may be attributed to possible marking confidence, more accurate assessment, and/or marks that better reflect discrete student projects and their situated experience.

Student Portfolios

Student portfolios defined. Student portfolios involve a more formalized and structured approach to self-evaluation. Through an organized collection of items that exhibit students' skills, practice ability, and knowledge, the portfolio provides students with a means to demonstrate they have achieved learning objectives and met the required outcomes of the practicum placement.

For practicum purposes, a portfolio is a self-assessment and evaluation tool that demonstrates professional growth and goal achievement over time, while providing a framework for collaboratively assessing student growth and performance. The portfolio should contain materials that are connected to clearly stated goals, provide indicators that these goals are being met, and should contain evidence of students' reflections on their areas of strength and challenge and their professional development. Importantly, a portfolio can demonstrate student development and the achievement of goals over time.

Benefits of student portfolios. There are a number of benefits to employing this person-centered learning tool. In using student

portfolios for assessment purposes, students can define and assess their own learning goals, demonstrate their growth and learning in a variety of ways, display their results in a variety of creative formats, and can use the portfolio to stimulate in depth conversations with their instructors and supervisors. Furthermore, with this personalized assessment method, students can incorporate their own philosophies, beliefs, and understanding of practice as they relate to it.

A well-designed portfolio describes students' learning opportunities and provides evidence that students have achieved their learning goals and are able to explain how their field work aligns with their course materials. This concrete approach is a way for practicum students to demonstrate the acquisition of practice-based skills and knowledge, as well as self-evaluate their areas of strength and confidence and highlight practice areas that could be further improved. This assessment instrument can also provide supervisors and students with a common language that they can use for identifying and analyzing students' work.

Students can be creative and capture moments of practice that are meaningful to them in a variety of ways. Because students compile most of the documents and artifacts that they are sharing with supervisors, students dedicate the most time for the project, and can work on the portfolio away from the practicum setting. In evaluating the guided self-reflection that is a part of the portfolio process, students are can self-evaluate their practice competence on many levels: (a) students are able to reflect on and question their practice abilities; (b) they can examine the effect of social and cultural factors relevant to their practicum setting; (c) and students can consider the importance of self-reflection in their future practice. Portfolios can also be used by students to display their own unique identity and practice preferences in the field.

Limitations of student portfolios. As with any assessment tool (self-guided or otherwise), there are some limitations. Different skills levels and practice experience of practicum students will affect the outcomes of self-assessment tools, and students with more experience will be able to reflect on a greater range of experiences and therefore be more able to track their growth over time. Additionally, a certain amount of personal skill and previous practice experience is required to critically examine one's own work, and view this from multiple standpoints.

Importantly, for students to learn through reflective assessments they need to critically reflect on their practice in the field rather than simply describe their practice. Students must actively seek out evidence of their learning, link it to prior knowledge, and then move forward with new knowledge and insight into their practice. In this way, students' prior ways of practice are reflected upon and possibly challenged, and as a result new ways of thinking and practicing are integrated. Being driven by the need to demonstrate competency in the field, the portfolio may not present the most accurate understanding of self and learning.

Another challenge associated with using portfolios as an assessment tool is the possible reservations supervisors or instructors may have when it comes to evaluating this creative and reflective project. Concerns over judging creative and writing skills, mixed with possible angst over measurement of how students' actual reflective skills are progressing, can create an emotional conundrum for the assessors themselves. While a grading rubric may eliminate some of this subjective doubt, the

uniqueness of the submitted projects is likely to continue to confound the supervisors and instructors who are assessing these portfolios.

Conclusion: Assessment Models in Practicum Settings

Assessment tools should engage students, supervisors, and instructors in meaningful conversations that promote skill development while identifying areas that require additional learning and improvement. Student, supervisor, and instructor relationships are improved when assessment tools are positioned with the formative function of supporting learning and skill development in practice. Structured feedback is essential to student learning, and the act of relaying observational information needs to be a deliberate component of practicum placement. Students have indicated that they appreciate the evaluation of their work during field placements. Moreover, student concerns and anxieties about assessment in practicum outline the need for clear, explicit, and collaborative evaluation processes.

Formalized assessments can be used as learning tools, or as a grading device, although whether or not to assign grades for field experiences appears to be contentious issue in human services. Direct observation methods for supervisory purposes are highly recommended for student assessment. On the other hand, it is likely that administering a variety of assessments that include formal and informal evaluations will help students understand their practice strength and challenge areas, while continuing to gain practice competence in the field. Valid assessments require regular communication involving students, supervisors, and instructors from the beginning to the end of practicum. This communication requires a considerable time commitment. Furthermore, clear objectives and concrete learning outcomes need to be predefined and monitored continuously throughout the placement.

Some settings may adapt well to formal assessment protocols, whereas some placements may require a more flexible and informal approach. For example, in CYC students practice in such a broad range of settings that working with a single assessment protocol is likely to pose considerable challenges. Perhaps it is therefore prudent to ensure that practicum students and supervisors are supported in learning via a number of formal and informal assessment modalities.

The timing and nature of the feedback offered, along with employing an assortment of assessment methods, is likely to offer students the best learning opportunities and involve a variety of ways to impart constructive information. Conceivably, the use of a variety of assessments methods in different settings, along with evaluations from several supervisors, will support a range of student learning styles and developmental abilities and promote desirable learning outcomes over time. This way, knowledge can be integrated and expanded in practicum placements, and students, supervisors, and instructors can continue to collaboratively respond to an extensive range of changing and complex environments that are present in practice.