THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS - FIELDWORK SUPERVISORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR ROLE AND NEEDS FOR SUPPORT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines current experiences, issues and concerns in fieldwork education in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand from the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors. In particular the research explores how supervisors conceptualise their role and their needs for support, education and training to fulfil the role of student supervisor. In order to provide a background for an informed analysis and discussion of the research findings, the thesis provides a summary of key events and documents which have influenced developments in fieldwork education in Aotearoa/New Zealand from 1970 to 1997 and a review of other research studies from this country and overseas. Four areas of theorising are examined and applied to an understanding of fieldwork education in social work. These are critical social science, critical pedagogy, adult learning theories and models and a critical reflective conceptualisation of professional education. These theories are influential in the development of an argument for a critical reflective model of the practicum in social work education which connects the nature of the practice with which social workers are engaged to the professional education and training which prepares students for this practice.

The thesis is a qualitative study of the nature of teaching and learning in fieldwork education from the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors, and utilises an action research process. The research findings show that the current issues which are of concern to fieldwork supervisors reflect not only their personal journeys and experiences but are also influenced by what is happening at a political and ideological level in both the educational and practice settings in which fieldwork is situated. The recommendations which arise from the research with regard to future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education, are at two levels. Firstly, there are practical suggestions about changes to the current set of arrangements around fieldwork education which could be implemented immediately by agencies and/or education and training institutions. Secondly, the research findings generate discussion about some of the deeper philosophical issues underlying the provision and resourcing of fieldwork education in social work which are unlikely to be resolved without the collaboration of all of the interested parties. In this respect, the fieldwork component of social work education is seen to be situated in a critical space, because placements are the point at which the worlds of educators, students, agency social workers and managers of social service organisations collide, thus creating the necessity for dialogue between all of the interest groups.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my daughters Julie and Annette. May you have a lifelong love of learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would particularly like to thank all of the fieldwork supervisors who participated in this research and shared their wisdom with me. I would also like to acknowledge all of the students and all of the fieldwork supervisors whom I have encountered in my work as a Placement Coordinator as you have all contributed to my knowledge and understanding of the importance of fieldwork in social work education.

I am indebted to three of my colleagues at the School of Policy Studies and Social Work. Mary Nash and Rachael Selby have closely supervised my work over the last two years and Jill Worrall has recently acted as a peer reviewer of this thesis. I acknowledge the contribution each of these women have made to this thesis by sharing their stimulating ideas and by providing feedback, encouragement and practical suggestions.

In the course of researching and writing up this study, I have entered into an exciting dialogue by e-mail with other educators both in Aotearoa/New Zealand and overseas, who also have a passion for improving the quality of fieldwork education in social work. While too numerous to mention by name, these people have deepened my understanding of some of the current issues in fieldwork education in their countries.

I was fortunate to receive an Academic Womens Study Award from Massey University, which gave me some time away from the work of teaching and placement organisation, to write up the research and this was extremely beneficial.

Life has a way of throwing you a curve ball when you least expect it and I experienced a period of chronic ill health while I was writing up this thesis. There were three people who helped me through that difficult time with their unfailing encouragement, support and belief in me, so I simply say thank you to my husband Mike and my parents Gil and Marguerite.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Nga Tou Rourou Me Toku Rourou, Ka Ora Ai E Te Iwi (With your contribution and our contribution, we can build a better outcome)

Introduction

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to locate myself in the area under study and to locate the research in the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. It therefore seems appropriate to begin with a whakatauaki[1] which is of personal significance to me. This whakatauaki is included in a certificate which the Social Work Department in which I am a Placement Coordinator, sends to fieldwork supervisors at the end of a placement in recognition of their contribution to the student's education. The whakatauaki is symbolic of my conviction about the importance of strong partnerships between educators and social workers in the provision of field education. It also reflects the collaborative research methodology utilised in this study.

The chapter begins with a description of my own involvement in the area under study. This is followed by a discussion about what led me to choose to research fieldwork education from the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors. Next, this chapter presents some of the key events and documents in the period from 1970 to the present, relevant to an understanding of the current set of arrangements for fieldwork education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This situates the research in a particular social, cultural, political and economic context and provides a bridge to Chapter Two in which I review the literature on fieldwork education in social work from Aotearoa/New Zealand and from other countries. Finally, an outline of the structure of this thesis chapter by chapter is provided.

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[1] This whakatauaki is used by many Iwi. A translation can be found in Ryan, M. (1992) Revised Dictionary of Modern Maori, page 171.

My own journey

In line with the value critical approach (Rein, 1983)[2] which is a key aspect of the methodology of this research project, the assumptions and practices of the researcher are part of what is critically examined in the research process. Therefore, I begin the introduction to the research by locating myself in the terrain I am setting out to discover, as my involvement in fieldwork education has influenced the research questions which have been explored in this study. I have been on the receiving end of fieldwork supervision in the three practice placements I undertook as part of my social work training. The influence of the three people who were my placement supervisors confirms what is written in the literature and emphasised by participants in this study, about the significance of one's own placement supervision experiences. While my placement supervisors were very different people, they all had a very positive influence on my personal and professional development as a social worker. My first placement was in a Department of Social Welfare Student Unit and Garry Cockburn was my supervisor. Garry was, I think, ahead of his time in his emphasis on teaching and learning about practice, rather than just overseeing the placement. My second placement was a community based placement with the Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind and my supervisor was Wendy Craig. Wendy enabled me to really see the relationship between personal troubles and structural issues and provided me with a feminist model for supervision which has influenced my own supervisory practice. My final placement was with the Special Education Service where I experienced cross-disciplinary supervision and consultant supervision in a group. My agency supervisor Ann Behrens, was an Educational Psychologist. Ann taught me about being a reflective practitioner at a deeper, philosophical level and this also stays with me.

For six years, prior to becoming a social work educator at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at Massey University, I was a fieldwork supervisor for Bachelor of Social Work students from the Massey social work programme. Three of these students were on placement with Women's Refuge and I supervised them because I was a member of the collective of women who were providing Women's Refuge services and because I was a qualified social worker. The other three students I supervised when they undertook placements with the Family Support Service which I was managing at the

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[2] According to Rein (1983), value critical inquiry seeks to bring into focus the taken-for-granted assumptions of existing policies and practices, and the social arrangements which support these assumptions. It is a form of inquiry that enables participants to reframe their experiences and leads to changed perceptions. It is linked with advocacy, because the critique of an existing set of social arrangements has a practical interest in realising alternative courses of action. Rein argues that in being exposed to other discourses, a researcher can gain a deeper understanding of his or her own interests and purposes through a process of engagement and transformation.

time. My own personal experiences of student supervision mirror some of the themes from studies which are discussed in the literature review in Chapter Two. In the Refuge placements, there was a danger that students could be thrown in at the deep end of domestic violence and treated as workers rather than students. With Family Support Service, supervising students was seen (by higher management) as an activity largely external to the real work of the agency. It was fine for me to take a student, but placements relied on my commitment and willingness to make time for students, and on my sense of obligation both to the course which had trained me and to the wider profession.

I received no workload relief and very little recognition from my agency for taking a student on placement. This is reflected in other studies into fieldwork education (Syson and Baginsky, 1981; Thompson and Marsh, 1991; Bogo and Power, 1992; Secker, 1993; Slocombe, 1993) and in the comments of participants in this research[3] My experiences as a Student Supervisor made me interested in some of the theories about adult learning (Mezirow, 1981; Kolb, 1984; Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985) and made me think about how to assist students to link theoretical knowledge and practice experience, as well as questioning the kinds of knowing essential to professional practice (Schön, 1983, 1987)[4]. My experiences with the students I supervised, taught me that the best place to begin placement supervision was with their learning needs and of course they all had different learning needs, different learning styles and different abilities.

A year after coming to work at Massey, I and another colleague, Wheturangi Walsh-Tapiata, took on responsibility for organising fieldwork placements for students in the Bachelor of Social Work programme. The wheel really had come full circle and I could now see the other side of the placement process from an educator's perspective. My position as Placement Coordinator convinced me of what I already knew from my own personal experiences both as a student on placement and as a fieldwork supervisor, namely, the central importance of fieldwork placements in social work education and training, which is well supported in the literature. For example, Kadushin (1991: 11) writes that "there is a general consensus that field instruction is the most significant, most productive and most memorable component of social work education". My job as Placement Coordinator has also convinced me of the marginal and vulnerable position of fieldwork within both university and agency settings, which is also well supported by the literature. I have shared similar concerns to those identified in the literature (Thompson and Marsh, 1991; Walker, McCarthy, Morgan and Timms, 1995; Cooper, 1995; Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a) about the quality and availability of placements and shortages of

[3] See Chapter Five and Chapter Six.
[4] These themes are explored in Chapter Three.

fieldwork supervisors and have wondered what can be done to change the situation. I have supported students whose placements have been withdrawn just days before they were due to begin.

I was a member of the Standing Committee on Fieldwork[5] of the New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (now superseded by the Industry Training Organisation, Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi). As a member of that committee, I helped to organise a Fieldwork Consultation Workshop in Auckland in February 1995. This two day workshop contextualised for me what was happening to fieldwork in relation to the bigger picture of developments towards competency based assessment, education and training. I became interested in finding a window into the confusion around future directions for fieldwork education in social work, at a critical point in time as we move from "provider defined curriculum based education to industry driven competency training" (Hopkins, 1995: 2). Simultaneously, as the findings of this research indicate[6], reforms in the public sector and the introduction of managerialist policies are having a direct influence on the willingness of social service organisations to continue to offer student placements, as these are not part of their "outputs" (Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a). Will this crisis in the supply of fieldwork placements for social work students (Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a) provide an impetus for change and offer an opportunity for fieldwork to position itself in a less marginal space?

Another project with which I am currently involved, is the development of a Diploma in Social Service Supervision. A specialist module in this course could be designed towards practice teaching. One of the suggestions for improving the quality of practice teaching in social work that comes out of the British experience, is the development of a curriculum for practice-based learning. If New Zealand were to follow this model, then a much more time-consuming and structured involvement would be demanded of fieldwork supervisors. Hence my interest in this research, to explore with fieldwork supervisors their thoughts about the preparation and support they receive when they take on the role of student supervisor (see Chapters Five and Six) and also their thoughts about both the content and delivery of any further training in this area (see Chapter Seven).

The first part of this chapter has described my own involvement in the area under study. The next section describes the aims of the thesis and the structure of this research.

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[5] This committee was disestablished by Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi in 1996.
[6] See Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

Research Topic

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore the current experiences, issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors in social work education with particular emphasis on their conceptualisations of their role and their needs for support, education and training to fulfil the role of fieldwork supervisor. It is also intended that the research has a practical utility and provides a basis for recommendations for changes to the existing set of arrangements around fieldwork education in social work, if these arrangements are found to be unsatisfactory in any way to participants in the study.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, there is very little research into this topic in Aotearoa/New Zealand. To my knowledge a researcher at the University of Canterbury is currently carrying out research for her doctoral thesis, with students and field educators on the topic of "Indicators for Effective Field Education". Another researcher at Massey University, who comes from Croatia, is evaluating a model of fieldwork education from the University of Zagreb. She has implemented this model with Masters In Social Work (Applied) students at the Albany campus, utilising a collaborative action research methodology (Napan, 1997). The other New Zealand study, which I have drawn on, particularly in the chapter on theoretical perspectives, is a study by Harré-Hindmarsh (1992), which looked at new social work graduates' experiences and concerns as they either entered or re-entered agency settings on completion of a university based qualifying course in social work.

While the research by Harré-Hindmarsh was from the perspectives of students and not just about fieldwork, it does illuminate the area under study in this thesis. I would imagine that some of the contradictions and tensions experienced by new graduates between agency settings and educational settings will also be experienced by social workers who take on the role of supervising a student. For example, Harré-Hindmarsh (1992: 39) argues that students experience conflict between the notion of an autonomous professional practitioner and the "bureaucratic ethos of the agency". If we were to substitute the word "managerialist" for "bureaucratic" to use the terminology of the late 1990s, and to see this conflict as related to the surveillance of professionals in the new managerialist environment (Uttley, 1994), then I would suspect that similar tensions will be very current for fieldwork supervisors in terms of what knowledge, skills and values they pass on to students and this is an area which is explored in this thesis.

Ideally, of course the research design would include the voices of all of the stakeholders in fieldwork education (educators, students, fieldwork supervisors, managers of social

service agencies, clients and representatives of other bodies with an interest in social work education and training, for example the New Zealand Association of Social Workers, the New Zealand Association of Social Work Educators and the Industry Training Organisation for the Social Services) in order to provide a complete picture. As I argue in Chapter Four, this was not feasible for a single researcher in a short time period. However, in order to ensure that the research findings are not one-sided, the perceptions of other stakeholders are ascertained by the use of key informants, key documents, other published studies and from my own participation in the field. The final chapter of the thesis does consider the implications that the recommendations for changes to fieldwork education might have for other stakeholders. However, in presenting the data in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, the window into fieldwork education is the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors. This research can then be set alongside other studies which look at the perspectives of the other stakeholders.

In summary, this research is a qualitative and interpretive study of the nature of practice teaching and learning in social work education from the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors. The research looks at the current experiences, issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors in social work education and formulates some recommendations about their needs for support and training to carry out the role of placement supervisor. In an action research methodology, described in Chapter Four, the research design cannot be highly structured in advance as it requires that ideas and strategies arise out of the research process. In describing action research, Kemmis and McTaggert (1988: 5) state that the aim is to promote "collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out". It is my hope that in some small way, this research will contribute both to a greater understanding from which all stakeholders in fieldwork education can benefit, and to recommendations for changes to the current set of arrangements around fieldwork education if these are found to be unsatisfactory in any ways.

While it is my intention that ideas and strategies emerge from the action research process I have followed in this research, I also have some thoughts and ideas about the area under study which have developed from my own involvement in fieldwork education in social work and from an extensive review of the literature on fieldwork education. Some of the key questions which I hope the research will illuminate are:

- do fieldwork supervisors need to receive some preparation for taking on the tasks of student supervision?

- where does the responsibility for supporting and training fieldwork supervisors lie?

- what are the most appropriate locations, content and methods of education and training for fieldwork teaching?

The next section aims to situate the thesis in the social, economic, political and cultural context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. This section is important to the argument I make in Chapters Two and Three that fieldwork education in social work is situated in a contested space, where there are conflicting aims and purposes. This section contributes to an understanding of what are some of the conflicting agendas in fieldwork education in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Look to the past to understand the present and plan for the future

The English translation of the familiar whakatauaki[7] which opens this section explains why it is significant to first locate the thesis in the political, social, economic and cultural context of Aotearoa/New Zealand before going on to make comparisons with the experiences of other countries in fieldwork education in social work in Chapter Two. This is because knowing where we have come from will help us to evaluate potential future directions for fieldwork education in social work in this country.

What follows is a chronology of key events and documents which I believe have been significant in the development of fieldwork education in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand, from 1970 to 1997. This is not an attempt at a complete history, which is beyond the scope and purpose of this thesis. This account also includes events in which I have participated. Together with Chapter Two, which describes other published studies which have explored fieldwork education in social work, the discussion which follows, contributes to a comprehensive research process which "combines document analysis, interviewing of respondents, direct participation and observation and introspection" (Denzin, 1978: 183, in Patton, 1990: 206).

Nash (1997b) divides social work education and training in Aotearoa/New Zealand into three periods and describes the relative influence of some of the key stakeholders - educators, employers, professional and governmental bodies over these periods. The

[7] The Maori translation of this whakatauaki is - Te tangata kei a ia te wa aianei, kei a ia te wa o mua. Te tangata kei a ia te wa o mua, kei a ia te wa o muri.

periods Nash (1997b: 15) outlines, which are taken from work in progress for her doctoral thesis are:

1949-1973. I am not covering this period except for the last two years. However, it is important to note that in this period, key issues in social work education related to recognition of a social work identity, in-service and pre-entry education and training for social work.

1973-1986. In this period, a key issue was concern over professional recognition for social work and the New Zealand Association of Social Workers (formed in 1964) was involved in lobbying government to establish an organisation with overall responsibility for education and training in social work (Baretta-Herman, 1994: 12).

1986-1995. Nash completes her history of social work education in 1995, whereas my analysis of key events and documents of relevance for fieldwork education, continues up to the end of 1997. Some of the key issues for social work education during this period were: widening access to education and training; adapting to public sector reforms and the change in status of professionals (Uttley, 1994); the introduction of competency based assessment, education and training (Kane and Hopkins, 1995); the proliferation of social work courses with increased competition between courses for fieldwork placements (Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a); and "the fragmentation of a common social work identity" (Nash, 1997b: 15).

The overview of the fieldwork component of social work education which follows, begins just before the start of the second period described by Nash (1997b), thus first covering the period 1970 to 1986 and secondly, the period 1986 to the end of 1997.

1970-1986 - Some Key Events in Fieldwork Education

In terms of legislation, The Department of Social Welfare Act 1971, was significant to social work education and training in two respects. Firstly, the category of social worker was created as a State Services occupational classification. Secondly, under law, the newly established Department of Social Welfare was given responsibility to:

> **provide for the training** (my emphasis) of such persons as the Minister may direct (whether employed in the service of Her Majesty or by any agencies of the Crown, or by any other organisations) to undertake social welfare activities. (Section 4:2:C)

With regard to fieldwork, the significant development was that from 1972 to 1976 the major state agencies (health, justice and welfare) set up Student Units to provide practical training for the new tertiary level social work courses which were established during this period[8]. Circa 1980, the Department of Social Welfare also began paying a financial allowance to social work students for the block placements which they completed over the summer.[9] As one of the participants in this research comments in Chapter Six, there has been a major attitudinal shift in agencies with regard to student placements from this period of the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s when "the agency was actually paying the students and a very strong supporter of placements" (Supervisor, CYPFS), to the 1990s where Student Units have been disestablished and the student field placement allowance discontinued because student placements are not deemed to contribute in any way to the organisation's outputs.

In 1973, the New Zealand Social Work Training Council (NZSWTC) was appointed by the Minister of Social Welfare as an advisory body, with responsibility for developing education and training in social work, establishing standards for social work practice and encouraging social work research (Baretta-Herman, 1994; Nash, 1997b). By the time this body was disestablished in 1986, it had supported the establishment and accreditation of four tertiary level social work programmes and developed programme standards (Baretta-Herman, 1994: 16). Of particular relevance to this thesis, are two key resource documents which were developed by working parties set up by NZSWTC. The first was "Competent Social Work Practice: A Resource Document" (1986)[10] . This document considered the knowledge, skills and values required of a competent social worker and the kind of education needed to prepare someone to become a competent practitioner. The issues of what constitutes competence in social work, how we measure it and how we educate for it, are still very current themes which are explored in this research, especially with regard to the fieldwork component of social work education and training.

The second document prepared by a working party of NZSWTC of significance for this thesis, was "A Supervision Resource Package", published in 1985. This document identified five key elements of social work supervision: administrative; teaching;

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[8] The first Student Unit was established at Wellington Hospital in 1972. With the exception of Justice, which funded its own student units, the other student units were all funded by the Department of Social Welfare.

[9] The financial allowance or vacation wage as it was sometimes known, was payable to all social work students undertaking placements both within the Department of Social Welfare and other agencies. It was paid to alleviate the financial hardship students would face because it was a course requirement for them to complete a block placement over the summer, which precluded them from seeking other paid employment over the summer vacation.

[10] While not published until 1986, the Working Party which produced this document was convened in 1982. This is the reason for discussing this document first.

supportive; reconstructive and consultative. The fourth element of reconstruction[11] is missing from many definitions of supervision. It relates to enabling supervisees (including students) to critically reflect on their current practice so that their actions and those of their agencies are directed to the goal of a just society. In Chapter Three, I propose a critical reflective model of the practicum in social work education, based on the arguments of Schön (1987: 38) about "the kinds of knowing essential to professional competence". It is argued in this thesis that it is very much part of the mandate of social work to engage in action to change structures that create and perpetuate injustice (New Zealand Association of Social Workers, Preamble to Code of Ethics, 1993). Like Schön (ibid), I believe that "reflection-in-action" is central to the preparation of professional practitioners and that the practicum must reflect the nature of the practice for which the student is being prepared. In my view, social work students need to be prepared to facilitate both individual and structural change. The documents referred to above are still of relevance to current issues in fieldwork education around competency based assessment, education and training and around the roles of fieldwork supervisors, which are explored in this thesis.

By the mid 1980s, NZSWTC faced challenges from community workers and Maori interests (Kane and Hopkins, 1995; Nash, 1997b) for supporting a conservative view of professional social work. Two influential documents of significance to social work and social work education, were Puao-Te-Ata-Tu (1986) and Kahukura: The Possible Dream: What the Treaty of Waitangi Requires of Courses in the Social Services (1990). Puao-Te-Ata-Tu (1986) drew attention to the institutional racism inherent in the policies and practices of the Department of Social Welfare. In future, the report stated, all policy development must take account of "incorporating the values, cultures and beliefs of the Maori people" (Puao-Te-Ata-Tu, 1986: 9). In 1990, the Maori Caucus of the New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS) produced the document "Kahukura", a cultural critique of education and training for the social services, arguing that education and training must recognise the aspirations of Maori. This report also raised concerns about how a competency based approach to assessment, education and training would take cultural differences into account, a concern which is expressed by participants in this research.

As I am writing up this research, I am very conscious that the climate in the social services "industry" and in higher education has changed yet again, with organisations being restructured according to an economic rationalist ideology as outlined in Chapter Two. The current emphasis on market forces has no real regard for social justice, placing

[11] The concept of "reconstruction" as part of social work supervision is based on the work of Abels (1977).

emphasis instead in social work education and training on the technical skills needed to carry out a social work role. As one of the participants in this study comments in Chapter Six, "in the current economic climate, there is an anti social work bias, and if agencies are getting rid of that actual role, then how do you get students to have an actual social work placement" (Supervisor, CYPFS)?

As I have stated, the NZSWTC was disestablished in 1986 and was replaced in December 1986 by The New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS). The major differences between the two organisations according to Kane and Hopkins, (1995: 2)[12] was that the standards set by NZSWTC were heavily dominated by Pakeha perspectives and social work models derived from a Western heritage of ideas, whereas in NZCETSS, there was a bicultural basis with a Maori and a Tauiwi Caucus working in partnership and a recognition of the need to include indigenous theories and models of practice in education and training in the social services (Nash, 1997a: 138). Within NZCETSS, the narrow focus of NZSWTC on social work, was broadened to a wider and more inclusive concept of social services, which included community work, youth work and other social services (Kane and Hopkins, 1995; Nash, 1997a). NZCETSS was charged with developing new directions and standards for education and training in the social services on the basis of which, courses in the social services could be accredited.

The work of NZCETSS which is most significant in terms of fieldwork is the working party on field education, which was set up in 1991, and which, in February 1993, produced a consultative document on "Supervised Practice, Fieldwork and Field Visits", a revised version of which was published in August 1993, entitled "Guidelines and Resource Book - Fieldwork/Supervised Practice and Field Visits". This document is highly significant to this thesis for a number of reasons:

1) it recognised the lack of quality assurance measures for social work practice placements. The areas which the working party thought needed some quality assurance measures were: **standards of fieldwork teaching; cultural appropriateness; training of fieldwork teachers; mediation when placement disputes arose; the development of a curriculum for fieldwork; and overall evaluation of the fieldwork component of the social work programme** (my emphasis).
(NZCETSS, 1993: 15).

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[12] The paper by Kane and Hopkins (1995) was presented at the Asia Pacific Regional Social Services Conference held in Christchurch in November 1995. It was subsequently revised and published in the Conference Proceedings in 1996. I have referred to both the first and second versions of this paper.

With regard to this first point, it is interesting to note that all of the areas which were of concern to the working party in 1993, are still considered significant by participants in this research and in many cases policy and practice in these areas was found to be less than satisfactory.

2) it provided much needed guidelines on the practice component of education and training in the social services (NZCETSS, 1993: iii).

3) it emphasised that the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi for social services education and training, outlined in Kahukura (1990), applied equally to fieldwork and field visits (NZCETSS, 1993: 3).

4) it made recommendations with regard to the recognition of prior learning and fieldwork. Generally, the working party considered that, as one of the key purposes of fieldwork is to link theory and practice, "it is not appropriate to give total exemption from fieldwork on the basis of prior learning, because the impact of the course content on practice needs to be assessed" (NZCETSS, 1993: 3).

5) it emphasised accountability to all the stakeholders in fieldwork education including consumers of social services, students, agencies, and educational providers (NZCETSS, 1993: 3).

6) it clarified the number and type of fieldwork experiences required at different levels of qualifications (certificates, degrees and diplomas).

7) it began the process of developing minimum standards that students are expected to have achieved by the end of a practicum.[13]

8) it clarified the respective roles and responsibilities of all of the stakeholding groups.

Clarification of the respective roles and responsibilities of the different parties involved in fieldwork is a particularly relevant area to this thesis, as one of the issues which the research has explored is the question about where the responsibility for supporting and training fieldwork supervisors ought to lie. The working party was very clear that, in their view, "the training and recruitment of fieldwork teachers is a provider

[13] Where there is more than one placement, there is a need for different standards, for example, for a first and second placement.

responsibility, as is the resourcing of the fieldwork programme" (NZCETSS, 1993: 9). Support was thought to include such things as tutor visits, accreditation programmes for fieldwork teachers, in-service training and seminars. Agencies were "expected to make a commitment to the fieldwork teacher in terms of her/his workload, support and resources so as to ensure that the fieldwork teacher has the allocated time, assistance and resources to fulfil the role in a professional manner" (NZCETSS, 1993: 10).

The above statements are interesting with regard to the questions I put to fieldwork supervisors in this research, about the support and training they had received both from agencies and from educational and training institutions (see Chapter Six). According to the working party, fieldwork teachers "should be able to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and proficiency in the field in which the student is placed, competence as a fieldwork teacher and a good level of knowledge of the provider's overall programme" (NZCETSS, 1993: 10).[14] The responses of student supervisors in this research illuminate whether or not these aims have been achieved.

Finally, the NZCETSS Guidelines outline (in an Appendix to the report) past and present common types of fieldwork arrangements. This is relevant to the discussion in this thesis[15] about current models of fieldwork education and about other models which could possibly be developed. All of the above areas in the NZCETSS Guidelines, provide benchmarks against which to consider the findings of this research. Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, the Industry Training Organisation for the Social Services which replaced NZCETSS, has produced its own set of guidelines for fieldwork which will be compared and contrasted with the NZCETSS document later in this chapter.

1986-1997 -Concerns Over Social Work Education and Training

The publication of Puao-Te Ata-Tu in 1986, led to a strong protest voice from Maori, arguing for more culturally appropriate social work practice. Following on from Puao-Te Ata-Tu, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, concerns were expressed about how adequately social workers were prepared for practice and about the lack of qualified social workers, particularly in the Department of Social Welfare. A Ministerial Review Team[16]

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[14] The working party also comments on the rights and responsibilities of students and consumers of social services as the other stakeholding groups (and the most vulnerable), but I have not reported these, as the focus of this research is on the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors.

[15] See Chapters Two, Seven and Eight.

[16] The Review Team published their report, known as the Mason Report in 1992. With regard to education and training, the report established that of 1,233 social workers employed by DSW, only 346 held a tertiary qualification and only 131 held a specific social work qualification. The Department

was commissioned to review the Children Young Persons and Their Families Act (1989) at a time when the Department of Social Welfare was being criticised on several fronts. As a result of investigations of situations of child abuse in which children had been seriously injured, the competence of departmental social workers was called into question (Pilalis, Tanielu and Opai, 1988). The Report of the Ministerial Review Team (1992) expressed concerns about the accountability of social workers which the review team felt impeded the delivery of an effective child welfare service. In the wider policy context, this period also saw the beginning of the restructuring of the welfare state (Boston, 1992; Kelsey, 1993). The key pieces of legislation which underpinned the reforms were the State Sector Act of 1988 and the Public Finance Act of 1989. This legislation paved the way for the introduction of new financial management models taken from the private sector, into the public sector in order to improve efficiency and performance accountability.

For the fieldwork component in social work education and training, the significance of the emphasis on accountability for "outputs", which came about with the Public Finance Act 1989, is that the provision of student placements was not included in agency outputs. Thus from a managerial perspective, the provision of fieldwork experiences is now seen as a drain on agency resources. The impact of the policy shift can be seen in the disestablishment of Student Units and the withdrawal of field practice allowances, which in 1991 were estimated as costing the Department of Social Welfare $650,000 (personal communication from Assistant Director-General Resource Management, DSW, 21st March 1991). In this letter the Assistant Director-General confirms that the decision to phase out field practice allowances was because "it does not contribute directly to the department's outputs". DSW argued that it was no longer possible for them to pay for educational functions out of service delivery funding. This reflects a very current tension about whose responsibility it is to provide the resources for funding field education in social work with employers arguing that this is a responsibility of education and training providers.

In 1993, for example, the Ministry of Health costed out the provision of clinical training for a number of occupational groups. They decided that clinical access for social work student placements was "fiscally neutral" or in other words, the costs and benefits to both service and training providers were seen as balancing out. However in 1997, Healthlink South has set a fee of $20 per social work student per day for clinical access[17] and some other Crown Health Enterprises are interested in following suit, as other students, for

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responded by setting up a Competency Programme for departmental social workers which aimed to have 90% of social work staff with a professional qualification by the year 2000.

[17] Personal communication from Dr D. J. McDonald, University of Canterbury, September 1997.

example medical and physiotherapy students, are expected to pay for their clinical training. The response from educational institutions has been not to place students with Healthlink South services because neither students nor educational institutions can afford to fund a placement fee of around $1,500 per student placement. If other Crown Health Enterprises do follow suit and if educational institutions continue to boycott health placements as a result, the implications for training the next generation of health social workers are very serious. This loss of health sector placements is occurring at a time when the social work role in health is under threat of fragmentation, as indicated in the literature (Bobbett, 1994) and as indicated by comments from all of the participants in this research who are working in the health sector (see Chapter Six).

Reforms to Education, Training and Qualifications

The reforms to education, training and qualifications in Aotearoa/New Zealand from the early 1990s onwards, through policies such as the establishment of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the setting up of Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) are also significant to this thesis. The role of the ITOs is "to define competency standards, qualifications, accreditation and moderation systems, register workplace assessors and bid for government funding to purchase training" (Kane and Hopkins, 1995: 6). As Kane and Hopkins (1996) comment, NZCETSS felt constrained to go along with the development of unit standards for qualifications, training and assessment in the social services, as the reforms were likely to be imposed on them, in any case, by NZQA. However, NZQA's "outcome-determined standards stripped of process considerations proved difficult to implement in an area traditionally orientated towards process" (Kane and Hopkins, 1996: 98). NZCETSS was superseded in 1995 by a new Industry Training Organisation for the Social Services, Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi. According to Kane and Hopkins (1995: 5) the change in organisations marked a shift from a curriculum model of social work education and training which was largely defined and driven by the interests of educators, to a system which emphasised competency standards defined by the industry and driven by the interests of employers.[18]

With regard to the impact of these developments on the fieldwork component of social work education and training, Kane and Hopkins (1996: 100) were cautiously optimistic

[18] In 1997, the Council of Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi consisted of a Kaumatua, representatives from: seven employer groups; nine Rohe representing Iwi; six professional associations; two educational provider groups; and two Pacific Island groups. The Council is supported by an Executive Director, his staff and working parties. In 1998 it is proposed that the governance of Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi is as follows: a much larger Council which meets only annually at the Annual General Meeting; a board of ten members (five Rohe and five Tauiwi representatives) supported by the Executive Director, his staff and working parties (personal communication, Shannon, P. 3rd April 1998). Pat Shannon is the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee representative on the ITO.

that the emphasis on the demonstration of competencies (which presumably can only be demonstrated in an experiential learning environment) might "provide opportunities for leverage for a more reasonable field education (funding) base". Kane and Hopkins (ibid) predicted that "employers will have to provide the (field education) resources that are necessary to make the new system work". They also argued with regard to the teaching and assessment of the fieldwork component of the social work programme, that partnerships between educational providers and agencies would be "essential because of the integrated nature of the standards, and the need for some learning and assessment to take place in the classroom and some in the workplace" (Kane and Hopkins, 1996: 100).

However, writing about fieldwork education in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 1997, Beddoe and Worrall (1997b: 58) note that "the provision of field placements is a low priority within social service agencies" and that there is still a "lack of resources for students including, space, supervision, vehicles, and the failure to recognise staff contributions to education as an essential professional endeavour". This research will provide some further thoughts on whether the new climate offers grounds for optimism or pessimism with regard to partnerships in the provision of quality fieldwork experiences for social work students and support for fieldwork supervisors.

Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi has developed a set of Guidelines for Providers of Education and Training in the Social Services, which replace the guidelines developed by NZCETSS, and are applicable to the new National Diploma and National Certificate in Social Services.[19] With regard to fieldwork, there are many similarities but some differences and contested areas between these guidelines and those developed by NZCETSS, which were summarised earlier in this chapter. Firstly, the ITO initially appeared to be willing to give exemption from fieldwork placements on the basis of prior learning, although they have since reviewed their position on this issue.[20] Secondly, there is a requirement in the guidelines that "if fieldwork educators/workplace assessors are to be given the

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[19] At the time of writing the ITO and the Vice-Chancellors' Committee are still in negotiation about how university based social work programmes will receive professional accreditation. At this stage, there appear to be two choices, one which keeps the universities out of the NZQA framework and which explores other options for professional accreditation of provider qualifications, for example by the professional association or by the establishment of registration boards and licensing options. The other option is that Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi does not restrict itself to unit standards and a very limited role in social service education, but seeks to provide professional accreditation across the whole sector (Shannon, P. personal communication, 8th August 1997).

[20] The guidelines with regard to recognition of prior learning for fieldwork state that a candidate for a National Qualification may not be presenting themselves for study at all. The candidate may consider that s/he has already reached the level of competence established by a unit standard or standards, and wish to present themselves to a provider or a registered assessor in the workplace for assessment on the basis of their prior learning. This provision has caused concern to the New Zealand Association of Social Workers representative on the ITO and at the time of writing, the ITO appears to have accepted in principle the need for students completing the National Diploma in Social Work to undertake two fieldwork placements, of which only one may be an in-post placement.

responsibility for assessing students and awarding credit against unit standards, they must be covered by the provider's application for accreditation (Accreditation Action Plan criteria 3a) or they must be assessors registered by the ITO" (1997, Section 6: 6). Field educators, who provide placements for students completing the National Diploma will therefore need to have knowledge about the National Qualifications Framework and assessment requirements.

As I have explained in a footnote, at the time of writing, Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi has no formal powers in relation to the universities. It would seem important, and this is also the view of the ITO, that there is some consistency over standards for social services education and training between education and training providers under the National Qualifications Framework and the university based courses (Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, 1997, Section 1: 5). It is interesting to note that when I asked participants in the individual interviews about the role that the ITO might play in the accreditation and training of fieldwork supervisors, with the exception of two respondents, who did have some knowledge of the "brave new world" of assessment and qualifications, the rest were very unclear about the role of the ITO[21].

In the Guidelines, Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi identify four options for fieldwork placements (1997, Section 6: 20). These are agency based placements, and in-post placements which are models of placement provision which currently exist in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The other two options are placement centres (stand alone units run by providers where students undertake supervised practice) and internships, which are not currently major models of fieldwork provision in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand, but could become more significant in the future. In Addendum Two to Section Six, the ITO has also included in their Guidelines, a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Fieldwork Educators in Relation to Fieldwork (1997, Section 6: 23-27), based on a model for clinical practice taken from the supervision of counsellors in training. While Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi states that their guidelines need be seen in relationship to the Codes of Ethics and Practice Standards of the professional association relevant to the particular discipline, it does seem that its broad focus on the social services presents some difficulties for the ITO in standards setting. This is evident by the emphasis on work with clients rather than community development in the Practice Standards. The New Zealand Association of Social Workers has spent many years developing its Practice Standards and Code of Ethics for social workers, which emphasise the dual focus of social work on both individual and social change. It seems that the mistrust of professionals in the new

[21] This may reflect the fact that participants in this research mainly took students from university based social work programmes. Only one supervisor had taken students on placement from the Diploma programme at Wanganui Polytechnic

managerialist environment (Uttley, 1994) may be hindering cooperation between professional associations and the ITO[22].

An encouraging sign over the last few years, is that fieldwork is becoming an area of research and study in its own right in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In February 1995, NZCETSS organised a Fieldwork Consultation Workshop. In July 1997, the Department of Social Work at the University of Canterbury organised a Fieldwork Symposium. In September 1997, there was a Fieldwork stream at the New Zealand Association of Social Work Educators conference in Auckland. In concluding this section, I want to highlight some of the current issues that emerged from the conferences held in 1997 so that in the final chapter, I can compare and contrast these issues with those which have emerged from this research.

Current Issues In Fieldwork Education

This section brings the thesis right up to the present by describing some of the concerns about fieldwork education in social work, which were raised at conferences held in 1997, as I was writing up the findings of this research. Many of the issues raised which are summarised below under the headings of Costs and Resources and Developmental Work, have been explored with participants in this research (see Chapters Five, Six and Seven). The final chapter of this thesis which offers some suggestions for future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education, based on the research findings, addresses many of the issues discussed below.

Costs and Resources

The costs associated with the fieldwork component of social work education and training and who meets these costs, was a very current issue in 1997[23]. In both agencies and education and training institutions, organising, supporting, supervising and assessing student placements was seen as demanding a time consuming involvement on the part of fieldwork supervisors (in the agency settings) and placement coordinators (in the educational settings). As participants in this research describe in Chapter Six, the pressures of agency restructuring, high staff turnover and reduced budgets are having an impact on fieldwork supervisors who feel that they have neither the time nor the energy to give to students. My research was carried out in 1996, (with the exception of the final

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[22] This is evident from a report in Social Work Noticeboard (the newsletter of the NZASW) in September 1997:4 from the NZASW representative on the ITO Council.

[23] It was interesting to note from the Fieldwork Symposium at the University of Canterbury, that other disciplines which also have practical work experience such as teaching and counselling face similar issues to social work.

group meeting which took place in 1997) but the same issues were still affecting the provision of fieldwork placements in 1997, as reported at the conferences. The demand from agencies for payment for taking a social work student on placement, particularly in the area of clinical training in the health sector, has intensified, as reported earlier in this chapter. There is a growing recognition at the conferences which I attended in 1997, of the need for additional support, recognition and training for fieldwork supervisors, but no real progress as to how to resource this.

Developmental Work

Areas in which developmental work in fieldwork education in social work is either beginning to take place, or is identified as needing to take place, are discussed in this section. Firstly, as a direct consequence of the proliferation of social work courses and the competition between courses for practice placements, there is evidence of trends towards the development of more specialised and practice setting specific education and training. Training in specific fields of practice will require specialised field placements. Trends in this direction could lead to an under supply of placements in some areas and an over supply of placements which are not taken up by students in other areas of practice. In the programme which I am familiar with, we are noticing that students are not taking up all of the community development placements which are offered. On the other hand, we cannot meet student demand for placements in the large statutory organisations. In my opinion, this trend reflects the impact of student loans and student debt, with the majority of students choosing to complete their placements in areas of practice which they believe are most likely to result in employment after graduation.

While social work is contracting and fragmenting in some sectors, it is developing in other sectors, for example social work in schools (Hunter, 1996; Belgrave and Brown, 1996). The challenges around social work students completing their placements in schools was a current issue for students, supervisors and educators at conferences in 1997. Working with Iwi Social Services is another developing area of practice for Maori students (Walker, 1996; Beddoe and Worrall, 1997b; Walsh-Tapiata, 1998). Cultural issues in student placements are considered in Chapter Five, where it is suggested that more research is needed in the areas of: processes for matching students to placements and supervisors; supporting and visiting students completing placements with Iwi Social Services; negotiating supervision arrangements and ensuring that assessment procedures are culturally appropriate.

The proliferation of social work courses which has led to an increased demand for placements in social service organisations, is providing some impetus for the

consideration of alternative models of fieldwork to the dominant field setting model. The alternative models of fieldwork provision which received most attention at conferences in 1997 and which generated most discussion from participants in this research are the reintroduction of some kind of Student Units[24], In-Post placements and an Internship model. One of the reasons for the interest in an internship model for social work is, I believe, related to the four year degree courses attempting to maintain their competitiveness (in light of the introduction of the two year National Diploma in Social Work), by offering specialisation in particular fields of practice for their fourth year students.

All of the gatherings to discuss fieldwork education in social work concluded that there is a need for more research in this arena. It was pointed out that we need to find out if we are training too many social workers and that we need to be able to answer basic questions like how do we know when a student is competent to practise as a social worker? It is this kind of research data which will provide a basis for lobbying for a more adequate resource base for fieldwork education. Other areas which were identified as needing further research were the assessment of students on fieldwork placements and the assessment of marginal students in particular.

Another challenge for fieldwork in the industrial and educational climate of the late 1990s, was seen as occurring in response to the development of what one speaker termed "the complaints culture"[25]. He was referring to the impact of an increasingly litigious environment on the provision of practical training. For example, what happens if a student enrols in a course which has a fieldwork component and for any number of reasons, a placement cannot be found for that student? This has been an issue in Australia for some time (Bourne and Cooper, 1996) and is emerging as a current issue in New Zealand. Some students at the conferences reported being thrown in at the deep end of some very difficult cases while on placement. The challenge for fieldwork supervisors is to remember that they are meant to be providing a safe and supportive learning environment for students, not exposing them to the worst cases their agency is having to deal with! Another ongoing challenge for educators and fieldwork supervisors is to provide for the diversity in the student population undertaking social work education and training.

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[24] There are some hopeful signs with regard to the reintroduction of Student Units. For example, the Coopers and Lybrand Report (1996: 7) on the CYPFS Competency Programme, recommended that the restoration of Student Units be considered by the Children Young Persons and Families Service. The return of this model of fieldwork education was viewed favourably by fieldwork supervisors, educators and students at the conferences I attended in 1997.

[25] Bob Manthei, Education Department, University of Canterbury, personal communication 18th July 1997.

This chapter concludes with an outline of all of the chapters which comprise the thesis. The research process, research findings and conclusions are presented in eight chapters which are described below.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter One elaborates on the research topic and my reasons for choosing this topic area. I describe my own interest and involvement in the area of fieldwork education in social work. Then I locate the thesis in the social, political, economic and cultural context of Aotearoa/New Zealand. This introductory chapter looks especially at a history of key events and documents from 1970 to the present, which I believe are significant to an understanding of the current issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors.

Chapter Two provides a review of other published research studies from Aotearoa/New Zealand and from overseas, to enable similarities and differences between issues and experiences in New Zealand to be compared and contrasted with other countries. This chapter is based on the premise that it is impossible to separate "the personal troubles of milieu and the public issues of social structure" (Wright-Mills, 1970: 14). The review of the literature is organised into two main parts, beginning with the personal experiences of fieldwork supervisors and then moving on to look at the conditions of field education, as it is argued that the practice issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors cannot be separated from the particular historical, cultural and political context in which they are located.

Chapter Three examines four areas of theorising that are relevant to this research: critical social science, including three formulations of social work education - technical rationality, practical reflectivity and critical reflectivity (Harré-Hindmarsh, 1992); critical pedagogy; adult learning theories and models; and a critical reflective conceptualisation of professional education (Schön, 1983, 1987, 1991). Each area of theorising is based on different ways of making sense of the world, different ideas about education, different constructs of what makes a "good" practitioner and different prescriptions for action. This chapter reinforces the argument I am making that fieldwork is situated in a contested space where there are competing human interests and conflicting purposes and agendas. This chapter also puts forward an argument for a critical reflective model of the practice placement in social work education, which links the nature of the practice with which social workers are engaged to the professional education to prepare students for this practice. This enables me to critique taken-for-granted formulations of fieldwork education.

Chapter Four discusses the action research methodology which was utilised in this study, the reasons for choosing this approach and how the choice of methodology is linked to the theoretical perspectives described in the previous chapter. It also provides a description of the research process, including a profile of the participants, an outline of the procedures for data collection, a discussion of some of the ethical issues encountered in the research and finally an explanation of the analytical frameworks utilised to organise and understand the data.

Chapter Five is the first of three chapters which present the research findings. This chapter begins by exploring participants' own experiences of student supervision and their views about what makes a good student supervisor. Next the factors which motivate participants to take a student on placement are explored. This is followed by a discussion of cultural issues in student supervision. In my conversations with fieldwork supervisors, it emerged that there were significant issues for Pakeha supervisors supervising Maori students, for Maori supervisors supervising Pakeha students and for Maori supervisors in supervising Maori students in "mainstream" agencies. Finally participants' conceptualisations of the role of fieldwork supervisor are presented, including any differences in practice which arise from how the role is perceived. If, as proved to be the case, there are aspects of the role which participants experience as more difficult, the comments of respondents help to illuminate the research question about what kinds of preparation fieldwork supervisors may need in order to take on this role.

Chapter Six investigates how the fieldwork supervisors who participated in the research are involved in a network of relationships around student placements both within their agencies and with education and training institutions. This chapter explores participants' perspectives about how these relationships impact on their task. The ways in which both agencies and education and training institutions are supportive of fieldwork supervisors are presented and discussed, as well as any additional support and training, participants would have liked to receive.

Chapter Seven explores participants' understandings about the wider social and political context and how this affects fieldwork education in social work. Participants' views about many of the current issues for field education identified in Chapters One and Two, are presented. Firstly, participants' thoughts on how fieldwork supervisors ought to be selected are reported, including a discussion about their views on the introduction of more formal processes of accreditation for fieldwork supervisors by means of either a portfolio or training course. This leads to an exploration of participants' views about the need for further training in order to take on the role of fieldwork supervisor and to a presentation of their ideas about the kinds of knowledge and skills which could be

included in training for practice teaching. This is of course directly related to the research question about the most appropriate locations, content and methods of education and training for fieldwork teaching. Finally, this chapter reports participants' perspectives on the quality of fieldwork education in social work and their thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of different models of fieldwork education.

Chapter Eight concludes the thesis by summarising some of the key themes which emerge from the research. It examines the research findings in relation to the questions which were formulated at the beginning of the study. This chapter discusses some of the implications of the research findings and makes suggestions for future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education in social work. In discussing implications and recommendations, the perspectives of other stakeholders in fieldwork education in social work are also considered.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has had three aims:

- to describe my own involvement in the area under study
- to locate the research and current issues in fieldwork education, in the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, by an analysis of key events and documents
- to provide an overview of the thesis and the research process

The discussion in this chapter is intended to set the scene for the argument that is made in Chapters Two and Three that fieldwork education in social work is situated in a contested area, where there are many stakeholders and conflicting purposes and agendas. This chapter has introduced readers to those groups who have an interest in the arena of fieldwork education in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The current issues around the provision of fieldwork placements, the debates about who "owns" and therefore who ought to resource fieldwork education in social work and the trends to competency based assessment, education and training, make it timely to consider the impact of all of these developments on fieldwork in general and on fieldwork supervisors in particular. This is the purpose of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

SETTING THE SCENE

"To prepare students to intervene successfully in the lives of people it is necessary to know first, what is competent practice and second how to teach it successfully in the classroom and in the field"

Triseliotis, J. and Marsh, P. (1990: 1)

Introduction

This chapter looks at published studies in fieldwork education in social work with a view to illuminating the three research questions identified in Chapter One. As previously stated, these questions are:-

- Do fieldwork supervisors need to receive some preparation for taking on the tasks of student supervision?
- Where does the responsibility for supporting and training fieldwork supervisors lie?
- What are the most appropriate locations, content and methods of education and training for fieldwork teaching?

This chapter begins with a review of studies which have looked at the personal experiences of social workers who take on the role of fieldwork supervisor with regard to motivation, perceptions of their role, models of teaching and learning in placement supervision and the kinds of support and training offered to fieldwork supervisors both from agencies and from education and training institutions. This is followed by an overview of some of the current arrangements for field education in social work both in Aotearoa/New Zealand and in other countries. It is argued that the specific issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors are inextricably linked to the particular historical, cultural and political context in which they occur. Therefore this research must take into account the organisational culture, values and ideologies of the education, health, justice and welfare agencies in which fieldwork supervisors are located.

Since the demise of Student Units in 1990/91, fieldwork placements for social work students in Aotearoa/New Zealand have primarily been provided by a Field Setting model of placement provision. In this model, fieldwork supervisors are social workers in social service organisations who take social work students on placement in addition to their main role as an agency worker[1]. The terms which are used to describe the activity of taking students on placement, vary in the literature from "practice teaching" in the British context, to "field education" in the Australian context, to "field instruction" in the Canadian and North American context to "fieldwork" in the New Zealand context. In the overview of the research literature which is presented in this chapter, I have adopted the terminology used by the authors of the study.

Personal Experiences

What motivates social workers to become fieldwork supervisors?

This is one of the questions I put to respondents in this research, therefore I was interested in the findings of other studies which explore the area of motivation to become a student supervisor. In a 1981 study which looked at 41 placements from eight social work courses in Britain, Syson and Baginsky found that most social workers became practice teachers "more by chance than design" (Syson and Baginsky, 1981: 44). The reasons for taking on this role varied from:- enhancing their own professional development and career prospects; because the agency told them they had to take a student; because of personal contacts with the education and training courses; as a way of keeping up to date with current ideas; and out of a sense of professional obligation. 34% of practice teachers in this study did not have any formal training in supervision prior to taking a student for the first time (Syson and Baginsky, 1981: 44). A more recent British study by Walker, McCarthy, Morgan and Timms (1995) found similar reasons to the Syson and Baginsky research. In addition practice teachers in the 1995 study commented on: practice teaching making their job more interesting as they spent time doing something other than casework; a sense of satisfaction in helping students to learn; an opportunity for self-development and re-assessing their own

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[1] Student Units provided placements for students completing fieldwork in statutory social work (in the areas of child welfare, health and probation). Some Student Units provided supervision for community projects, for example when I was training to be a social worker, there was a Community Health Student Unit attached to Palmerston North Hospital. My impression as a Placement Coordinator is that one of the consequences of the demise of Student Units has been a decrease in the numbers of placements in the statutory sector. Education and training institutions have therefore had to look to the voluntary sector for additional placements in order to make up the shortfall. Research is needed to confirm if this is the case.

work; and lastly a sense of responsibility to protect and raise standards of practice within their agency [2](Walker et al, 1995: 112).

Studies of the turnover of fieldwork teachers (Bogo and Power, 1992; Slocombe, 1993) show a high drop-out rate, so for many social workers taking on a practice teaching role is a temporary and transitional commitment. In 1992, Bogo and Power carried out a longitudinal panel study with 65 field instructors in a two year graduate social work programme at the University of Toronto in Canada. Field instructors who offered a further placement were interviewed, as well as those who did not continue (23 did not volunteer to take a student in the following year). The reasons field instructors gave for not continuing were related to (a lack of) agency support and personal life events. Those who continued gave as motivations: influencing another's professional development; enjoying teaching; and a feeling of professional obligation to contribute to student education and training.

A lack of support was a major disincentive to providing another placement, in a six year survey of the reasons why social workers offered or did not offer student placements to the social work programme at the University of Queensland in Australia (Slocombe, 1993). Slocombe concludes that student placements are "provided at a personal cost (to the field educator) with at best a neutral or tacit acceptance by their agency" (Slocombe, 1993: 45). In Syson and Baginsky's (1981) study, only four out of 41 practice teachers had their workload reduced to compensate for taking a student. Syson and Baginsky (1981: 47) comment that very few agencies saw practice teaching as an agency responsibility but rather as the individual responsibility of the social worker taking on the student. Questions about the "ownership" of fieldwork are a constant theme throughout the history of social work education. While agencies may claim that placements are a service to courses, there is the obvious contradiction that students on placement are seen as agency workers in respect of the clients of the agency and therefore are performing part of the agency's service function.

Fourteen years after the Syson and Baginsky study, research by Walker et al (1995) shows some improvements in agency support for placements as a result of changes in the structural arrangements around fieldwork in Britain. In 1989 the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) implemented proposals for the introduction of a system for the training, assessment and accreditation of practice teachers and for the approval of agencies in which students complete placements. In the study by Walker et al (1995), which involved 197 practice teachers, 40% indicated that practice teaching was part

[2] It is interesting to note that in between the Syson and Baginsky (1981) research and the research by Walker et al (1995), Britain has introduced a Practice Teaching Award with the dual aims of increasing the status of practice teaching in agencies and ensuring that student supervisors develop skills in practice teaching. The additional motivations expressed by practice teachers in 1995 may be reflective of the introduction of additional training for practice teachers.

of their job description; over 50% had specific agreements with agencies about the amount of time which could be allocated to student supervision; and 12% were promised a reduction in their caseload while the student was on placement (Walker et al, 1995: 103)[3]. However, 38% of practice teachers still expressed concerns about a lack of support and supervision from their agencies in relation to student placements with some responses mirroring the earlier findings of the Syson and Baginsky (1981) study, for example: "The agency doesn't see a student as their liability. My student is my problem and my choice so I should deal with it on my own" (Walker et al, 1995: 102).

I was interested to explore with participants in this research, their perceptions of the support they have received as fieldwork supervisors both from their agencies and from the education and training institutions their students came from. Their experiences are outlined in Chapter Six. As discussed in Chapter One, there has been very little published research into fieldwork education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This is why the studies I am drawing on to set the scene come from countries with similar political, economic and welfare systems to New Zealand. Another area which is explored in this research is how fieldwork supervisors in Aotearoa/New Zealand conceptualise their role. I was therefore interested in other studies which had looked at this question.

What's in a name? - Fieldwork Supervisors' Perceptions of Their Role.

There is a great deal in a name in my view. As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the words which are used to describe the activity of taking students on placement vary in the literature from country to country. This reflects differences in the ways in which the tasks of placement supervision are perceived and different structural arrangements for the provision of practice placements.

There is a conceptual shift in using the title of practice teacher or field educator rather than that of student supervisor or fieldwork supervisor. Practice teacher, according to Danbury (1994) implies an emphasis on a teaching and learning process and an educative role for fieldwork supervisors, rather than an emphasis on a supervisory process in fieldwork and a supervisory role for student supervisors. Ford and Jones (1987: 2) suggest that the job title "fieldwork supervisor" highlights the supervisor's responsibilities to the agency "for ensuring accountability for the work and protection of clients' interests", whereas the job title "practice teacher" highlights the supervisor's responsibilities "to the social work course for ensuring that the student has opportunities for practice and learning". It is interesting how a discussion of preferred job titles, mirrors tensions over the "ownership" of fieldwork

[3] This would suggest that the introduction of the Practice Teaching Award has resulted in improvements in some areas for practice teachers.

education, which as I have already stated, is a constant and recurring theme throughout this thesis. This research found that in Aotearoa/New Zealand, social workers who take students on placement overwhelmingly preferred the job title "fieldwork supervisor"[4] and the reasons for this preference are explained in Chapter Five.

Reports, conferences and symposiums which have discussed fieldwork education in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand over the last decade (see Chapter One), have highlighted the need for more quality assurance measures in fieldwork education; formal processes for the selection and accreditation of fieldwork supervisors; and competency-based performance indicators (Hopkins, 1995). These discussions could lead us to adopt a similar approach to fieldwork education as has occurred in Britain, with the development of a national framework for the accreditation of practice teachers and the approval of agencies in which students are placed. These discussions are also highly significant to the research question about the preparation which will be needed by fieldwork supervisors, if the expectation is for them to take on a much greater role in the teaching and assessment of students.

There are additional expectations reflected in the title of practice teacher and also a redefinition of relationships with students, agencies and courses (Danbury, 1994). As stated above, this is a road that some other countries have already travelled and therefore we can learn from their experiences and from their mistakes. Walker et al (1995: 16) comment that expectations for a more active teaching component to the fieldwork supervisor's role result in "a more structured, time-consuming and demanding involvement". In Aotearoa/New Zealand, Hopkins (1995: 9) argues that one of the implications of the introduction of unit standards into education and training for the social services will be "a positive duty on (education and training) providers to train, assess and support field education staff".

The question of how student supervisors conceptualise their role can be explored by looking at five areas:

- definitions of the roles of fieldwork supervisors provided in books about student supervision
- self-report studies where fieldwork supervisors talk about their perceptions of their role

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[4] This does not necessarily mean a lack of emphasis on teaching and learning and an educative role for fieldwork supervisors. Particularly in the Student Units which existed from the mid 1970s up to 1990 in New Zealand, student unit supervisors clearly had a teaching role. In a field setting model of placement provision, the emphasis placed on teaching and learning is much more dependent on how individual fieldwork supervisors conceptualise their role

- models which exist for the delivery of fieldwork education, as these also put some boundaries around fieldwork supervisors' roles
- studies which explore relationships between students and fieldwork supervisors, as these also illuminate the roles that fieldwork supervisors perform from students' perspectives.
- studies which explore role conflicts for fieldwork teachers

1) Definitions of the roles of fieldwork supervisors

In a text for practice teachers in Britain, Thompson, Osada and Anderson (1994) argue that the roles of the practice teacher are:- enabler, supporter, challenger, teacher, manager and evaluator. Also writing in the British context, Fisher (1990: 10-13) elaborates on three key functions of the practice teacher role, which he identifies as manager, enabler and assessor. In a North American study, Freeman and Hansen (1995: 305) describe the roles as:- facilitator, role model, supervisor, teacher, agency resource, evaluator, co-worker, researcher, and control agent. As stated in Chapter One, in 1985, the New Zealand Social Work Training Council identified the key aspects of social work supervision as administrative, teaching, supportive, reconstructive and consultative. The fourth element of reconstruction (which I have argued is missing from many definitions of supervision), relates to enabling supervisees (in this case students) to critically reflect on their practice so that their actions and those of their agency are directed to the goal of a just society.

The idea of a reconstructive component to practice teaching is also important to the argument I develop in Chapter Three and Chapter Eight, for a critical reflective model of the practice placement, which requires supervisors to challenge students to critically reflect upon their actions and to re-examine underlying beliefs, values and theoretical constructs. As Schön (1987: 38) argues, ideas about the nature of the practicum in professional education "and the conditions and processes appropriate to it depends in part on our view of the **kinds of knowing essential to professional competence** (my emphasis)". *Kahukura* (Benton, Benton, Croft and Waaka, 1990), a report of the Maori Caucus of the New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS), is another of the few documents which stress a reconstructive component to social work education. *Kahukura* also alerts us to concerns about how a competency-based approach to education and training in the social services will take cultural differences into account. In a discussion of adult learning, which is very applicable to learning to be a social worker, Brookfield (1986: 143) points out that adults need to be encouraged "to scrutinise critically the extent to which supposedly universal beliefs, values and behaviours are in fact culturally constructed". In my view, the ability to develop a capacity for critical reflection, is crucial for social workers who work with a diversity of client groups, many of whom are

marginalised and extremely vulnerable. I will return to this point later in this chapter (and again in Chapter Three), when discussing the implications of trends towards competency based education and training for a critical reflective conceptualisation of the practicum.

2) Making the transition from practitioner to fieldwork supervisor - self-report studies

Several writers (Ford and Jones, 1987: 1; Rogers and McDonald, 1992: 166; Coulshed, 1993: 2) make the point that we should not assume that competent practitioners will automatically make skilful practice teachers. The need for fieldwork teachers to understand and use educational methods has been heightened in those countries which have introduced systems of accreditation for practice teachers and a curriculum for practice teaching. For example, writing in the British context, Coulshed (1993: 2) argued that CCETSW's (1989) regulations "left tutors and practice supervisors seeking an educational theory and practice which empowers learners alongside ensuring their competence". However as Walker et al (1995: 137) point out in a discussion of their research findings, there is a tension between ideals and reality, as practice teaching is carried out "in agencies whose primary task is the delivery of services that are not educational and whose personnel have not been recruited with an expectation of career advancement as educators".

It is not surprising therefore, as one recent Canadian study found, that when deciding how to promote students' learning on placement, field instructors choose "content focused on getting the job done rather than selecting methods and content for educative purposes" (Rogers and McDonald, 1995: 41). The choices which fieldwork supervisors make about how to link the theoretical and the practical will depend on their familiarity with what the social work course is teaching; their values and beliefs about the kinds of knowledge and skills essential to professional competence; their understanding about how to promote learning; and their own preferred theories and models of practice. This research (see Chapters Five, Six and Seven) explores with participants questions about whether or not they perceive themselves as educators; how they promote learning on placement; and whether or not they find themselves in agreement with the social work course about what things need to be learned by students in order for them to become competent and safe practitioners. If the transition from practitioner to fieldwork teacher involves taking on a qualitatively different role, as the literature suggests, then this supports the contention that more preparation is needed for this role than is currently provided by social work courses in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It also supports the contention that part of the content of a curriculum for fieldwork education ought to include an understanding about how adults learn (Brookfield, 1986; Gardiner, 1989; Coulshed, 1993).

Fieldwork teachers report feeling least confident about providing theory teaching and often do not have knowledge about how adults learn best (Bogo and Power, 1992; Fortune and Abramson, 1993; Walker et al, 1995). Fortune and Abramson (1993) looked at characteristics of the learning environment, including the student-field instructor relationship, of 142 masters level social work students in New York. They concluded that "to provide the cognitive input which is valued by students and which contributes to quality field instruction, explicit connections between case material and theory need to be made regularly" (Fortune and Abramson, 1993: 107). This implies that "field instructors must have at least a beginning ability to conceptualise and communicate their practice....Without clarity about these linkages in their own practice, instructors are unlikely to be able to provide the necessary conceptual frameworks to students" (Fortune and Abramson, 1993: 108). Walker et al (1995: 99) found that when fieldwork teachers face time pressures, discussion around linking theory and practice is the most likely aspect of supervision to be neglected, whereas supervisors will still pay attention to discussing casework, agency policies and procedures and the student's personal development in supervision.

3) Models for the delivery of fieldwork education and implications for teaching and learning in placements

The different models of the practicum which have influenced conceptions of the fieldwork teaching task are generally agreed to be: apprenticeship, casework, academic and articulated (Sheafor and Jenkins, 1982; Lynch and Cornwall, 1992). **Elements of all of these models are still evident in current practice and the models are not mutually exclusive** (my emphasis). The apprenticeship approach is the earliest model used in social work education and is based on observing an experienced practitioner at work. As Lynch and Cornwall (1992: 102) comment, "the teaching processes of apprenticeship supervision involve the supervisor modelling correct conduct and observing and guiding the student in hands on situations".

In the casework model, the teaching role of supervision is about facilitating the personal and professional development of the student by ensuring that the student has resolved their own life issues which may impact on their work with clients (Lynch and Cornwall, 1992: 103). In the academic approach, the focus is on the students' cognitive development and knowledge-directed practice. The role for the fieldwork supervisor is to facilitate the application of academic knowledge in a placement, but the course assumes the major responsibility for the students' learning (Sheafor and Jenkins 1982: 15-16).

In the articulated approach, there is "a planned relationship between cognitive and field learning" (Sheafor and Jenkins 1982: 17). The placement is explicitly educational and the

fieldwork teacher carries a higher level of teaching responsibility as "both class and field learning must be developed with clear learning objectives which are carefully sequenced to allow their integration" (Sheafor and Jenkins, 1982: 17). In reality, there are major difficulties to an articulated approach, with regard to integration of knowledge and skills across two different settings, (the course and the placement agency). The difficulties are well expressed by Evans (1990, cited in Cooper, 1994: 115) who argues that "structural separation of field and academic institutions has created two antithetical cultures, one which assesses ideas and theory and another which assesses practice knowledge".

4) Roles taken on by fieldwork supervisors from students' perspectives

In a major piece of research into fieldwork education in Britain, Secker (1993) carried out 51 semi-structured interviews over a period of three years with consecutive cohorts from one social work course. As part of her research, Secker looked at practice teaching approaches which students found objectionable. Her research findings give insights into the roles taken by fieldwork supervisors from students' perspectives and also show how elements of each of the four models described above are still influencing placement supervision.

Secker (1993: 124) found that unhelpful approaches to placement supervision from students' perspectives were: ***a therapeutic approach***, in the sense that the fieldwork teacher attributed problems in the placement to personality deficits in the student; and ***an unsupportive approach*** in which the practice teacher was perceived as unapproachable. These two approaches were fortunately rare according to Secker. More common was ***a constricting approach***, in the sense that the practice teacher's own theoretical perspective was imposed on the student's work. The most common approaches which students did not appreciate were: ***an amorphous approach***, in the sense that the fieldwork teacher failed to provide enough focus and direction for the placement; and ***a caseload management approach***, in the sense that the practice teacher saw her job as providing work experience and monitoring what the student was doing and saw "teaching" as the university's job (Secker, 1993: 121). The approach to practice teaching most appreciated by students was where the fieldwork teacher placed emphasis on identifying and addressing the student's learning needs (Secker 1993: 126).

The picture which emerges from the discussion so far is that it is largely left to individual fieldwork teachers to decide which of a number of potential roles and approaches to practice teaching they will take on. There are also significant differences in the support and training offered to fieldwork teachers, which will be discussed later in this chapter. The consequence of this is that students will have very variable educational experiences on their

placements and therefore variable opportunities to develop as safe and competent social workers. As well as a lack of clarity about what is or is not their role, research has also identified some of the potential role conflicts which fieldwork teachers may experience.

5) Role Conflicts Experienced by Fieldwork Teachers

Syson and Baginsky (1981: 152-167) identify some potential role conflicts for fieldwork teachers. The first relates to a question of accountability. Are fieldwork teachers primarily accountable to the client and the agency or to the student and the course? This role conflict helps to explain the tensions which surround the question about "ownership" of fieldwork and the debates about whether placements are a service to agencies or a service to social work education and training courses. The second potential area of conflict relates to different knowledge bases and approaches to learning, explored in studies by Gardiner (1989) and Van Soest and Kruzich (1994).

The study by Van Soest and Kruzich (1994) showed that when learning blocks occur on placements, an understanding of the preferred learning styles of both field instructor and student may help to overcome the difficulties. Gardiner (1989) argues that three levels of learning are necessary for adult learners to create meaning from their own experiences. In his analysis of interview data with pairs of social work students and supervisors, Gardiner found that the majority of supervisory approaches reinforced level one interactions - a surface-reproductive conception of learning. Relatively fewer interactions demonstrated levels one and two (where students are actively involved in constructing meaning from their placement experiences) and even less demonstrated level three (the ability to transfer both the content and process of learning to contexts other than those in which the original learning arose). Level three conceptions of learning requires fieldwork supervisors who can recognise that all students may not learn in the same way; or that the same student may learn things in different ways at different times; and who can adapt their approach accordingly (Gardiner 1989: 133).

Gardiner (1989: 144-145) argues that the nature of professional practice requires learning at all three levels in order to prepare practitioners for the uncertainty, uniqueness and value conflict which are an integral part of the work of professionals (Schön, 1987). In a follow up study of tutors, supervisors and students, Gardiner (1989: 148) found that over half of the fieldwork teachers demonstrated level one conceptions of teaching and learning, which he argues supports the need for "a major staff development programme". For this research, these findings suggest that many fieldwork teachers are not well prepared for the task of assisting students to learn from experience.

The third area of potential role conflict relates to tension between different aspects of fieldwork teaching role. How do fieldwork supervisors reconcile their role as enabler and supporter of the student's learning with their role as assessor? Heycox, Hughes and Eisenberg (1993) and Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes (1996) in Australia have carried out several research studies into field teachers' fears of failing marginal students. They found that for the social worker in the role of field teacher, the task of grading student performance conflicts with the non-judgemental ethos of social work.

These studies and my own experiences as a Placement Coordinator unlock a Pandora's box of issues about the role of assessor, for example, how much confidence does the fieldwork teacher have in the assessment process (usually prescribed by the course); what will be the effects on the student of a negative assessment; will failing the student be seen as a reflection on the fieldwork teacher; how much support will be forthcoming from the agency and from the course; what are the standards that the student is supposed to have achieved by the end of the placement and to what extent are judgements about performance influenced by "personal" characteristics of fieldwork teachers and students (Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes, 1996)? The responses of participants in this study to some of these role conflicts are discussed in Chapter Five.

In Britain where a competency based approach[5] to assessment, education and training has been implemented in the Diploma in Social Work qualification, research is identifying further role conflicts for fieldwork supervisors (Owens, 1995; Pell and Scott, 1995). In the new culture of practice teaching in Britain, the assessor role is further complicated, according to Owens (1995: 63) by the need for fieldwork teachers to be able to validate, collate and present evidence relating to performance outcomes. Pell and Scott (1995) propose that demands to assess over 50 competencies for the DipSW have created conflict for fieldwork teachers. According to Pell and Scott (1995), practice teachers are caught in the dilemma of wanting to appear competent themselves, in other words, able to manage the new requirements, while at the same time, many are unhappy about technical competencies which they believe do not capture important social work values and principles essential to safe and effective practice[6]. Pell and Scott (1995) liken this to a study of medical students by Haas and Shaffir (1991) which revealed that in order to live up to expectations of trustworthiness and competence, the medical students showed evidence of a set of behaviours referred to as "the cloak of competence", in order to cover up uncertainty and conform to the professional image demanded of doctors. Similarly, in their research, Pell

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[5] The implications of a competency based approach and its pros and cons for fieldwork in social work education will be further elaborated later in this chapter as part of a discussion about the current context in which fieldwork education is situated.

[6] Similar concerns about a reductionist and technicist approach to competency are being expressed by some social work educators in Aotearoa/New Zealand. See Nash (1997a and 1997b).

and Scott (1995: 46) found that in order to minimise dissonance, some practice teachers "wrap their own assessing activities in a cloak of competence", thus appearing to be happy with the new requirements. If a competency-based system seems to be working, then it is likely that important questions such as "whose interests are served by the relatively uncritical development of these (competency-based) forms of education and training" (Pell and Scott, 1995: 43) will be glossed over. This point is taken up in Chapter Three in the discussion of alternative educational theories and their implications for conceptions of the practicum in professional education.

The next part of this chapter looks at what other studies have discovered about the kind of support and training provided for fieldwork teachers. This relates directly to the research question about where the responsibility for supporting and training fieldwork teachers should lie. Firstly, agency support will be considered and then support from the educational and training institutions.

Whose responsibility? - the provision of support and training for fieldwork supervisors

- **Agency Support**

A number of studies (Syson and Baginsky, 1981; Thompson and Marsh, 1991; Walker et al, 1995) have looked at the kind of support that fieldwork teachers receive from their agencies, as well as the kind of support they would have appreciated but in many cases did not receive. Of the 41 practice teachers in the Syson and Baginsky (1981) study, only three had attended a full-time supervision training course, while the rest had attended only occasional seminars run either by the agency or the course. Five agencies ran support groups for practice teachers, and three supervisors were part of formal or informal regional associations of practice teachers. Only eight practice teachers received direct supervision from their agency supervisor about the student placement, while the rest, including six who were taking students for the first time, were "left to themselves" (Syson and Baginsky, 1981: 46-47). From discussions with fieldwork teachers in the social work programme for which I am a Placement Coordinator, the New Zealand context would, I suspect, currently reflect what Syson and Baginsky found in 1981. This is an area which is followed up in this research with questions about the support and training fieldwork supervisors have received from both their agency and the social work course while the student was on placement, plus a question about any additional support and training which they would have liked. These research findings are presented in Chapter Six.

As I have already described, since the Syson and Baginsky (1981) study, Britain has gone down the track of accreditation of fieldwork teachers and approval of agencies in which students are placed. A Practice Teaching Award was introduced by CCETSW in the late 1980s. To be eligible for the award, practice teachers either put together a portfolio demonstrating competence in practice teaching or attended a CCETSW approved course of 150 hours[7]. The CCETSW agenda was to "encourage agencies to 'own' practice teaching and publicly to express 'commitment' to high standards of practice teaching and learning through a statement of agency policy and an action plan" (Walker et al 1995: 6). In 1991, there were 38 approved practice teaching programmes, 477 people with the Practice Teaching Award and 31 approved agencies. By 1994 the figures were 48 practice teaching programmes, 2,167 people with the Practice Teaching Award and 119 approved agencies (Walker et al, 1995: xviii). What effects have the changes made on agency support for practice teaching in Britain?[8]

Walker et al (1995) found 62% of practice teachers indicated satisfaction with the support and supervision provided by their agencies and for 40%, practice teaching was included in their job descriptions, although this may not translate into meaningful support. For example, there is no financial reward for practice teaching, although in the long term, taking on this role may enhance social worker's promotion opportunities. Of the 38% who were dissatisfied with the support and supervision provided by their agencies, the issues were similar to what Syson and Baginsky had found in 1981, including: a sense of isolation; no reduction in duty work or caseload; having to respond to agency pressures e.g. staff shortages; and taking on new responsibilities in the time the student was on placement. In a fieldwork setting model of placement provision, all of the responsibility for the student tends to fall on the individual practice teacher and social workers suggested that it would be a good idea if the student was allocated to a team rather than one person.

Agencies also have to be willing to support social workers who want to put themselves forward for accreditation by providing study leave. The accreditation of practice teachers

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[7] Under the CCETSW (1989) regulations, experienced practice teachers were eligible for accreditation if they put together a portfolio of their work which demonstrated competence in practice teaching and only new practice teachers were required to complete the course route to the Practice Teaching Award. It is interesting to note that the quality assurance measures put in place for practice teachers in Britain are currently being reviewed (Slater, 1996) because assessors for the Practice Teaching Award have found it hard to extract evidence from portfolios which clearly shows that the key requirements of the award have been met.

[8] At the time of writing, the bodies which regulate education and training in the social services in Britain are undergoing changes. A new General Social Care Council for the Personal Social Services is to be established in Britain by the year 2000. CCETSW will disappear but is making a bid to run the National Training Organisation (NTO) for the social services. NTOs are similar to the Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) in New Zealand in that they are concerned with occupational standards and the oversight of education, training and qualifications for the "industry" for which they have responsibility. For an overview of the proposed changes in Britain, see Inman (1998).

was seen in Britain as a positive solution to the problems of quality control and a shortage of placements for social work students. The expectation was that as social workers would have to supervise at least one student in order to receive accreditation, this would increase the pool of practice teachers. While accreditation has resulted in improvements in the quality of practice teaching in Britain, research shows that it has not solved the problem of an under supply of placements, and may have the opposite effect to the one intended. According to Thompson and Marsh (1991: 48) the CCETSW requirements for training of practice teachers will in all likelihood "limit the supply of placements in the future as staff make tough choices about their training priorities". Similarly, Fisher (1990: 23) comments that:

> it is possible that the accreditation system will reduce the numbers of practice teachers available to programmes, since some may be selected out, others may be deterred by the process, others may not be allowed study leave, and others may consider it pointless to undertake the study and scrutiny involved only to have to fit in taking a student on top of their regular workload.

In Chapter One, I suggested that the establishment of Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) and the development of unit standards for education and training in the social services based on competencies defined by the industry in Aotearoa/New Zealand, will mean that educators and employers will have to grapple with issues such as more formal processes and national standards for the selection and accreditation of fieldwork teachers. The British experience shows that it would be wise to think through all the consequences of moving in the direction of accreditation of fieldwork teachers and approval of agencies in which students are placed, as there are likely to be costs as well as benefits. Questions about the selection and accreditation of fieldwork supervisors are explored with participants in this research and their thoughts about this issue are reported in Chapter Seven.

- **Support from the Educational and Training Institutions**

The 1989 CCETSW reforms in Britain also aimed to change the nature of relationships between agencies providing placements and social work courses by involving practice teachers in student selection, teaching and assessment and giving them input into the curriculum thus keeping courses up to date. These developments need to be seen in the context of much broader issues of reconstruction of welfare states, labour markets and vocational education; issues about preparation for social work practice and whether this is to be in the hands of educators or employers; and the introduction of a competency-based approach to assessment, education and training. These themes will be addressed later in this chapter. For the moment, I focus on what the research literature tells us about the personal experiences of fieldwork supervisors in their relationships with the courses their student

came from, in order to be able to compare and contrast these experiences with those of participants in this research, which are reported in Chapter Six.

Practice teachers in the study by Walker et al (1995) expressed concerns about getting short notice about students coming on placement which meant a lack of time to organise the placement; receiving insufficient information about students; students not being adequately prepared for placements; minimal contact with the course while the student was on placement; a lack of support if problems arose while the student was on placement and a lack of up to date teaching in the academic setting (Walker et al, 1995: 92-107). Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes (1996: 36) in Australia, found that field educators perceived the university staff liaison person as being "a consultant to the student and a monitor of their progress, rather than as a consultant to themselves or mediator between field educator and the student". The kind of support offered by training institutions apart from placement visits by the liaison staff person, tend to be limited to running courses, workshops or seminars for practice teachers. Bogo and Power (1992) in Canada, found that free workshops, a certification programme and associate professor[9] status acted as incentives for fieldwork teachers to continue in the role.

The question of payment to agencies for taking students on placement is a current issue in Aotearoa/New Zealand and one which is discussed with research participants. From an agency perspective, a common view is that under the current funding arrangements, the educational setting receives the fee for the student, while the agency social worker provides half the teaching and receives no payment! Presently under consideration in Aotearoa/New Zealand are contractual arrangements such as agencies only offering placements to students who agree to work for them on qualifying; agencies only offering placements if they receive payment from the training provider or placement trade-offs, whereby courses agree to prepare students for work in specialised areas of practice in return for a placement. The alternative to contractual arrangements are reciprocal exchange relationships such as continuing education and joint research projects. It seems to me that the commercial transaction model of placement provision risks "compromising two areas vital to social work: firstly, the provision of a broad based humanistic and critical education which gives students a range of practice experiences and secondly, the development of a student's professional social work identity" (Ellis, 1997: 93).

[9] The equivalent recognition in Aotearoa/New Zealand would be associate lecturer status.

The Conditions of Fieldwork Education

Those of us who are involved in finding and organising placements for social work students know that difficulties around fieldwork are very much influenced by what is happening as the welfare state is systematically dismantled and as both social service agencies and educational institutions experience yet another wave of restructuring. "Workers in the field of health and social care are having to develop new languages and forms of organisation which are outside of traditional agency structures and professional categories" (Pietroni, 1995 in Yelloly and Henkel, 1995: 35). Management of social service agencies is, according to Cannan (1995: 8), in the hands of "a new class of managerial cultural engineers" who utilise "American management theories, quantitative rather than qualitative performance indicators, performance related pay, short-term contracts and return on money rather than service". Alongside this restructuring of welfare agencies, educational institutions have also been reformed and positioned as key sites for instilling the attitudes and values necessary for the new "enterprise culture" (Cannan 1995: 8). The implications for social workers are well put by Cannan (1995: 11) who argues that:

> As the public services become imbued with the values and practices of business, so their workers, the bureau-professionals, the caring professionals who have always been directly reliant upon state sponsorship for their spheres of practice, their mandate and their conditional autonomy, must renegotiate their position in the welfare state.

In an article entitled "The Future of Fieldwork in a Market Economy", Beddoe and Worrall (1997a: 21-25) show that the impact of reforms to the welfare sector with the introduction of "a contracting model in which managerialist policies prevail" are having very similar effects in Aotearoa/New Zealand to the British experience described above. Students on placement are inevitably caught up in the fall out from restructuring. Fieldwork is situated in a contested space where there are conflicting purposes and agendas. There are multiple stakeholders (educators, students, fieldwork teachers, managers of social service agencies, clients of the agencies in which students are placed and future employers of social workers through the Industry Training Organisation). Therefore finding and organising placements "is not simply an administrative task, but the outcome of a coalescing or mutuality of interests of players in a covertly disputive domain" (Evans and McDermott, 1988: 6).

Concerns about the quality of fieldwork placements

The moves to accreditation of practice teachers and the approval of placement agencies came about in Britain because of concerns about the quality of social work practice and the quality of education and training for that practice (Gardiner, 1989; Secker, 1993). Similar concerns about how adequately social workers are prepared for practice, and the lack of qualified social workers are evident in Aotearoa/New Zealand (see Mason Report, 1992). These concerns led to demands that professional education should demonstrate "fitness for purpose" and that "professionals should be equipped for practice at the end of their training" (Gardiner, 1989: 2). Questions also arose about what constitutes "good" practice teaching and how can this be promoted? These are problematic issues, as while there is general agreement that placements are a pivotal part of the education and training of social workers, they are also the site where a number of differential power relationships have to be negotiated and issues of marginality and externality are highly significant in both educational (Hartman, 1990) and agency settings (Thompson and Marsh, 1991). Fieldwork education faces many structural and political uncertainties about resourcing and funding.

In respect of funding for fieldwork education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, since the demise of Student Units and the loss of the vacation wage for social work students on placement over the summer, neither education and training institutions nor agencies receive funding specifically targetted for fieldwork. The situation in Britain has been quite different (Borrill, W., personal communication, 9th March 1998). Government funding is delivered through CCETSW and provides 17 pounds sterling per day for social work placements in voluntary and independent organisations. Placements in the statutory sector are not directly funded but are supported in other ways. CCETSW allocates financial support to education and training institutions providing Diploma in Social Work programmes under the heading of "Practice Learning Funding Monies". This includes:- contribution to infra-structure for partner agencies; block purchase placements from non-partner agencies; student travel; collaborative monies, for example to facilitate partnership arrangements; and finally money for practice teacher workshops.[10] As the costs associated with fieldwork are such a current issue in Aotearoa/New Zealand, as reported in Chapter One, I was interested in making comparisons with models from other countries, such as the British model, where government funding is targetted to the fieldwork component of social work education[11].

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[10] I am indebted to Wendy Borrill at the University of Southampton (one of my many e-mail correspondents) for providing and verifying this information about the funding of fieldwork in Britain.

[11] As reported in an earlier footnote, the British situation is currently changing with the introduction of a National Training organisation. Interestingly government funding will continue for three years and then the new body has to be self-funding from employers in the social services industry (personal communication, P. Blackman, CCETSW Social Work Education Advisor, 7th April 1998).

The literature from Britain, Australia and New Zealand[12] also reveals concerns about the quality and availability of student placements and shortages of fieldwork teachers. The lack of a specific curriculum in fieldwork education has also become an issue in Britain (Doel, 1988) and Australia (Cooper, 1995a). The issue of performance standards for field educators (Bourne and Cooper, 1996) and codes of conduct for students and field educators (Cooper and Forward, 1996) have, not surprisingly, been highlighted recently as consumers in the "enterprise culture" (Cannan, 1995: 8) exercise their rights of complaint in an increasingly litigious environment. As Freeman and Hansen (1995: 295), writing in the North American context point out, a lack of performance standards for field educators means a very real risk that "poor attitudes and outdated practices" are passed on to students by untrained fieldwork instructors.

Introduction of competency based assessment, education and training

A trend towards a model of social work training which is employer rather than educator driven is evident in Britain (Howe, 1990; Cannan, 1995) and in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Hopkins, 1995; Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a). Howe (1990) writing about the British experience, argues that the control over the shape and content of social work education and practice has passed out of the hands of educators and into the hands of managers. He argues that the partnerships between education and training providers and managers of social service agencies mandated by CCETSW, have given managers a direct opportunity to influence social work education. He warns that the effects of this have been a lack of voice for the consumers of social services and an attack on the professional social work identity as the managerialist model is suspicious of and seeks to regulate "an independent, free-thinking social worker" who might just make "unpredictable demands on the organisation and is therefore a liability" (Howe, 1990: 48). Uttley (1994) argues that a similar trend is occurring in Aotearoa/New Zealand in a paper about the rationalisation, routinisation and displacement of professionals.

In Aotearoa/New Zealand, as described in Chapter One, the Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS) was disestablished in 1995 and replaced by an Industry Training Organisation, Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, which took responsibility for writing unit standards for education and training in the social services, based on the specification of competencies defined by the industry. The unit standards for two new social work qualifications (National Certificate and National Diploma) have been registered

[12] See Thompson and Marsh (1991) in Britain; Slocombe (1993); Cooper (1995); Fook and Cleak (1994) in Australia; NZCETSS (1993); Nash (1993); Daniels (1993) and Hopkins (1995) in New Zealand.

on the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) framework. New Zealand's approach to the reform of training and qualifications has been heavily influenced by the integrated competency approach[13] of an Australian, Andrew Gonczi (1993). There is much debate as to whether a competency based approach will mean a move away from an educational curriculum designed to give students a broad and critical understanding of the nature of contemporary society. Nash (1994) and Dominelli (1996, 1997a, 1997b) argue that this is a very likely consequence. Gonczi (1993: 17) on the other hand argues that if New Zealand adopts an integrated competency approach which avoids the problems of a task based or behaviourist approach, this integrated approach can lead ultimately "to a greater integration of the theoretical and practical which is at the heart of successful professional practice".

As I argued in Chapter One, whether or not the emphasis on the demonstration of competencies will "force better coordination between educators and agencies" (Hopkins, 1995: 8) with regard to the provision of placements, is a very current debate and one of the conditions of field education impacting on my research. As already stated, Hopkins (1995: 2) argues that the development of unit standards may provide "an opportunity for leverage for a recasting of fieldwork and a claim for a more reasonable resource base". He also suggests that there will be "a positive duty on providers to train, assess and support field education staff" (Hopkins,1995: 9). In another paper, he argues that "provision of these resources (work based learning, practice and assessment opportunities and skilled field educators) cannot be achieved by yet again cranking up student fees" (Kane and Hopkins 1995: 9). My own experiences as a Placement Coordinator and as a member of the Standing Committee for Fieldwork of NZCETSS (up to 1995), suggest some deep divisions between educators and employers as to who ought to provide the resources for fieldwork education. As Fisher (1990: 24) states "reorganisation and regulation will not serve in place of resources". The above discussion highlights the debates about where the responsibility to train, assess and support field education staff should lie, and raises the additional question about how fieldwork can be more adequately funded. These current debates are explored with participants in this research and their perspectives are presented in Chapter Seven.

There is a body of critical literature on competency standards emerging from Britain which moved down the track of competency-based vocational education training in the social services from the late 1980s, which suggests some lessons to be learned (Pell and Scott,

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[13] In a paper presented to the Tertiary Education Sector, Gonczi (1993) points out that many of the criticisms of competency based assessment, education and training are based on the assumption of a task based or behaviourist approach. Gonczi is also critical of this approach which he agrees is "reductionist, ignores underlying attributes, ignores group processes and their effect on performance, is conservative, atheoretical and ignores the role of professional judgement in intelligent performance" He proposes instead an integrated and holistic approach to competency which he argues is capable of looking at "complex combinations of attributes (knowledge, attitudes and skills) which are used in combination to understand the particular situation in which professionals find themselves".

1995; Owens, 1995; Clark, 1995; Dominelli, 1996). What follows is a summary of some of the arguments for and against a competency-based approach which arise from this literature. The positive aspects seem to be that all parties to fieldwork operate in relation to clear, specific and focussed criteria of performance, which makes the assessment process fairer, more comprehensive and objective. There is also some suggestion that having competency standards in place will increase public confidence in social work practice and that employers will be clearer about what knowledge and skills to expect of new graduates.

The negative aspects with regard to fieldwork seem to be that an emphasis on outcomes is at odds with a process of learning. There is a significant difference between knowing **how** and knowing **why** (my emphasis). In other words, anxiety about demonstrating appropriate behaviour may detract from understanding that behaviour. Research by Owens (1995) and Pell and Scott (1995) found that the time consuming nature of planning how students can be given opportunities to demonstrate they have met all the required competencies, puts emphasis on "surface" rather than "deep" learning. I have already summarised research by Gardiner (1989) where he argues that "deep" learning is necessary for adult learners to create meaning from placement experiences and to be able to transfer learning into different contexts. Thus Jones (1993: 15 in Pell and Scott 1995: 45) argues that in Britain, CCETSW

> ...has yielded to employer pressure for a social work qualification which has been intellectually 'gutted' to conform to their demand for a bureaucratically compliant workforce.

Many critics of a functionalist and behaviourist approach to competency argue that it is hard to translate attitudes and values fundamental to social work practice, into observable behavioural statements and that the attempt to do so is necessarily simplistic and one-dimensional. Opportunities for debates about issues of a critical, ethical and philosophical nature may be missed in the practicum because these are not part of the assessment criteria (Cannan, 1995: 14).

The research literature offers two different kinds of responses to the current conditions of field education in social work. The first set of responses offers options for tinkering with the existing set of arrangements for fieldwork education. The second set of responses offers options for a more radical reconceptualisation of the practicum (Lynch and Cornwall, 1992).

Change within the system or change of the system? - models of fieldwork education

What are some of the existing models for university-agency partnership in the provision of fieldwork? Bogo and Globerman (1995) in Canada describe four models:- field setting; student unit; training centre and teaching centre. Beddoe and Worrall (1997b) in New Zealand describe nine models:- internship, contact-challenge, quid pro quo or pay back, student units, fieldwork supervision accreditation, ownership, sponsorship, in-post practicum and action-reflection. Some of these models are already in place, others are still at the formative stage. Another model found in the literature is the consortium model in Britain.

This section briefly outlines models of fieldwork from overseas and from Aotearoa/New Zealand. I begin by describing the field setting model as this is the model that currently provides most placements for social work students in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Then, I discuss the other models proposed by Bogo and Globerman (1995), that is to say Student Units, Training Centres and Teaching Centres and compare and contrast the Canadian and the New Zealand experiences of these models. I have not described all of the models proposed by Beddoe and Worrall (1997b) at this stage, as some of their models are discussed in Chapter Seven, when looking at suggestions that fieldwork supervisors in this research had for new models of fieldwork education. However, I do describe an Internship model, an In-Post practicum and the Contact-Challenge model. Finally, I describe the British Consortium model.

- **Field Setting Model**

The Field Setting model is the current model of placement provision in Aotearoa/New Zealand, since the demise of Student Units circa 1990. In this model, a social service agency agrees to offer a student placement to the social work course, and as Bogo and Globerman (1995: 179-180) found in their Canadian study, "the student's educational experience is generally organised by the setting's mandate and service delivery programs, and more specifically by the service functions and practice methods of the field instructor". Under a field setting model, Bogo and Globerman (1995: 188-191), found that "it is unlikely that a systematic and structured educational program will be developed by the (field) setting"; that there are "few opportunities for organised reciprocity between the setting and the university"; and that the model "reinforces social workers' own independent commitment to social work field education".

With the current shortage of fieldwork teachers and fieldwork placements and competition between an increasing number of training providers for placements for social work students in Aotearoa/New Zealand, this model may not be sustainable. This model also means that agencies do not formally recognise practice teaching as an agency responsibility. This is a situation which several writers (Preston-Shoot, 1989; Bogo and Power, 1992; Thompson and Marsh, 1991) argue needs to change, with agencies providing appropriate support, training and budget allocation for practice teaching. For example Preston-Shoot (1989: 9), writing in the British context states that:

> the professional development and support of practice teachers **is an agency obligation** (my emphasis). It forms part of a general responsibility for staff development, but is increasingly being abandoned, as agencies react to financial and other pressures which result in the accomplishment of agency tasks being emphasised at the expense of staff development.

Beddoe and Worrall (1997a: 24) echo the last point about the reluctance of agencies to assume responsibility for the support of practice teaching in the current New Zealand context, when they argue that "major social service agencies aim to exert greater control over social work education whilst simultaneously wanting to participate less in its provision". The stand off between employers and educators over who ought to resource fieldwork education relates directly to one of the questions which this research hopes to illuminate, namely, where the responsibility for supporting and training fieldwork supervisors ought to lie.

- **Student Units**

As described in the brief history of fieldwork education in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand in Chapter One, student units were a very successful partnership model of fieldwork education between the mid 1970s through to 1990[14] . Student Units were originally introduced as a solution to the problem of a lack of qualified social workers available to supervise student placements. The Departments of Internal Affairs, Justice and Social Welfare and a number of (then) Area Health Boards established Student Units in association with tertiary institutions that offered full time social work courses (post-graduate diplomas and degrees) of two or more years duration. Student Unit supervisors were a joint appointment between the university and large state social service agencies in child welfare,

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[14] Student Units were phased out of existence as a result of a cutback in government funding from Vote Welfare which was not picked up by Vote Education. In the case of the Department of Social Welfare, the money previously spent on Student Units and on vacation wages for social work students' practical training, was redistributed to other forms of professional development, for example the Competency programme established by the NZ Children Young Persons and Families Service.

health and justice, and their role was dedicated to the organisation and supervision of a group of students on placement and liaison with the social work course.

Student Units had many advantages, recognised here and in other countries that developed this model of placement provision. In some cases, Student Unit supervisors were key people in newly developing areas of practice, for example, following Puao-Te-Ata-Tu (1986), a Maori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare, at least one Tikanga Maori Student Unit was established for Maori students in DSW placements. This unit played a role in the development of culturally appropriate models of fieldwork and assessment. As student unit supervisors were familiar with the curriculum of the social work programme, according to Bogo and Globerman (1995: 180) writing about the Canadian context, "they could provide a conceptual base for practice consistent with that taught in academic courses and draw links to field learning assignments in regular field seminars, individual and group instruction". Further, "the student unit provided a supportive learning environment and the opportunity for expanded learning through participating in others' case presentations" (Bogo and Globerman 1995: 180). Thus Student Units addressed many of the areas of improvement in current practice in fieldwork education in social work, identified by participants in this research.

- **Training Centre**

This model, described in the Canadian literature, by Bogo and Globerman (1995: 181), as "a structural unit consisting of a group of agencies used for field education for a specific group of students", does not have a direct parallel to my knowledge in either history or current practice in fieldwork education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It has some similarities with the consortium model in Britain (described later in this section). It also has some similarities with suggestions that universities set up Practice Learning Centres, and tender for contracts to provide social and community work services and/or carry out selected research projects in consultation with social service agencies. The work is then done by students under supervision of the Centre staff, who are qualified social workers, and who may be appointed solely by the university or may be joint university/agency appointments. For example, in the mid 1980s, La Trobe University in Melbourne established a Practice Research Unit (Pilcher and Shamley, 1986). It is not a clinic providing services for clients, but rather the university provides accommodation and supports time-limited research projects identified by local agencies, which are carried out by social work students. The arrangement is described by Pilcher and Shamley (1986: 31) as similar to a "Project Holding company".

- **Teaching Centre**

The Teaching Centre model described by Bogo and Globerman (1995: 183) in Canada is similar to the medical model of a teaching hospital. It is a model only possible for large organisations, where the agency setting identifies a contribution to education and research in it's mission statement and establishes formal institutional supports for fieldwork, including the creation of a specialist position(s) to coordinate and promote student placements[15]. The advantages of this model according to Bogo and Globerman (1995: 184-187), are that:

> it develops a statement that presents all aspects of the teaching program, the philosophy, service context, theoretical perspectives, and learning opportunities; commits resources to field education; establishes criteria and procedures for the selection of field instructors; recognises the major role (the agency) plays in ensuring the success of the field program; collaborates with the university in the educational development of field instructors; and promotes stronger links between practice and research.

- **Internship model**

Thompson and Marsh (1991: 52) question whether two separate stages of social work education, one under the control of the educational setting based on class teaching and the other under agency control (validated by the school of social work) based on practical experience, is a likely possibility, given "other developments in education and training concerning accreditation of work-based learning"? This sounds very similar to models from other disciplines, for example, psychology and nursing, of an internship period following on from completion of the academic course. This model has previously existed in social work education and training as two of the participants in this study had trained under an internship model in Britain in the 1970s and their experiences are described in Chapter Seven. It is a model which is currently under consideration for social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand. With the introduction of three year degree and two year diploma courses in social work in New Zealand, in order to remain competitive in the education market place, the four year degree courses are looking at the option of specialisations or "endorsements" in particular fields of practice for their final year students. Beddoe and Worrall (1997a) describe how this model might work. Fourth year students would be encouraged to specialise in a field of practice, for example, family therapy, alcohol and drug

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[15] The creation of Professional Social Work Adviser positions by some Crown Health Enterprises in New Zealand could be seen as a small step in this direction. These positions include the coordination and promotion of student placements and in some cases a responsibility for the support and training of fieldwork supervisors.

counselling and so on. As well as completing major academic work about policy and practice in that setting, they would also complete their final placement in that field. On completion of their placement, they would then be "offered a half-salaried internship for one year with a view to gaining a specialist certification" (Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a: 28) on top of their generic qualification.

- **In-Post Practicum**

There is a tradition in Aotearoa/New Zealand of supporting some students with considerable practical work experience in a social service agency but no formal social work qualification, to complete at least one of their fieldwork placements in their usual place of employment. As Beddoe and Worrall (1997b: 61) point out, "these students are often the primary income earner for their families and may face taking unpaid leave from their jobs to undertake a placement, if their employer is not willing to support their training". Randal (personal communication, 19th July, 1997)[16] points out that these placements can be highly successful if some of the pitfalls can be avoided, especially managing the dual roles of employee and student. These placements require setting clear learning objectives for a placement experience which is different to the student's usual role and responsibilities in the agency. Randal (personal communication, 19th July, 1997) suggests a number of ways in which "the workplace can be utilised for the purposes of placement". These are: practice research; agency research; pursuit of one-off practice issues; learning the ropes in another part of agency work; learning a new role within the agency; and developing more specialised skills perhaps by undertaking some professional development in another agency on a part time basis.

- **Contact-Challenge Model**

This is a model of fieldwork developed in Croatia at the University of Zagreb and brought to New Zealand by Ksenija Napan, who is completing a doctoral thesis at Massey University. The model places students in ongoing relationships with agencies and clients who have volunteered their expertise to help students become more effective social workers, over the course of an academic year and sometimes for a longer time period. Thus students have real life experiences to reflect on as they are developing theoretical knowledge and skills. According to Napan (1997: 44) such a model by promoting "simultaneous learning of social work theories and their application in practice, together with the encouragement in practising social work skills and encouraging students to work on their own personal growth and development, supports students to integrate theory, practice and

[16] As yet unpublished paper on "(Re)learning in the Workplace" presented at Fieldwork Symposium, University of Canterbury, 18th and 19th July 1997.

experience". Napan is currently researching this model in Aotearoa/New Zealand with a group of Masters in Social Work (Applied) students from the Albany Campus of the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at Massey University.

- **Consortium Model**

In Britain, the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) requires Diploma in Social Work programmes to plan and develop their courses in partnerships with employers of social workers[17]. These partnerships of courses and agencies, known as consortia, have responsibility to plan course content, select candidates for courses, and provide fieldwork placements and fieldwork teachers. In addition practice teaching courses are provided and practice teachers are involved in students' preparation for fieldwork. As I have already stated, the agenda behind the development of consortia in Britain was to raise the status of practice teaching and practice teachers, with the hope that this would encourage agencies to put more resources into student placements. Rogers (1996: 273), a Canadian academic, reviewing the Consortium model sees benefits such as "a greater number of practice teachers who feel more competent and less marginalised, an increase in the number of placements, and enhanced partnerships between educational institutions and social service organisations". However the extensive research carried out by Walker et al (1995) found that while the new model had resulted in closer involvement between courses and agencies, effective partnership calls for more than merely creating new organisational forms. As they found in their research:

> tensions and frustrations have continued to emerge in and between social work agencies and academic institutions. Practice teachers complain about the lack of support and recognition within their agencies, and about the low degree of involvement of course tutors, both in the planning of placements and in discussions during them. Students complain about the lack of involvement of their course tutors in the placement experience; and many students, practice teachers and course tutors point to the inadequacy of information exchange, the lack of clarity in defining responsibilities, and a continuing division of function which inhibits a holistic approach to social work education.
> (Walker, McCarthy, Morgan & Timms 1995: 147-148).

All of these new and old models of the practicum are resource intensive and it is unlikely that any one model alone will be able to provide the number of social work placements

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[17] At the time of writing, this is the current set of arrangements in Britain. However as discussed in earlier footnotes, the British system is about to undergo significant changes and the future of the Consortium model is therefore somewhat uncertain.

currently required given the proliferation of social work training courses in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The models also mirror the continuing stand off between agencies and training institutions over how much responsibility each will take for fieldwork education. Models for fieldwork also have to be flexible enough to cope with workforce trends to structure organisations in different ways, for example in health around multi-skilling[18], and flexible enough to allow for the expansion of fieldwork placements into new areas, for example Iwi Social Services and school social work. The above discussion suggests that some work will need to be done to prepare fieldwork supervisors for a changing environment. Britain has already gone down the track of developing a curriculum for practice teaching leading to formal qualifications (Doel, 1988) Other writers suggest that a more radical re-thinking of the practicum is required (Cooper, 1995a; Lynch and Cornwall, 1992).

Conclusion - A Reconceptualisation of the Practicum?[19]

Doel (1988: 45) argues that in Britain, the introduction of a system for the training, assessment and accreditation of practice teachers (CCETSW 1989, Paper 26.3) and the specification of minimum standards of competencies which students completing the Diploma in Social Work must be assessed on in the fieldwork component of the course (CCETSW 1991, Paper 30), has put the activity Britain now refers to as practice teaching on a radically different basis from the previous model of student supervision. He argues that there is a very real "prospect of practice-led curricula, in which the class curriculum is in turn revised and shaped by the practice curriculum" (Doel 1988: 47). The notion of a curriculum for practice-based learning which includes content, methods, sequencing of learning opportunities and continuous assessment and the notion that fieldwork teachers are able to deliver this curriculum is challenging for a number of reasons, not least the implications for a much more time-consuming and structured involvement on the part of the practice teacher.

The development of a practice curriculum also raises some more fundamental questions about the lack of articulation of a philosophical and theoretical position underlying particular conceptions of the practicum in professional education (Lynch and Cornwall, 1992). Much emphasis is placed in the literature on the incorporation of adult learning theories into a curriculum for practice teaching (Gardiner, 1989; Van Soest and Kruzich, 1994; Coulshed, 1993; Rogers and McDonald, 1995) based on theorists such as Knowles (1978) and Kolb

[18] This term is used by Janet George and Lindsey Napier (1996) to refer to 'a noticeable trend to ignore diversity in workers and clients' which 'is shown in the deprofessionalising of services, with the boundaries between the roles of nurses, occupational therapists and social workers increasingly blurred in the name of efficiency and rationality'.

[19] In 1992, Lynch and Cornwall wrote a paper entitled "Re-conceptualising the Practicum: Meeting the Industrial and Intellectual Challenges for Higher Education in the 1990s. The use of their terminology in the heading for this section is acknowledged.

(1984)[20]. However some writers (Humphries, 1988; Lynch and Cornwall, 1992) argue that while these educational theories provide some useful insights into teaching and learning processes, they also, in the words of Lynch and Cornwall (1992: 104) see education as a "psychological, apolitical, individually oriented process". Lynch and Cornwall (1992: 108) also question to what extent "a university education can or should be competency-based, that is derived from the skill requirements of the work place"? In seeking a theoretical perspective to inform the practicum, Lynch and Cornwall (1992: 105) draw on the work of Schön (1983; 1987) and argue for "a critical reflective conception of professional education". The theoretical perspective which has influenced my thinking and my research is described in the next chapter. I also argue for a critical reflective conceptualisation of fieldwork in social work education, which links the nature of practice with which social workers are engaged to the professional education to prepare students for this practice.

[20] The application of adult learning theories to the fieldwork component of social work education, particularly the concept of reflective learning in fieldwork supervision is discussed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORIES, CONCEPTS AND THEMES

"The struggles between courses and agencies are enshrined in conflicting ideologies of social work, associated with which are competing human interests"

Harré-Hindmarsh, J. (1992: 258)

Introduction

In the same way as the review of the literature in the previous chapter, this chapter about theoretical conceptualisations continues to set the scene for an informed discussion of the research findings. The research process I have followed is based on a critical approach to theory and practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Lynch and Cornwall, 1992). The aim of the action research methodology utilised in this research and described in Chapter Four, is that the issues and concerns of the participants will guide the process of inquiry and that from their "stories", conceptualisations and constructions of practice will emerge, based on the grounded theory approach developed by Glaser and Straus (1967). Therefore, it is not my intention in this thesis to try and fit the research findings into pre-conceived conceptual categories, nor am I seeking to verify existing theories. However inevitably my own situatedness in the terrain I am researching, means that I will bring some theoretical ideas and concepts to the interpretation of the data. Patton (1990: 391) describes these as "sensitising concepts" and this is how I view the theoretical material outlined in this chapter.

I argue that there are four areas of theory relevant to an understanding of fieldwork education in social work and show how these theoretical ideas are related to an understanding of the area under study. The four areas of theorising which are discussed in this chapter are:

- **critical social science** (Fay, 1987; Habermas, 1971).
- **critical pedagogy** (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1983)
- **adult learning theories and models** (Knowles, 1978; Kolb, 1984; Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985; Gardiner, 1989; Mezirow, 1981, 1990).

- **a critical reflective conceptualisation of professional education** (Schön, 1983, 1987, 1991)

Insights from Critical Social Science - Habermas (1971) and Fay (1987)

Relationship Between Theory and Practice

The way that critical social science sees the relationship between theory and practice is different to that proposed by positivist and interpretive social sciences. The influence of the positivist paradigm has separated out theory and practice in social work education[1] as it has in other professions, such as nursing and teaching. Schön (1987: 8) argues that we have created a model of professional education, in which a hierarchy of knowledge and knowing has developed so that the "normative professional curriculum still embodies the idea that practical competence becomes professional when its instrumental problem solving is grounded in systematic, preferably scientific knowledge". The previous chapter highlighted the distinction frequently made in the literature between academic knowledge and practice wisdom. According to Kondrat (1992: 237-238) the role of the academic from a positivist viewpoint "is to produce and authenticate knowledge, and the role of the practitioner (from a positivist viewpoint) is to apply knowledge. Thus practical knowledge becomes derivative. It is the technical or scientific application of formal knowledge". The purpose of the practicum (from a positivist perspective) is for students to learn how to apply scientific knowledge to the problems of everyday practice.

Care needs to be taken not to set up a false dichotomy between theory and practice, as arguably social work education has always recognised the integrated nature of the relationship between cognitive and experiential learning. However, I agree with Evans (1990, cited in Cooper, 1994: 115) who argues that the structural separation of academic and field learning has not facilitated integration. Clark (1995) carried out some research in Britain into how social workers use knowledge and theory in practice. Clarks' findings lend support to a reflexive view of the nature of the relationship between theory and practice in social work. He concludes that:

> practitioners usually only demonstrated an explicit command of the issues in their field when they had actually encountered them in their own work.

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[1] This is described by Sheafor and Jenkins (1982) as the 'academic model' of social work education. The separation of academic work and field experience does not enable students to apply the theoretical material as it is presented, which adult learning theories suggest is the best way to maximise the integration of theory and practice.

> Their knowledge and understanding had a patchy and pragmatic quality; their formal knowledge only became active when fertilised by direct experience. (Clark, 1995: 573).

Clark (1995) formulated a concept of "practical theorising", which is similar to Schön's (1983, 1987) view of how professionals think in action. In his work, Schön (1983, 1987, 1991) argues that the technical rational approach which derives from positivist ideas about the application of knowledge, is not able to provide the necessary framework of knowledge building for (social work) practice, which requires taking account of "the artistic, intuitive processes which the best practitioners bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict" (Schön 1983: 49). Schön proposes instead a reflexivity between theory and practice in which "research, theory building, knowledge application and skill development (separated in the technical-rational model by time and function) can emerge contemporaneously with action through the reflective process" (Papell and Skolnik, 1992: 20). According to Gould (1989: 10), what Schön does, is to invert the conventional way of thinking about the nature of the relationship between theory and practice, so that "the central educational problematic (in professional education) becomes the enhancement of learning from practice rather than the conventionally understood integration of formal theory with practice". I will discuss Schön's contribution to the subject matter of this thesis in much greater depth in the section on a critical reflective conceptualisation of professional education.

To summarise the discussion thus far, in critical social science the relationship between theory and practice is conceptualised as "a process of active construction and reconstruction of theory and practice by those involved" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 148). It is also the commitment to emancipation and transformation that makes critical social science different to positivist and interpretive social science. Thus as Carr and Kemmis (1986: 144) explain, critical social science is "a social process that combines collaboration in the process of critique with the political determination to act to overcome contradictions in the rationality and justice of social action and social institutions".

Three Primary Cognitive Interests - the technical, the practical and the emancipatory (Habermas, 1971)

The critical theorist Jurgen Habermas (1971) refutes the idea that science provides an objective, neutral view of reality (the positivist viewpoint), arguing instead that there are three primary cognitive interests - the technical, the practical and the emancipatory, corresponding to different aspects of social existence, work, interaction and power respectively, which give rise to three distinct but interrelated learning domains, shaped by

the particular human interests they serve.[2] The technical gives rise to the instrumental domain where the emphasis is on instrumental action to control the environment. The practical gives rise to the interactive domain where through communicative action "individuals and communities strive to give meaning and coherence to their social existence" (Kondrat, 1992: 240). The emancipatory gives rise to a capacity for self-reflection, "including interest in the way one's history and biography has expressed itself in the way one sees oneself, one's roles and social expectations" (Mezirow, 1981: 5). Taken-for-granted social roles and expectations and habitual ways of acting can only be challenged because we are able to think reflectively, an important point with regard to the critical reflective model of the practicum which I am proposing.

Fay (1987: 10) explains the importance of critical reflectivity, in enabling people to become aware of the ways in which the interests of the dominant group(s) in society have come to be internalised and accepted as given even by those who are oppressed by the existing set of social arrangements. Fay calls this "self-estrangement", and educators have theorised about how to overcome this false consciousness without imposing yet another preferred version of reality or prescribing the action to be taken. Freire (1972) proposes a problem-posing model of education. In this model, adult educators make problematic taken-for-granted social roles and expectations in ways which encourage "a free and uncoerced exchange of ideas and experiences". Fay (1987: 107) makes the important point that individuals need to be provided with "emotional support to overcome their own feelings of inadequacy and guilt as they become critics of the social world they inhabit". Social workers work with individuals, groups and families who are often disadvantaged by the existing set of social arrangements and therefore an understanding of critical reflectivity needs to be part of the education which prepares social work students for practice.

The ideas about critical reflectivity also relate to the argument made in Chapters One and Two, that fieldwork education in social work is situated in a contested space, where there are conflicting purposes and agendas, therefore it is important to critique the taken-for-granted formulations of fieldwork. As Fay (1987: 23) argues, a group of people can discover and re-evaluate their experiences of powerlessness and act on their new understanding to emancipate themselves[3]. Critical social science stresses that those people

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[2] For a general and succinct discussion of Habermas's critical social science, see Carr and Kemmis (1986:134-152). For an interpretation of the critical theory of Habermas in relation to adult learning, see Mezirow (1981: 3-6).

[3] The concept of oppression is a relative concept. Clearly fieldwork supervisors are in a more powerful position than other stakeholders in fieldwork education, that is to say students and clients. However the research findings do show that there are aspects of their role and relationships with both agencies and educational and training institutions, that fieldwork supervisors do feel powerless about and that there are practices they would like to change.

who are disadvantaged by a particular set of social arrangements are the people who must be involved in changing them. Hence the emphasis in this research on an action research methodology (discussed in Chapter Four) which provides the opportunity for fieldwork teachers to talk about their practice and their experiences of taking students on placements, and the use of critical reflection groups so that what is learned in the research is shared with participants and is applied to solving problems that are important to them.

Both Habermas (1971) and Schön (1987) refute the argument that practical knowledge is somehow inferior to technical (scientific) knowledge, because it is subjective. For Habermas (1971), critical social science depends upon the concerns, meanings and interpretations of participants. Kondrat (1992: 239) drawing on the ideas of Schön, argues that "practical knowledge" is "a distinct and identifiable mode of knowing in its own right", and that "as knower and known are involved in the same social, cultural and symbolic experiences", they are "accomplices in the activity of creating and understanding meanings" (Kondrat, 1992: 245). Inevitably, practice is subjective and the purpose of critical self-reflection "is to distinguish ideas and interpretations which are ideological or systematically distorted from those which are not, and distorted self-understandings from those which are undistorted" (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 149). There is a need for an ethical discourse to guide the application of critical theory to social work, to ensure that we are not just replacing one dehumanising exercise of power with another (Fay, 1987; Rees, 1991). What is important for social workers (and for educators and researchers) is to be aware of their "partial and personal perspectives and remain open to and aware of other perspectives" (Kondrat, 1992: 245).

If we apply the ideas of Habermas to fieldwork education, it can be argued that the educator and the practitioner "have functionally different relationships to the practice arena and therefore, different cognitive interests for their involvement in that arena" (Kondrat, 1992: 241). This point of view is well supported by the research literature discussed in the previous chapter (Evans and McDermott, 1988; Walker et al, 1995). The idea of different cognitive interests, perhaps explains some of the difficulties experienced by students and fieldwork teachers in attempting to make links between theory and practice as they experience the cognitive, attitudinal and affective differences between the academic setting and the practice setting (Benne, 1976 cited in Kondrat, 1992: 248). However, I would be careful about taking this argument too far, as there is also support in the literature (Rogers, 1996b) and in my own experiences of a mutuality of interests in fieldwork[4]. The discussion about subjectivity highlights that it is the task of the fieldwork

[4] Some of the models of fieldwork education, described in Chapter Two, for example the Consortium model in Britain involves partnerships in all aspects of fieldwork education between educators and employers.

teacher and of the student on placement to struggle to integrate their subjective experiences during the placement with "sources of understanding that transcend and condition the personal perspective" (Kondrat, 1992: 246). Gould (1996: 3) explains this well when he writes that theories and models learned in the academic setting "are not neutral resources which can be drawn upon and directly applied, but are only of use when mediated through the complex filters of practice experience". The above discussion relates to the research question about the kind of preparation fieldwork teachers need in order to fulfil their role as mentor and facilitator of the student's learning. I argue that the answers to this question will depend on supervisors' conceptualisations about the purposes of the practicum.

The next part of this discussion about insights from critical social science, applies the three primary cognitive interests identified by Habermas (1971) the technical, the practical and the emancipatory, to three alternative formulations of social work education.[5] These three formulations are:- technical rationality, practical reflectivity and critical reflectivity. Some of the current problems in fieldwork education, which were identified in the literature review are discussed in light of these three formulations of social work education. It is suggested that while these formulations have been separated out for the purposes of this discussion, like the models of fieldwork education discussed in Chapter Two, they are interrelated and there are aspects of each of the three formulations in current fieldwork education practice. In Chapter Two I have argued that some writers suggest that we are currently at a transitional point where the emphasis on competency-based approaches to learning means that a technical rational formulation of social work education is once again in the ascendancy (Howe, 1990; Hopkins, 1995; Gould, 1996). According to Howe (1990: 45) it is likely that the "definition of a good social worker and the training that produces her will pass out of the hands of the traditional teacher and into the hands of those whose experience lies outside education and inside the management of welfare bureaucracies".

Technical Rationality

A technical rationalist view of professional activity limits social work to instrumental problem-solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique. The relationship between theory and practice is "an instrumentalist, engineering conception" (Fay, 1987: 86). Some of the consequences of these assumptions for fieldwork education in social work are: firstly, "when the technical definition of practice knowledge

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[5]These three formulations of social work education were developed by Harré-Hindmarsh (1992) in a New Zealand study of new social work graduates' experiences as they entered or re-entered agencies on the completion of a university based qualifying course in social work.

dominates, the field practicum experience is viewed primarily as the location in which the student 'road tests' conceptual knowledge acquired in the classroom" (Kondrat, 1992: 249); and secondly, that the placement setting is seen as an "instructional site free of any conflicting value positions and agendas" (Harré-Hindmarsh, 1992: 241).

The response to current problems in fieldwork education from this perspective is a concern with improving the technical skills and competencies of social work graduates. The implications of this technical paradigm are outlined in the body of critical literature on competency standards discussed in the previous chapter (Pell and Scott, 1995; Owens, 1995; Clark, 1995; Dominelli, 1996). The ideology which underpins a task-based, behaviourist approach to competency, is conservative, atheoretical and ignores any suggestion of conflicts of interest. According to Gould (1996: 5) this approach downgrades "critical analysis as an educational objective" and promotes "a short-term view of practice to suit the supposed labour force requirements of agencies". If social workers are trained in an environment where technical expertise alone is emphasised, then how will they cope with the real world of professional practice which is characterised by "situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict" (Schön 1983: 49)? There are grounds for real concern that debates of a critical, ethical and philosophical nature, essential to preparation for social work practice, are minimalised and that the development of critical reflectivity is not encouraged (Pell and Scott, 1995; Owens, 1995; Clark, 1995; Dominelli, 1996).

Practical Reflectivity

The second formulation of social work education described by Harré-Hindmarsh (1992) is practical reflectivity. Here "the aim is not technical control and manipulation, but rather the clarification of conditions for communication and intersubjectivity" (Mezirow, 1981: 5). The response to current problems in fieldwork education from this approach is a concern with improved communication, understanding, interaction and partnership amongst all the groups with an interest in fieldwork. This conceptualisation is evident in many of the studies described in the literature review which propose solutions to problems which are attributed to value conflict, communication breakdown or a lack of understanding of the other parties' reality (Thompson and Marsh, 1991; Bogo and Power, 1992; Secker, 1993; Bogo and Globerman, 1995). While this research is useful in increasing our understanding of the different perspectives of each of the interest groups, in my view the critical emancipatory formulation offers a greater potential for translating new and changed perceptions into transformative action. Carr and Kemmis (1986: 137) express this point well, arguing that "critical social science moves beyond the

tendency of interpretive social science to rest content with illuminating, rather than overcoming, social problems and issues".

According to Harré-Hindmarsh, (1992: 241) the relationship of theory to practice in the practical reflectivity approach is based on Schön's concept of "reflection in action", where "professional activity is considered to be a constant process of interpretation, action, reflection and adjustment". I have considered the contribution of Schön and those writers who have applied his ideas to adult learning in general (Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985) and to social work education in particular (Gould and Harris, 1996; Gould and Taylor, 1996) to reflect practical and critical reflectivity. Papell and Skolnik (1992: 20) argue that through "reflection in action", the tacit knowledge of practitioners, in other words, the intuitive know-how that guides professionals can be brought into consciousness and passed on to students. When this happens "the knowledge that is implicit in action becomes available for both critique and inquiry" (Kondrat, 1992: 250) and thus moves from practical to critical reflectivity

Critical Reflectivity

Critical reflectivity is the third formulation of social work education described by Harré-Hindmarsh (1992). In contrast to an instrumentalist conception of the relation between theory and practice in the technical- rational formulation, there is an educative conceptualisation whereby "social theory is seen as the means by which people can achieve a much clearer picture of who they are and of what the real meaning of their social practices is, as a first step in becoming different sorts of people with different sorts of social arrangements" (Fay, 1987: 89). Moral and ethical assumptions about justice and equity are explicit in critical theories, for without these assumptions, there would be no basis for taking action to transform an existing set of social arrangements. From this perspective, it is important to understand how the meanings people attach to situations are not "chosen from an infinite range of meanings", but are constrained by peoples' personal biographies, by social and historical conditions and by power relations where "certain groups have more power to influence what is considered legitimate, normal and reasonable" (Harré-Hindmarsh 1992: 80). Here Harré-Hindmarsh is drawing on the work of historian, philosopher and social theorist, Michel Foucault, particularly his ideas about "totalising discourses", forms of social regulation and power relations.[6] With

[6] Foucault's primary unit of analysis is discourse, which is best understood as a system of possibility for knowledge (see Philp, 1985: 69-71). For Foucault, discourse is ambiguous and plurivocal. It is a site of conflict and contestation (see Sawicki, 1991:1). While Foucault would say that multiple discourses are present at any time, some have more power to be heard and he describes these as 'totalising discourses', by which he means those discourses which privilege one group over another. The task of critical social science, according to Foucault is to explore 'the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden' (1978:100). One of Foucault's main arguments in 'Discipline and Punish' (1977) is

regard to the subject matter of this thesis, the important points from the above discussion relate to the argument put forward in Chapters One and Two, that there are conflicting agendas and purposes in fieldwork education and unequal power relationships which influence how the fieldwork experience is interpreted by each of the stakeholders. Placements are the site at which tensions related to organizational, societal, personal and cultural values and beliefs become very apparent.

As already stated, the relationship between theory and practice from a critical social science perspective involves "a process of active construction and reconstruction by those involved" (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 148). How does a critical reflective formulation of the practicum resonate with current demands from employers of social workers that social work education and training produces graduates with the knowledge and skills to be competent and effective in the workplace? Humphries (1988: 11) points out that "a capacity for critical reflectivity does not exclude that domain of learning which concerns technical competence, but rather informs action in important and significantly different ways". The ideas of Mezirow (1981) who proposes a critical theory of adult learning are discussed in the section on adult learning models. Like Humphries, Mezirow argues that learning for task-related competence is an important part of adult learning, but that adult learners also need to learn in the other two learning domains described by Habermas, namely, learning for personal and interpersonal understanding and learning for perspective transformation[7].

Critical educational theorists such as Freire (1972) and Giroux (1983, 1987) propose that teaching and learning do not take place in a political and cultural vacuum. As already stated, Freire (1972) puts forward a problem posing model of adult education, where educators make problematic taken-for-granted social roles and expectations. As this thesis is about future directions in how we educate and train supervisors for the task of preparing students for practice, I argue that it is also necessary to understand what is happening at an ideological level in the education, health, justice and welfare agencies where placements are situated, in order to understand the issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors. Thus there is another body of theory which is relevant to this

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that modern societies regulate their populations by sanctioning the knowledge claims and practices of human sciences such as medicine, psychiatry, psychology and criminology, which have developed ways of categorising and separating out what is normal and what is deviant, creating a new form of discipline. Thus certain groups, including social workers become key agents in controlling the population by 'normalisation'. Although social work does act as a system of social control, it is in a contradictory position, as it also 'fulfils an essential mediating role between those who are actually or potentially excluded from the mainstream of society' (Parton, 1991:15). Foucault is concerned with an analysis of power relationships which goes beyond the exercise of political power by the State, to an analysis of 'the range of mechanisms whereby different groups and forms of knowledge regulate and thereby construct, the live of individuals, families and communities' (see Parton, 1994:12).

[7] The meaning of the term 'perspective transformation' is explained in the section on Mezirow's critical theory of adult learning later in this chapter.

thesis and that is the notion of education as a tool for liberation (Freire, 1972; Giroux, 1983, 1987). The body of theory about critical pedagogy has been taken up in Aotearoa/New Zealand and applied to social work education by Benton, Croft and Waaka (1990) in a report entitled Kahukura: The Possible Dream: What The Treaty of Waitangi Requires of Courses in the Social Services (see Chapter One).

Critical Pedagogy - Freire (1972) and Giroux (1983, 1987)

Freire and Giroux propose a critical pedagogy, which is the opposite to a notion of education as "a static currency that can be accumulated and exchanged" (Giroux and Trend, 1992: 60) and opposite to the notion of education as meeting "the predefined instrumental objectives of the market place" (Giroux and Trend 1992: 61). Freire (1972: 46) has described this conceptualisation of education as "a banking system". According to Giroux and Freire, "to propose a pedagogy is at the same time to construct a political vision" (Giroux and Trend, 1992: 62). The fundamental aim of a critical pedagogy according to Freire (1972) and Giroux and Freire (1987) is the liberation of human beings and never their domestication[8].

Social work students are inevitably caught up in the ideological debates in both educational and agency settings about what counts as knowledge for social work practice and whose interests are served? From a theoretical perspective of critical pedagogy, De Maria (1993: 12) argues that Giroux and Freire propose an educational practice that is "contextualised around emancipatory interests - the emancipation of the teaching enterprise and the emancipation of the dispossessed". In Aotearoa/New Zealand, a visionary report, Kahukura (Benton et al 1990) emphasised the need for a critical education for social services workers:

> to free the minds of the oppressed, to enable them to see beyond the limitations of their misfortunes, to become actors taking back control of their own lives, instead of passively accepting their status as victims. To accomplish this mission, social work must always be concerned with development of individuals and communities.
> (Benton, R., Benton, N., Croft, C., & Waaka, A., 1990: 1)

[8] Nash (1997:140) explains Freires' concepts of domestication and liberation. Domestication is where education serves to maintain the status quo and transmits the values of the ruling class, whereas education as a tool for liberation helps people "to become critical, creative, knowledgeable and participating members of their society".

These writers raise some important questions about how cultural difference is taken into account in social work education, training and assessment. They argue that Maori clients and Maori workers have been disadvantaged by a Eurocentric curriculum[9] in social work education and that:

> purporting to qualify people to work in social services in New Zealand without a sympathetic understanding of the culture and aspirations of a substantial portion of their likely clientele is in fact running an unjustifiably high risk of harming these clients thus again violating Articles Two and Three of the Treaty (of Waitangi), and the norms of professional ethics and social justice.
> (Benton, R., Benton, N., Croft, C., and Waaka, A., 1990: 19).

In summary, the argument thus far is that it is impossible to consider the education and training of fieldwork supervisors who play a key role in preparing students for practice, without making the link between the nature of the practice with which social workers are engaged and the professional education to prepare students for this practice.

Critical educational theorists such as Freire and Giroux see educational (and agency) settings as political and cultural sites, "characterised by contestation and struggle among differentially empowered cultural and economic groups" (Giroux, 1983: 3). Some groups have more power to implement their agenda and their ideas about what constitutes useful and relevant knowledge. In the previous two chapters, I have outlined the implications of the implementation of an economic rationalist and managerialist agenda in Aotearoa/New Zealand. As I have discussed in Chapters One and Two, the establishment of Industry Training Organisations and the development of unit standards for workers in the social services, signals a shift in power base from educators towards employers and from "provider defined curriculum based education to industry driven competency training" (Hopkins, 1995: 2). This is occurring in the context of a fundamental restructuring of the welfare state with emphasis on the privatisation of social services; the imposition of a managerialist culture; a reduction in resources alongside increased regulation and demands for accountability from social service agencies; and the commodification of knowledge (Boston, 1992; Kelsey, 1993; Rees and Rodley, 1995).

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[9] Until recently, social work theories which arose in Western Europe and North America were applied inappropriately and oppressively to other societies and cultures with different values and assumptions. There was no appreciation that these cultures had their own bodies of knowledge and models of practice and that their wisdom and their worlds ought to be part of the curriculum. While it is now generally acknowledged that curricula must be inclusive of cultural diversity and difference, how this is achieved is highly significant. Giroux and Trend (1992: 55-58) for example, describe how the public school curricula in New York and California have recently been rewritten by Ravitch and others, ostensibly to take account of multi-culturalism, but in ways that "dehistoricizes and depoliticizes the idea of culture" and "locates the source of oppression and change in individual will and achievement".

It is very much part of the mandate of social work to engage in action to change structures that create and perpetuate injustice (New Zealand Association of Social Workers, Preamble to Code of Ethics, 1993). According to Preston-Shoot and Jackson (1996: 6) social work is "fundamentally about power, ideology and social justice". A friend and colleague commenting on further cutbacks and fragmentation in home help services, recently asked me, why social workers remained passive and did not protest? The answers to her question are complex. Some key factors which writers like Kelsey (1993) have pointed out are:- the lack of data on which to construct a critique; the feeling that there is no alternative and the personal risks of speaking out against managerialist policies. Social work educators also have to take some responsibility for current directions in social work education. De Maria (1993: 9) writing in the Australian context, points out that in the 1980s and 1990s "caught within the workings of the neo-conservative juggernaut", social work has "rediscovered its conservative clinical roots" and "started to philosophically embrace an industry-driven vocational model".

According to Dominelli (1996) the consequences of embracing an industry-driven vocational model in Britain have led to a shift in the culture of social service organisations:

> away from focusing on following through a process in social work intervention, whilst actively engaging the user and addressing questions of oppression, to being concerned primarily with managing packages of care, overseeing the service being delivered by others and measuring outcomes crudely in terms of the number of people being processed by the system rather than the quality of their experience.
> (Dominelli, 1996: 172).

In my role as Placement Coordinator, I am aware of similar trends in Aotearoa/New Zealand. When agencies are asked for feedback about how well prepared social work students are for practice in their organisation, supervisors constantly ask for more preparation in practical skills of assessment, counselling and report writing. Therefore, it has been interesting to explore with participants in this research their views about the importance of incorporating critical reflectivity into the fieldwork component of social work education.

Giroux argues that educational (and agency) settings have the potential to "serve as a context from which to organise sites of resistance" (Giroux and Trend 1992: 53). While not minimising the difficulties of organising resistance, as both educational and welfare

sectors have been comprehensively restructured according to the economic rationalist agenda, some writers suggest that social workers and social work educators have an obligation to speak out about the human costs of economic rationalist policies (Dominelli, 1996; Ife, 1996; Fook, 1997). Giroux argues that if a space is created in which groups with differential power can hear each others' viewpoints, then "through such an exchange of views a mode of practice might emerge in which all groups may benefit" (Giroux, 1983: 240).

In social work education, placements are the point at which educators, students, agency social workers and managers come together, creating a space for all of the groups involved with the placement experience to enlighten one another. While this may seem idealistic, in Chapter Four, I describe a study by McGuiness and Wadsworth (1992) utilising a critical emancipatory research methodology, which allowed for the systematic exchange of mutually-constructed meanings (about their experiences) between staff and service users of an acute psychiatric unit. These researchers argue that programme evaluation is strengthened when the voices of all stakeholders, particularly the least powerful, are heard. This study influenced my own choice of a collaborative action research methodology. While this thesis concentrates on the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors, it is hoped that the research will contribute to ongoing debate and exchange of views amongst all interested parties about future developments in fieldwork education in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

The next area of theoretical knowledge necessary to an understanding of conceptualisations of the practicum is the argument that a better understanding of the processes of adult learning will improve fieldwork teaching. The assumptions underlying different models of adult learning need to be scrutinised critically, particularly with regard to who defines what is necessary to learn in order to be a competent social worker.

Adult Learning models - an overview and critique

There is a large body of knowledge about adult and experiential learning which became especially relevant to social work education from the 1970s onwards with the development of an "articulated" model of fieldwork education which involves a planned relationship between cognitive and experiential learning and a shift in emphasis to the educational aspects of the fieldwork supervisor's role (Sheafor and Jenkins, 1982). It has been argued that the change in title from student supervisor to field educator in Australia, practice teacher in Britain, and field instructor in North America and Canada is reflective of the emphasis on "an educational theory and practice" (Coulshed, 1993: 2). The difference between these adult learning theories and models and theories about adult

education which are critical and dialogical (discussed in the previous section of this chapter) are that the theories discussed in this section (with the exception of Mezirow, 1981, 1990), put forward a conceptualisation of educational theory which is primarily concerned with teaching and learning processes and give little consideration to the organizational, social, political and cultural context in which learning occurs.

Of particular relevance to the subject matter of this thesis are the ideas of Knowles (1978) about the characteristics of the adult learning process. Also of importance is the work of Kolb (1984) on experience as the source of learning and development, and the concept of learning styles and a learning cycle. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) have developed a three stage model of reflective learning to assist educators who are interested in enhancing learning from experience in professional education, which is very relevant to fieldwork supervisors. There is also a body of knowledge about how to enhance the capacity of students to transfer learning from one context to another and the fieldwork supervisor's role in this process (Harris, 1983; Gardiner, 1988). These theoretical developments led to a number of interpretive studies which looked at the relationship between learning conceptions and capacity to learn (Gardiner, 1989; Gray and Gardiner, 1989; Van Soest and Kruzich, 1994; Rogers and McDonald, 1995) with the idea that a better understanding of the processes involved would improve practice teaching.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is not necessary to go into a great deal of detail about the work of any of the adult learning theorists described above, but rather to show how some aspects of their theories have been usefully applied to fieldwork education in social work and to provide a critique of what is missing from traditional adult learning theories and models.

From Pedagogy to Andragogy - Knowles (1978, 1983).

Knowles is credited by some commentators on his work (Gardiner, 1989; Coulshed, 1993) as being responsible for "a paradigm shift from looking at teaching to looking at the whole nature of learning" (Coulshed, 1993: 5). Knowles (1983) identifies some key characteristics of adult learners which are very significant for teaching and learning on placement. These characteristics are:- the importance of self-esteem and self-direction in the learning process; the importance of peoples' life experiences as a resource for learning; that learning is enhanced when it is problem-centred rather than subject-centred and finally, that if knowledge is applied immediately and the content is relevant, it is more

likely to be internalised and remembered.[10] The role for the fieldwork teacher is as a facilitator and resource person.

It is perhaps unfortunate that Knowles has described his approach as moving from pedagogy to "andragogy", a term which Humphries (1988: 5) is critical of for both its "androcentric and ethnocentric assumptions". Humphries (1988: 7) is critical of Knowle's assumption that "all adults will have similar aspirations and opportunities for self-direction, that their own and others' expectations of them will be of a uniform character regardless of social characteristics such as class, race and gender". She also contends that the place of past experience in educational theory is more complex than Knowles suggests, in that Knowle's concept of experience is benchmarked against white, male, middle-class norms, taking no account of structural factors of poverty, racism, and sexism (Humphries, 1988: 9). A further limitation, which has already been alluded to, is the assumption that learning takes place in "a political, social and historical vacuum" (Humphries, 1988: 10). In fact, as Humphries (1988: 10) points out, education for social work practice requires students to question and re-evaluate values, beliefs and ways of doing things, which can be a painful process. Brookfield (1986: vii) is sceptical of the "warm fuzzy" notion of facilitation of learning whereby adult learning "is seen as a nondirective, warmly satisfying encounter through which learners' needs are met", arguing that adult learning encounters in fact may "contain elements of conflicting purposes, contrasting personality styles, or challenges to learners to engage in an anxiety-producing re-examination of self or previously unchallenged norms (organisational, behavioural or moral)". Often some of our most significant learning arises when we are asked to step outside of our "comfort zone".

With regard to the research question about the needs of fieldwork teachers for support, education and training to carry out their role, this discussion of adult learning models suggests a need to think carefully about the content of courses on practice teaching. If, as I am arguing, a critical reflective conception of the practicum is most suited to preparing students for the nature of contemporary social work practice, then it will be interesting to see if and how participants in this research build a critical approach into their fieldwork teaching.[11]

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[10] Bogo (1981) reports on a group training programme offered by the University of Toronto to new field instructors, based on these principles of adult learning. Thus their training programme for field instructors covers four key areas:- a learning environment which enhances self-esteem; an emphasis on drawing on personal experiences; learning outcomes which are practical and immediately applicable in current placement situations; and finally an action-reflection process which promotes the integration of theory and practice.

[11] One research study in Canada, reports an evaluation of a ten week, twenty hour continuing professional education course for field instructors, designed 'to develop and promote the ability of participants to be critically reflective about their practice' (Rogers and McDonald 1992:167).While this was only a small scale study, there were significant post-course differences in critical thinking scores on the Watson-Glaser

Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

Kolb (1984) emphasises the importance of learning from experience or learning by doing. He conceptualises the learning process as involving four modes, which he calls concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Kolb proposes a learning cycle based on these four modes. Firstly, the learner has some kind of experience which becomes the basis for observation and reflection. This experience is then linked to theoretical material or new ways of conceptualising the problem as the learner seeks to put the experience into some cognitive map. This in turn leads to the next step in the cycle where the learner experiments, problem solves, explores alternatives and develops action strategies, which are then tried out in practice. Kolb (1984: 77) further suggests that while individuals use all four modes, research shows that for different individuals, one or more of the learning modes tends to be more dominant or in other words, individuals have preferred learning styles, which he describes as convergent, divergent, assimilation and accommodation[12]. As Coulshed (1993: 6) points out Kolb's experiential learning model helps practice teachers to understand why some students "prefer to try to do something prior to reading about it or vice-versa, or why some learners enjoy modelling themselves on what they see other practitioners doing".

Kolb's ideas have generated a lot of research in fieldwork education into the influence of learning styles on student and field instructor perceptions of the placement experience (Bogo and Vayda, 1987; Gardiner, 1989; Van Soest and Kruzich, 1994). For example, Van Soest and Kruzich (1994) explored whether perceptions of a successful placement are related to different or similar learning styles of student and fieldwork instructor. They expected to find that the more similar the learning styles of field instructor and student, the more positively each would perceive the placement. As Van Soest and Kruzich (1994: 61) point out, this could lead to the assumption that a match of field instructor and student based on learning styles is desirable. However as all four stages of the learning cycle are needed for effective learning, what is more crucial is that students and fieldwork instructors are aware of each other's preferred learning style and able to provide opportunities for learning in other modes.

Critical Thinking Appraisal between the group that attended the special course as opposed to the control group (Rogers and McDonald, 1992:173). Further research is needed into the outcomes for students of being supervised by field instructors who have received this training.

[12] According to Kolb (1984:77-78) a convergent learning style relies primarily on the dominant learning abilities of abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation; a divergent learning style emphasises concrete experience and reflective observation; an assimilation learning style, emphasises the dominant learning abilities of abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation; and finally an accommodative learning style emphasises concrete experience and active experimentation.

Van Soest and Kruzich (1994) found that both field instructors and students share a common preference for the "accommodator" learning style, which emphasises concrete experience and active experimentation. According to Kolb (1984: 78) "the greatest strength of this orientation lies in doing things, in carrying out plans and tasks and getting involved in new experiences". Van Soest and Kruzich's findings are similar to other research which has shown occupational clusters in preferred learning styles and that studies of social workers show that they tend to be "accommodators or divergers" (Kolb, 1984: 89). Both accommodators and divergers prefer using concrete experience over analytical thinking. Van Soest and Kruzich (1994: 61) conclude that the challenge for fieldwork instructors is "to find ways to increase the student's ability to learn theory as well as its practical applications" and that "learning styles need to be drawn upon differentially and flexibly to enhance the field experience".

A critique of Kolb's work can be provided at a number of different levels. Firstly, individual profiles change over time and according to circumstances. Secondly, learning is much more complex that this model suggests. Thirdly, little attention is given to the role of cultural experience in the development of learning styles. Fourthly, the formal education system shapes individual learning styles as we are "taught" how to learn. Fifthly, there is a suggestion that difficulties in the learning process are related solely to a lack of understanding about the process, rather than to ideological differences about "what is 'best' to learn and transfer and who defines this" (Harré-Hindmarsh 1992: 56).

The work of Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985), Boud and Miller (1996) and Boud and Knights (1996) on building reflective learning into adult education is briefly discussed next, as this is relevant to the third research question about the content of practice teacher training.

Turning Experience Into Learning - Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985)

Schön's work (1983, 1987) and Kolb's work (1984) stimulated discussion amongst adult educators about how to encourage reflective learning from experience, in professional education for teaching, nursing, social work and other disciplines which require practical training. Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) propose that the aspect of experiential learning which adults find the most difficult is reflection, particularly if they are not encouraged to develop this skill. With regard to the practicum, Boud and Knights (1996) point out that "the encouragement of reflective practice requires more than the development of effective ways of debriefing periods of fieldwork". Boud and Knights (1996: 26-27) emphasise that reflective learning involves both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-on-action refers to the importance of revisiting experience

in order to learn from that experience. Here the role of the fieldwork supervisor in facilitating student learning is critical, as is highlighted by a two year longitudinal study into experiential learning in social work and teacher education carried out by Gould and Harris (1996). One of their findings was that the extent to which students develop the capacity for practical and critical reflectivity during supervised practice in fieldwork placements depends on "the cues and opportunities for reflection provided by a mentor" (Gould, 1996: 6) in other words, the fieldwork supervisor.

The work of Gardiner (1989) who developed a model of teaching and learning in placement supervision is discussed next. His work is important because like Gould and Harris (1996) he has applied some of the ideas of adult learning theorists directly to fieldwork in social work education.

Interactive Model of Teaching and Learning in Placement Supervision - Gardiner (1989)

Gardiner's (1989) research looked into the relationship between conceptions of learning, approaches to learning and the outcomes of learning in social work education and training.[13] As Gardiner (1989: 2) points out "despite the centrality of placements in developing practice competence for social workers", there is a lack of research into how social work students learn to learn (meta-learning) and the role their fieldwork supervisors play in this task. From his research into student-supervisor interactions, Gardiner developed a model which has three qualitatively different levels of learning. According to Gardiner (1989: 130), Level One interactions show "a surface-reproductive conception of learning",[14] characterised by a predominant focus on the content of what is to be taught and learnt (facts or procedures). At Level Two, the focus is on students taking "an active role in constructing meaning from their placement experiences. There is a recognition of diversity in approaches to teaching, learning and practice" (Gardiner, 1989: 130). At Level Three, the focus is on meta-learning, which shows the ability to

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[13] The specific methodology of Gardiner's (1989) research involved the use of open-ended questionnaires with fieldwork supervisors, an in-depth case study of an entire placement carried out by tape-recording all the supervision meetings, and interviews with 12-15 pairs of students and supervisors to study supervisor-student interactions in placement supervision.

[14] In making a distinction between 'surface' and 'deep' approaches to learning, Gardiner (1989: 60-66) is drawing on the work of a group of cognitive psychologists, collectively known as the Goteborg studies (Marton and Saljo, 1976). Surface learning is about remembering the content, whereas deep learning is concerned with principles and meaning. While learners utilise both approaches, the two approaches are qualitatively different. Further, according to Gardiner (1989: 61) these studies showed "that students' approaches to learning are closely related to the outcomes of that learning. Thus a decision to adopt a surface approach rules out the possibility of a deep outcome (understanding meaning) simply because it was not being looked for, and was not seen as the purpose of the learning". The implications for practice teaching are that students may not look for 'deep' outcomes (principles and meaning) in learning if this is not expected of them by their fieldwork teachers.

transfer both the content and process of learning to contexts other than those in which the original learning arose. Supervisors who demonstrated Level Three interactions were able to recognise that not all students learn in the same way and that the same student might learn in different ways at different times. They also demonstrated an ability to use and evaluate different teaching approaches for different tasks (Gardiner, 1989: 133-136).

At each of the three levels, students and supervisors revealed different conceptions of learning, teaching, education, the relationship between theory and practice and the purpose of placements. Gardiner's (1989) study found that over half of the supervisory approaches reinforced Level One conceptions of teaching and learning, whereas if social work students are to be able to transfer learning[15] and develop a capacity for critical reflectivity, Level Three interactions need to be reached. Presently, as already argued in the previous chapter, the solution to problems related to the quality of social work graduates and practitioners in Britain and other countries, has been to specify competencies which aspiring social workers are required to demonstrate in their fieldwork placements. According to Gardiner (1989: 146) there is some limited evidence that what this does is to increase content at the expense of process, with the effect of inducing surface-reproductive learning. Gardiner's (1989: 145) research is important in directing our focus "to identifying and promoting the kinds of approaches to learning which students will need if they are to achieve the required learning outcomes for competent professional practice". However, it does not address wider issues about what we mean by competent social work practice and how we prepare social workers for that practice, a task in which fieldwork teachers have a key part to play. The adult learning theories discussed thus far concentrate on individual change, whereas Mezirow (1981, 1990) has developed a critical theory of adult learning which is concerned with both personal and social transformation.

A Critical Theory of Adult Learning and Education - (Mezirow, 1981, 1990)

Mezirow (1981) has taken the ideas of Habermas about the three primary cognitive interests, the technical, the practical and the emancipatory, (outlined earlier in this chapter), and applied these ideas to adult learning theory. He argues that adult learners need to learn in all three learning domains, that is to say, learning for task-related competence corresponding to the technical domain; learning for personal and

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[15] One of the key aspects of any vocational education is the ability to transfer knowledge and skills learned in an academic setting to a practice setting. Gardiner (1988) argues that transfer of learning requires the conceptual ability to both derive generalisations from particular experiences and to make use of these previous experiences appropriately in other situations and contexts.

interpersonal understanding, corresponding to the practical domain; and learning for perspective transformation corresponding to the emancipatory domain. Mezirow (1981: 17) is critical of behavioural change models of adult education which he argues are only applicable to learning for task-related competence, but have been "indiscriminately applied to the other (learning) domains as well". He argues that "this misconception has become so pervasive that the very definition of education itself is almost universally understood in terms of an organised effort to facilitate behavioural change" (Mezirow, 1981: 17). According to Mezirow (1981) the practical and emancipatory learning domains need to be addressed in fundamentally different ways and require fundamentally different educational practices.

For Mezirow the key concept is the notion of perspective transformation. For Mezirow (1981: 6), "perspective transformation[16] is the emancipatory process of becoming critically aware of how and why the structure of psycho-cultural assumptions has come to constrain the way we see ourselves and our relationships, reconstituting this structure to permit a more inclusive and discriminating integration of experience and acting upon these new understandings". The most significant distinguishing characteristic of adult learning, according to Mezirow is the capacity for critical reflectivity which includes "not only becoming critically aware of habits of perception, thought and action" (which is covered by some of the other theorists of adult learning discussed above) but also enabling the adult learner to "identify real problems involving reified power relationships rooted in institutionalised ideologies which one has internalised in one's psychological history" (Mezirow, 1981: 18).The aim of this research is to enable fieldwork teachers to reflect on and theorise about their own teaching and educational practices with students and to reflect on the conditions and context of field education which impact on their work as placement supervisors.

This section on adult learning theories and models has provided some important themes and concepts for a discussion of the research questions and the research findings in subsequent chapters. While I have already made reference to the contribution of Schön (1983, 1987) to the subject matter of this thesis in other parts of this chapter, his ideas about the nature of professional practice and the preparation that is necessary for such practice, are so important to the research questions this study explores, that the final section of this chapter is devoted to Schön's work.

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[16] Mezirow's concept of perspective transformation is similar to what Freire (1972) terms 'conscientization' and Habermas (1971) 'emancipatory action'.

Educating the Reflective Practitioner - Schön (1983, 1987)

As I have already stated, Schön is critical of a technical rational view of professional competence whereby theories and techniques are applied to solving instrumental problems, arguing instead for "a constructionist view of the reality with which the practitioner deals" (Schön, 1987: 36). He conceptualises the terrain of professional practice as a "swampy lowland" in which "messy, confusing problems defy technical solution" (Schön, 1987: 3) because of conditions of "uncertainty, uniqueness and value conflict" (Schön, 1987: 6).

Schön's work is important in setting the scene for an informed discussion of the research findings of this thesis, as he discusses the crisis in confidence in professional knowledge and in education for professional practice, which is a very current issue in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Uttley, 1994; Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a; and Nash, 1997a). Schön's argument that professionals are faced with "heightened societal expectations for their performance in an environment that combines increasing turbulence with increasing regulation of professional activity" (Schön, 1987: 7) is equally relevant to the 1990s. As I have argued in the previous chapter, concerns about the quality of social work practice, inevitably led to concerns about the quality of social work education and training. Schön's contribution is to address concerns about the gap between what is taught by the education and training institutions and what is required of social workers in the real world of practice by suggesting that:

> The question of the relationship between practice competence and professional knowledge needs to be turned upside down. We should start not by asking how to make better use of research-based knowledge but by asking what we can learn from a careful examination of artistry, that is, the competence by which practitioners actually handle indeterminate zones of practice[17] (Schön, 1987:13).

Thus, Schön emphasises:- the central importance of the practicum in professional education; the inductive nature of learning for professional practice and the reflexive relationship between conceptual and experiential learning. Schön outlines how a "reflective practicum" differs from an academic or apprenticeship model.

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[17] By 'indeterminate zones of practice', Schön is referring to the conditions of uncertainty, uniqueness and value conflict which characterise a large proportion of the actual situations faced by professional practitioners.

> If we focus on the kinds of reflection-in-action through which practitioners sometimes make new sense of uncertain, unique or conflicted situations of practice, then we will assume neither that existing professional knowledge fits every case nor that every problem has a right answer. We will see students as having to learn a kind of reflection-in-action that goes beyond stateable rules - not only by devising new methods of reasoning, but also by constructing and testing new categories of understanding, strategies of action and ways of framing problems.
> (Schön, 1987: 39).

The implications for professional education of a reflective practicum are several according to Schön (1987: 311-312). **Firstly**, a reflective practicum brings ***learning by doing*** (my emphasis) into the core of the curriculum. Gould (1989: 17), explains the radical implications of Schön's ideas well, when he states that placing "the practitioner centre-stage as the primary creator and bearer of theory challenges conventional understandings of the function of the professional academic as the primary producer and disseminator of knowledge". According to Gould's (1989: 14) interpretation:

> Schön finds that scientific or professional knowledge is embodied in the practice exemplar and legitimised by the appropriate reference group. Within this world view there is no place for the positivist, value-free knowledge of techniques, but only a relativist, constructed understanding which the practitioner continuously tests out and extends.

Secondly, the role of the fieldwork supervisor is characterised as a mentor or coach rather than as a teacher in the traditional sense of the word, which is interesting, given the emphasis particularly in Britain on the teaching aspect of the supervisor's role. Schön (1987: 17) argues that students cannot be *taught* what they need to know, but can be *coached*. It could be argued that the distinction Schön makes here is one of semantics and that it depends on how you interpret the words teaching and coaching. However, I think that Schön's point in making this distinction reflects the constructionist epistemology of practice[18] he proposes, and is significant to a deeper understanding of how students learn in the practicum and "what happens when people with similar and different ways of framing reality come into collision" (Schön, 1987: 322). In Chapter Five, reflecting on their experiences of student supervision, participants in this research express the view

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[18] As Schön (1987: 36) points out the logical-positivist, technical-rational paradigm rests on "an objectivist view of the relation of the knowing practitioner to the reality s/he knows", whereas "in the constructionist view, our perceptions, appreciations, and beliefs are rooted in worlds of our own making that we come to *accept* as reality".

that one of the most difficult aspects of the fieldwork supervisor's role is when there is a clash of world views of student and supervisor.

Thus I will illustrate my interpretation of Schön's argument here with reference to conflicts between fieldwork supervisors and students. As Schön (1987: 4) points out, "depending on our disciplinary backgrounds, organisational roles, past histories, interests and political/economic perspectives, we frame problematic situations in different ways".[19] If, for example, a student and a supervisor hold conflicting frames, they will "pay attention to different facts and make different sense of the facts they notice" (Schön, 1987: 5). The way such conflict is resolved is critical in my view to a deep understanding of what Schön means by a reflective practicum and the processes of learning which will take place in such a practicum. Schön (1987: 36) describes having "a reflective conversation" about the different views, values and beliefs each person holds about the situation and in so doing both (student and supervisor in my example) will "remake a part of their practice world and thereby reveal the usually tacit processes of worldmaking that underlie all of their practice". There is an equality, reciprocity and respect implicit in the model Schön proposes, which is not reflected in conceptualisations of the role of the fieldwork supervisor as the "expert" which the term "practice teacher" could convey.

Thirdly, according to Schön (1987: 312), a reflective practicum "must cultivate activities that connect the knowing and reflection-in-action of competent practitioners to the theories and techniques taught as professional knowledge in academic courses". It is important to be clear that Schön is arguing that formalised theory and empirical knowledge are important, but that the processes of knowledge building and the relationship between theory and practice in professional education, needs to be inverted. In order for student supervisors to be able to emphasise the reflexive relationship between conceptual and experiential learning, they need to understand learning processes (which is where the adult learning theories discussed in the previous section become important); they need to be able to articulate resistances to a reflective model of the practicum in practice settings which are more interested in uncritical technicians; and they need to become involved as practitioner-researchers in reflecting on and creating "their own tacit theories of the phenomena of practice" (Schön, 1987:321) and assist their students to do likewise.

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[19] Not only are the interpretations or meanings given to problematic situations influenced by our personal biographies, they are also influenced by societal images of a particular profession, which are related to the history and conditions which have impacted on the development of that profession. See the study by Gould and Harris (1996) with regard to social work and teaching and the study by Haas and Shaffir (1991) with regard to medicine.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have put forward an argument for a critical reflective conceptualisation of the practicum in social work education, drawing on four areas of theory. In concluding this chapter, the relationship of each body of theory to the arena of fieldwork education is summarised. In the final section on a critical reflective conceptualisation of professional education, I have argued, based on the work of Schön, that the practicum is the most significant site of learning for professional education by a process of "knowing-in-action" (Schön, 1987: 25). This view of the importance of the fieldwork component of social work education is supported in the literature on practice teaching from around the world (Doel and Shardlow, 1996) and supported by the participants in this research (see Chapter Five). If the practicum is about learning from experience, teaching about practice is then conceptualised as "the art of facilitating students in articulating personal categories of understanding, framing a problem and implementing strategies of action" (Gould, 1989: 17). Thus the theories and models discussed in the section on adult learning which provide insight into how knowledge is developed from reflective observation on real life experiences, are significant to the research question about the content of education and training which would be most useful to practice teachers in fieldwork education in social work.

While Schön's conceptualisation of the practicum does suggest the existence of value conflicts over purposes and agendas, these conflicts are not explored at a political level, thus his solutions are directed at redesigning professional education. In Chapter Two, I have argued that tinkering with the existing system may not be sufficient to solve the problems around fieldwork education in social work, because this kind of change will not address the often marginal and contested position of fieldwork within both educational and agency settings. Thus the work of critical educational theorists such as Freire (1972) and Giroux (1983) who argue that teaching and learning do not occur in a political and cultural vacuum but are socially, culturally and historically situated and constructed, is also significant to an understanding and discussion of the findings of this research which are presented in Chapters Five, Six, Seven and Eight. The section on critical social science is also significant for the choice of research methodology for this thesis which is described in the next chapter.

As already noted, I agree with Carr and Kemmis (1986: 144) who conceptualise the relationship between theory and practice as "a process of active construction and reconstruction (of theory and practice) by those involved". Hence the choice of an action research methodology, outlined in Chapter Four, where the researcher is actively

involved in the area under study, and where the aim is that the study will have a practical utility, providing a basis for changes to the existing set of arrangements around fieldwork education in social work if these are found to be unsatisfactory to participants in the research in any way.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

"The action research process is one in which participation and observation in the field is combined with reflection among participants and used in the service of participants to achieve their goals"

Kerr, A. (1995: 42)

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research methodology utilised in the study; the rationale for choosing this approach and how this is related to the theoretical perspective described in the previous chapter. The research design is then outlined, including a profile of the participants and a description of the procedures used to collect the data. The next part of this chapter discusses ethical issues which arose in the course of carrying out the research. Finally, the analytical frameworks utilised to organise and understand the data are outlined.

This research is a descriptive and interpretive study of the nature of fieldwork supervision in social work education from the perspective of fieldwork supervisors. It is guided by a phenomenological inquiry paradigm[1] which according to Patton (1990: 37) "uses qualitative and naturalistic approaches to inductively and holistically understand human experience in context specific settings". I have argued in previous chapters that the experiences of social workers who take social work students on placements will not only reflect their own personal histories and values, but will also be influenced by what is happening at a political and ideological level in both the educational and agency settings in which fieldwork is situated. Qualitative methods pay attention to "nuance, setting, interdependencies, complexities, idiosyncrasies and context" (Patton, 1990: 51) and were therefore most likely to provide the kinds of information and insights I wanted to obtain.

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[1] Phenomenology is concerned with how people put together the phenomena they experience in order to make sense of their world. Within the phenomenological paradigm, the hermeneutic or interpretive position is that nothing can be interpreted free of some perspective, therefore the first priority for the social researcher is to capture the perspective and elucidate the context of the people being studied (Patton, 1990: 84-85).

Key Features of Qualitative Inquiry

Patton (1990: 39-58) outlines some of the distinctive features of qualitative inquiry which are significant for the choice of a qualitative approach to this research. Qualitative inquiry is naturalistic in the sense that the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the natural setting. Qualitative inquiry uses an inductive approach which places emphasis on "illumination, understanding and extrapolation rather than causal determination, prediction and generalisation" (Patton, 1990: 424) which is emphasised in the quantitative tradition in research. In qualitative research, grounded theory [2] (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) develops as constructs emerge from grouping, questioning, testing and regrouping the data which has been collected. Qualitative research is also about representing the participants in their own terms rather than imposing "a preconceived or outsider's scheme of what they are about" (Lofland, 1971: 4). This means that qualitative research must involve direct personal contact between the researcher and the participants, because this is the only way that the researcher can come to understand the perceptions, symbolic constructs, feelings and knowledge of the people and situation being studied. To collect this kind of data, the researcher uses in-depth, open-ended interviewing and direct participation techniques, such as the group meetings and the in-depth individual interviews conducted in this research which will be described more fully in the section on research design.

In contrast to some forms of quantitative inquiry which use standardised measuring instruments which fit data into a number of pre-determined response categories, researchers in the qualitative tradition do not make the assumption that they can possibly know enough about the context and world view of respondents a priori in order to know what questions to ask and therefore rely on the researcher as the human instrument. Even though I had been a student supervisor prior to becoming a social work educator, I did not want to go into the field with preconceived ideas based on my own experiences, but rather I wanted the research design to provide opportunities to consult with participants at each stage of the research about what are the important current issues and concerns in fieldwork education. When I was deciding on the methodology to utilise in this research, I was particularly influenced by two other research studies. The first study by McGuiness

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[2] The grounded theory approach developed by Glaser and Strauss from their study of interactions between hospital staff and dying patients, depends on "simultaneous collection and analysis of data, sampling on the basis of emerging theory, and the generation and integration of abstract concepts" (Charmaz, 1983 in Wells, 1995: 35). As Wells points out many studies do not actually reach the point of developing theory, but rather generate "a typology through which the phenomenon under study can be categorised" (Sherman, 1994 in Wells, 1995: 35). The strength of the grounded theory approach, according to Wells (1995: 36) is that it is useful for understanding complex relationships among phenomena and takes into account "specific social structural conditions that support interaction, the consequences of interaction and how interactions change over time". The approach seemed appropriate to my research for the reasons outlined above.

and Wadsworth (1992) utilised a responsive evaluation methodology in a consumer evaluation of an acute psychiatric service in Melbourne, Australia and was very successful in raising the consciousness of staff and patients and in increasing their understanding of each others' perspectives. The second study, the Otago Family Network research project, by Ballard, Bray, Burrowes, MacArthur and Watson (1992) utilised an action research methodology in a study of policies and provisions for children with special needs and their families in the area of early intervention.

I was interested in the assertion by McGuiness and Wadsworth (1992: 3-4) that:

> The 'hearing' of users (consumers of psychiatric services in their study) is not, however merely a nice ethical and democratic ideal, but the basis for the conduct of good science which will result in the most valid possible understanding of users' meanings. Without the careful grasping of these meanings, service providers will be disadvantaged in their efforts to practice good care and to plan and design appropriate services and activities.

Like McGuiness and Wadsworth, I was interested in a research project which would have practical utility in the development of knowledge on which future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education in social work could be based. As I have already stated in Chapter One, in order to provide a complete picture, the research design would ideally have included the voices of all of the stakeholders in this area of practice, but this was just not feasible for a single researcher in a short time period. As I already knew something of the difficulties of providing quality fieldwork experiences from an educator's perspective and to a lesser extent from students' perspectives from my role as a Placement Coordinator, I decided to focus on the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors as they are both providers and consumers of fieldwork placement experiences. One clear message which comes through in the literature which is summarised in Chapter Two is that no one stakeholder in fieldwork education can resolve the difficulties over the provision of student placements on their own. Therefore it seemed useful to carry out research which would provide students, educators and other groups with an interest in fieldwork education with the perspectives of social workers who took students on placement.

The other aspect of the McGuiness and Wadsworth study which I liked, was their insistence that "the research design must supply conditions for researchers 'engaging' with the researched in a process of sustained or in-depth interaction, structured conversation and mutual exchange until understanding is reached" (McGuiness and Wadsworth, 1992: 4). The design for this research has attempted to follow this strategy,

both in the group meetings at the beginning and at the end of the research process and in the individual in-depth interviews. The Otago Family Network study (Ballard et al, 1992) influenced my choice of an action research methodology, again because I wanted the study to have practical utility and to provide a basis for recommendations for changes to the existing set of arrangements around fieldwork education in social work, if these were found to be unsatisfactory in some way. The principles which underpin action research will be described in the section on action research.

The methodology I have chosen, that is to say a qualitative approach and an action research strategy, will raise questions for some readers about the subjectivity of the researcher who is both data collector and data analyst and I will address these in greater depth later in this chapter, in the sections on ethical issues and data analysis. As Patton (1990: 356) points out, "qualitative inquiry may be more intrusive and involve greater reactivity than surveys, tests and other quantitative approaches". However, as far as I am concerned, provided the involvement of the researcher in the terrain under study is recognised, this can be a strength rather than a weakness and I will say more about this in discussing the choice of an action research methodology. Before moving on to discuss the reasons for choosing an action research methodology and some of the key features of this research strategy, the next section makes some connections back to the previous chapter on theories, concepts and themes in order to explain the relationship between a critical emancipatory theoretical perspective and action research.

The Relationship Between Theoretical Perspective and Choice of Methodology

A phenomenological approach which requires understanding the participants in their own terms is only a first step and has "the potential to ignore the relationship between the structural context and persons' subjective understandings and interactions" (Harré-Hindmarsh, 1992: 76). Therefore this research is also influenced by a hermeneutic inquiry tradition which proposes that the meaning of something can only be interpreted from "some perspective, a certain standpoint, a praxis or a situational context" (Patton, 1990: 85). The first priority therefore, is to capture the perspectives and elucidate the context of the research participants[3]. From there, researchers in the hermeneutic tradition *construct* the "reality" based on "their interpretations of the data with the help of the participants who provided the data in the study" (Eichelberger, 1989: 9 in Patton, 1990: 85).

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[3] Prior to this stage, the researcher needs to be very aware of their own perspective, in order to guard against what Opie (1992) has described as appropriation of participant-generated data to or along the lines of the researcher's interests.

As I have argued in Chapter Three, I see critical theory as adding another dimension to interpretive inquiry[4]. According to Thompson (1995: 45) critical theory, like hermeneutics, "recognises the importance of subjectivity", but critical theory "also recognises that each individual is socially located in terms of class, race, gender and other social divisions". In Chapter Three, I argue that from a critical social science perspective, the meanings that people attach to situations "are not chosen from an infinite range of meanings", but are constrained by their own personal biographies, by social and historical conditions and by power relationships whereby some groups have more power than others "to influence what is considered legitimate, normal and reasonable" (Harré-Hindmarsh, 1992: 80). Therefore in both the group meetings and the individual in-depth interviews in this study, I was interested in exploring participants views about the current social, economic and political context in which fieldwork education in social work is situated.

I have already stated my concern that the research will have a practical utility and provide a basis for recommendations for changes to existing practice if this is found to be unsatisfactory in any way. One of the criticisms of studies using an interpretive-phenomenological approach is that they are often successful in increasing the understanding of the different perspectives of stakeholding groups, but less successful in translating new and changed perceptions into transformative action. As McGuiness and Wadsworth (1992: 4) comment on the basis of their research, a critical perspective is needed to enable movement from current policy and practice to a future point of new and changed policy and practice. Without a critical emancipatory theory, which of necessity rests on certain "metaphysical assumptions about what constitutes oppression, freedom and justice" (McNay, 1992: 1), it is difficult to see the basis on which new and changed perceptions can become the basis for transformative action.

Harré-Hindmarsh (1992: 59) suggests that part of the reason why we have compartmentalised theory and practice in social work education, is because practice has been conceptualised as a technical act. As I have already pointed out, one of the dangers

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[4] Guba and Lincoln (1994) delineate the differences between four paradigms (positivism, postpositivism, critical theory and constructivism) along the dimensions of ontology, epistemology and methodology. According to Guba and Lincoln, the methodology of critical theory is "dialogic and dialectical" and is quite distinct from the methodology of constructivism which fits into a "hermeneutical and dialectical" tradition. Both critical theory and constructivism have similar concerns about the reconstruction of previously held constructions. The difference is that critical theory of necessity rests on certain "assumptions about what constitutes oppression, freedom and justice" (McNay, 1992: 1) whereas constructivism aims for consensus on the basis of individual reconstructions and is open to new interpretations as new information and new constructions emerge. In critical social science, where activism and advocacy are key elements, there is always the danger of the imposition of a morally superior view of reality (Fay, 1987). In order to avoid this danger "judgement about needed transformations should be reserved to those whose lives are most affected by transformations: the inquiry participants themselves" (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 113).

of a competency based approach to assessment, education and training in social work is that it further develops this split, so that "there is little or no theorising in agency sites and little or no practising in university sites" (Harré-Hindmarsh, 1992: 59). Whereas, it is my belief that social work education ought to integrate reflective processes into teaching and learning in both academic and field settings. Fook (1996: 5) expresses this well when she writes that "a reflective approach affirms the importance of experiential and interconnected ways of knowing the world, and favours more emancipatory and participatory research practices". Like Harré-Hindmarsh, I have argued for a critical reflective conceptualisation of the practicum, because of my belief that education for practice has to prepare students for the realities of practice and in my view, social work is a moral, normative and political activity. Therefore as I have argued in the previous chapter, social work education ought to require that practitioners and students:

> develop capacities of critical reflection; clarification of purposes and meaning of practices; and the ability to work in situations characterised by tension, power struggles and ideological conflict with a view to becoming different people with different sets of social arrangements.
> (Harré-Hindmarsh, 1992: 64).

The implications for a researcher of drawing on a critical emancipatory theoretical perspective are well expressed by Codd (1989: 7) who states that "enquiry is no longer viewed as a neutral information collecting process but rather it is taken to be a social practice in which dimensions of productive work, communicative action and moral commitment are all dynamically inter-related". As I made decisions about how to carry out the research, my involvement in the field (initially as a social work student, then as a practitioner, later as a student supervisor and now as an educator); my commitment to improving the quality of field education in social work; and my contention that fieldwork is located in a contested space where there are conflicting purposes and agendas, led me to an action research methodology. It seemed to be an appropriate methodology for the research, as action research begins from an assumption that inevitably there will be a "struggle over values, discourse and power" (Ballard et al, 1992: 233).

Key Aspects of an Action Research Methodology

Action research is research which "explicitly and purposefully becomes part of the change process" (Patton, 1990: 157) so that "what is learned in the field is applied to solving problems that are important to the research participants" (Ballard et al, 1992: 2). An action research methodology also requires that the issues and concerns which are to be the focus of the study are identified by the participants themselves and that feedback is

sought from participants throughout the study. The methodology requires ongoing dialogue between the researcher and participants in the study. As well as in-depth interviews, this research also used focus groups (described in greater depth in the section on research design) both at the beginning of the research process, to reformulate the broad research questions I had already identified and in the writing up phase of the study to provide critical comment on the preliminary analysis of the findings. The research has also been utilised in other ways to give feedback to a wider audience of student supervisors and educators. For example, I have already drawn on the research for presentations at two conferences to fieldwork educators and supervisors, one in Australia in 1996 and one in New Zealand in 1997. Some of the learning from the research has also been utilised in a training day for fieldwork supervisors at Massey University in 1997. As I explain in discussing the research process, because participants did not remain constant at the group meetings, I was not able to maintain a critical reference group of the same fieldwork supervisors throughout the project. Nevertheless, I have taken every opportunity to engage in dialogue with fieldwork supervisors and to provide feedback from the research.

As I have stated, action research is linked with advocacy because the critique of an existing set of social arrangements has a practical interest in realising alternative courses of action (Rein, 1983). From this it follows that the researcher is actively involved in the area under study (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982) as I am in fieldwork education in social work. Olesen (1994: 166) describes a continuum of involvement in action research from "researcher consultation with participants regarding topics and research instruments" through to "participants and researchers working together on all phases of the project". I envisaged that this research would fall closer to the end of the continuum which Olesen calls "researcher consultation", in order to make the research manageable for a single researcher, and this proved to be case.

An action research methodology is also about the "illumination of processes and settings for the benefit of people who live inside those particular settings" (Codd, 1991: 3, in Ballard et al, 1992: 234). As the literature review in Chapter Two has shown, a lot of overseas studies emphasise the need for more research into fieldwork education in social work from fieldwork supervisors' points of view (Gardiner, 1989; Thompson and Marsh, 1991; Secker, 1993). As discussed in Chapter One, there is a lack of research into fieldwork education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, yet this is clearly an area where more research is needed, as a recent article about field education, highlights a "placement crisis as a threat to the social work profession" (Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a: 25). This research aims to contribute to an understanding of the current context of fieldwork education by

grounding a description of the nature of practice teaching in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the 1990s in the accounts of fieldwork supervisors.

Action research is about participants' own authentic analysis of their own practices, understandings and situations (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 202). The role of the researcher in an action research model is not as an objective or disinterested observer, and goes beyond the disciplined subjectivity of the interpretive researcher to a role as a collaborator, advocate and change agent. Throughout this research, I have needed to be careful that my own involvement in the field, (which is of advantage in that I have an informed, insider's understanding of the area under study) does not lead me to appropriate participant-generated data to or along the lines of the researcher's interests (Opie, 1992). As I will discuss in the data analysis section, I have needed to ensure that the analysis of the research findings reflects issues and themes which the participants have articulated, not my own interpretation of fieldwork supervisors' needs. Some of the potential difficulties of action research and the ways in which I attempted to overcome these, will be discussed as they arise in the sections on research design, ethical issues and data analysis.

Research Design

Data was primarily collected through a group process and through in-depth individual interviews. I also kept any written material relevant to the research project , for example field notes, letters to research participants, applications to the Human Ethics Committee and funding applications[5]. In addition, throughout the period in which the research has been completed, I have continued in my role as Placement Coordinator for the undergraduate social work programme at Massey University, thus I have participated in meetings related to fieldwork; conferences where fieldwork education in social work was discussed and debated; facilitated training days for fieldwork supervisors; and facilitated training days to prepare students to go out on their fieldwork placements. I have also in the course of this involvement collected written data including minutes of meetings; letters relating to current issues in fieldwork, for example Access Agreements with Crown Health Enterprises for students to use their facilities; evaluations of two years of placements from both students and fieldwork supervisors; material from training days; conference papers related to fieldwork education and so on. While not collected specifically for the purposes of the research, this data has obviously enhanced my

[5] The application to the Human Ethics Committee and subsequent interview with the Ethics Committee helped to clarify ethical considerations throughout the research process. The Massey University Research Fund provided funding for travel to group meetings and individual interviews which were outside of Palmerston North and for venue hire for the group meetings, as it was important to have a neutral and accessible venue for these meetings.

understanding of current issues in the area under study. As already noted, it is commensurate with an action research methodology that "the researcher is actively involved in the cause for which the research is conducted" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982: 215).

Action research cannot be tightly structured in advance as the intention is to find out about the issues and concerns of the participants which will then guide the process of inquiry. It is necessary however to find ways of putting some boundaries around the research. The fieldwork stage of this research began in July 1995 when I took the opportunity to ask fieldwork supervisors who attended a Training Day for Supervisors (these were fieldwork supervisors from all over New Zealand who had a Bachelor of Social Work student from Massey University on placement in 1995) if they would be willing to receive information about my fieldwork research. Thirty five people indicated their willingness to receive more information. The remainder of 1995 and early 1996 was spent developing a research proposal, applying for research funding and getting approval for the research project from the University Ethics Committee, alongside of teaching and placement commitments.

I have already explained the rationale behind my decision to choose an action research methodology and to utilise both a group process and a series of individual in-depth interviews. I anticipated that fieldwork supervisors would experience the activity of fieldwork teaching in both similar and different ways and also that the local settings (both geographical and agency) in which social workers who take students on placement are located, could also reflect significant variations, therefore I tried to accommodate this in the research design. I will describe the research process chronologically, therefore I will begin with a discussion of the first round of group meetings which took place in March 1996 in Palmerston North and in May 1996 in New Plymouth.

Focus Group Meetings

Prior to the nine in-depth individual interviews, I met with eighteen other fieldwork supervisors at two focus group meetings held in Palmerston North and New Plymouth. I used the focus groups for the purposes described by Murphy, Cockburn and Murphy (1992). Firstly I wanted to involve members of the target group in order to find out what were the current issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors so that these could be explored in greater detail in the individual in-depth interviews. Secondly, the groups also presented me with the opportunity to test out areas that I thought it would be important to cover in the individual interviews and pretest ways of asking about these areas.

I had a group of thirty five social workers who had indicated their willingness to receive more information about my research into fieldwork education. In January 1996, I wrote to those who lived in or near three geographical locations, Palmerston North, New Plymouth and Wellington. I enclosed an Information Sheet about the research and a consent form for the group meetings (see Appendix A) which all participants signed and returned. I also utilised a snowball or chain approach whereby I invited the person I wrote to, to tell other social workers who were currently supervising students, or who had been student supervisors, about the research and to invite them to come to the focus groups.

In Wellington, seven people responded but this meeting never took place because after several attempts, it proved impossible to find a date on which all seven could attend. In New Plymouth, nine people responded and seven attended the group meeting on the day. Of the seven group participants in New Plymouth, five were female, two were male. Four participants worked for Children Young Persons and Families Service (CYPFS) and one of these was also a Consultant Fieldwork Supervisor, one worked in health social work, one worked for the District Council and the other was now in private practice. All the participants were Pakeha. The number of times participants had supervised a student ranged from one to six. In Palmerston North, sixteen people responded and eleven attended the focus group meeting on the day. Of the eleven participants in Palmerston North, ten were female and there was one male. Five participants worked for CYPFS, five worked in health social work and one worked in the voluntary sector. There was one Maori supervisor and the rest were Pakeha. The number of times participants had supervised a student ranged from one to ten.

With the participants' consent, both of the group meetings were recorded on audio tape. I facilitated the group meetings, which began with a welcome and introductions of participants followed by an explanation of the research; the setting of some ground rules about confidentiality of information shared in the group; a postbox technique whereby group members responded initially individually to questions about different areas of student supervision and then looked at and discussed each others' responses; and finally a brainstorm which I recorded, about current issues and concerns in fieldwork education. The cards that supervisors were asked to respond to in the postbox technique, asked about six areas of fieldwork supervision[6]:-

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[6] The areas of fieldwork education which group participants were asked to respond to, were developed from the review I had carried out of research into fieldwork education (see Chapter Two); from my own involvement in fieldwork education, described in Chapter One; and in order to collect data which would illuminate the research questions identified in the introductory chapter.

- Motivation for taking a student on placement
- Roles taken on as a student supervisor
- The importance the agency gives to student placements
- Partnerships with education and training institutions
- Support and training for student supervisors from agencies and from education and training institutions
- Quality of placements

Each card had either one or two specific questions for participants to think about and respond to[7]. Participants asked for clarification about the meaning of some of the questions and this was very helpful to me in seeing how I needed to change the way in which the question was worded[8]. For example I had a question which asked:- "In your agency is student supervision seen as a) an activity largely external to the main work of the agency or b) as a core agency function?" Several participants were not clear what this question meant. Therefore in exploring this important area of agency views on student placements in the in-depth individual interviews, I developed less ambiguous questions such as "in what ways is your agency supportive of student placements?" and "in what ways could your agency be more supportive of you when you take a student on placement?" I also asked a very specific question about whether or not student supervision was included in participants' job descriptions.

Before I developed the interview guide for the in-depth individual interviews, I summarised all of the individual responses of each of the eighteen participants in the focus groups and used these responses including new ideas and contradictory points of view to develop the topics for further exploration in the individual interviews[9]. As participants first read and then discussed each others' responses (which were recorded anonymously on different coloured sheets of paper for each question and then "published" for everyone to read), there was an opportunity for them to "react and build upon the responses of other group members" (Stewart and Shamdesani 1991: 16) in the group discussion which followed. Thus the brainstorm of current issues in fieldwork education was lively and very helpful in sensitising me to the issues that participants saw as the most significant from their perspectives as fieldwork supervisors.

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[7] See Appendix B for the specific stimulus questions asked at the focus groups.

[8] In retrospect, I can see that it could have been helpful to pilot the questions on the card with a small group of fieldwork supervisors, prior to the focus group meetings. However, the process for the focus groups, including the questions on the cards were discussed at a supervision meeting with my two supervisors and some revisions were made in light of their feedback.

[9] Group members' responses to the questions on the cards are contained in Appendix B.

The issues and concerns of participants in the group meetings are reported in Figure One. I have reported the issues from the groups in Palmerston North and New Plymouth group meetings separately in order to see if there are any significant differences in concerns.

Figure One - Current Issues and Concerns In Fieldwork Education From Group Meetings Held in Palmerston North and New Plymouth in 1996

Palmerston North Group	New Plymouth Group
Agency resources are limited e.g. a lack of accommodation for the student	Resources in agency - cars, desks, computer, physical space, implications of sharing office space and phones
Courses could pay agencies to take students or offer training for agencies who take students (this training to take place in the community)	Adjusting own workload Students take a lot of time in induction phase - 1/3rd of time of supervisor and other social workers' time
Development of contractual arrangements between courses and agencies in line with purchase of service contracting	Feelings of frustration about not having enough time to give - not as much as the student needs, especially if a non social work setting
Incentives for fieldwork supervisors to become accredited	Amount of prior information supervisor has about a student, especially need to know if a difficult/failing student
Work environment is unstable and it is hard to explain this reality to students and it affects willingness to offer placements	How much preparation prior to placement (i.e. contact with student) is necessary?
Assessment - expectations of the level of competency students are supposed to have reached on placement are not always clear	Negotiating roles between day to day and consultant supervisor
Training - one day is too little but a Diploma in Supervision too great a time commitment. Offer more training days - a range of training opportunities during placement time	More coordination between training institutions e.g. joint training on a regional basis
Models of fieldwork which meet different cultural needs	More updates on course curriculum - overview of course content
Ethical Issues in giving a client to a student - it takes time to find suitable work for students	Selection of Supervisors - Who monitors? How is this monitored? Feedback for supervisors on their assessments

For both groups, agency resources and what was happening in the workplace affected their ability to offer to take a student. Both groups had issues related to the assessment of students on placement. Both groups entered into discussion about training and how fieldwork supervisors might be selected and accredited. Only the Palmerston North group discussed models of fieldwork which met different cultural needs and not surprisingly this issue was raised by the one Maori fieldwork supervisor present. Perhaps because there were five supervisors who worked in health at the Palmerston North meeting, the question of educational and training institutions paying agencies to train students on placement and the idea of contractual arrangements for placements was significant. As previously discussed in the introductory chapter, some Crown Health Enterprises will only accept social work students on placement if they receive payment and participants from the health sector would probably have been aware of this. In New Plymouth, there was some discussion about the need for clarity about the roles of agency supervisor and consultant supervisor, which arose from one participant's unsatisfactory experience in her role as a consultant supervisor. Generally however, the current issues in both locations were very similar, which gave me confidence that in developing the interview guide for the individual interviews based on the focus group meetings, I would not be missing any important areas of concern.

A second round of group meetings was also part of the action research methodology. However as I am presenting the research process chronologically, the next step in the process is to describe the in-depth individual interviews which were carried out in August and September of 1996.

Individual Interviews

As Patton (1990: 169) suggests, qualitative inquiry typically focuses on relatively small samples selected purposefully, so that at the end of the study, the researcher will be able to make some meaningful comments about the area being studied. For example, as I wanted to be able to explore gender differences, I needed to ensure that the sample consisted of both males and females. As I wanted to explore whether or not Maori and Pakeha fieldwork supervisors had similar or different issues and concerns, I needed to include both groups in the sample.
The individual interviewees were invited to participate[10] using a maximum variation sampling strategy (Patton, 1990: 172) in order to explore similarities and differences

[10] I had originally intended that the individual interviewees would self-select from the first round of focus groups, but this did not happen. As discussed, the necessity to ensure that the respondents for the in-depth interviews reflected some of the characteristics I had identified as important to include such as gender, ethnicity, number of times supervised a student, practice setting and geographical location made utilising

between gender, ethnicity, practice settings, geographical locations, the number of times participants had supervised a student and the social work programme the student came from. Such a strategy ensured that participants for the in-depth interviews reflected the above characteristics, which it was considered to be important to include in the research.

Some of the individual interviewees were part of the original group of thirty-five people who in July 1995, had indicated a willingness to receive further information about the research, although for various reasons, none of them had managed to attend one of the group meetings. Others were fieldwork supervisors known to me who I approached to take part in the research project because they would reflect one or more of the characteristics described above which would otherwise have been missing from the sample. For example, I wanted to include a fieldwork supervisor who worked for Community Corrections (as none of the group participants came from this practice setting), I wanted to include Maori fieldwork supervisors, and I wanted to include new supervisors who had only supervised once and very experienced student supervisors who had supervised many times over a number of years. I brainstormed a list of sixteen names and decided to approach nine people initially, expecting that some would turn me down. In July 1996, I wrote to nine fieldwork supervisors in three geographical locations, Palmerston North, Wellington and New Plymouth, enclosing an Information Sheet about the research and a Consent Form (see Appendix A). All agreed to take part and interviews were carried out in August and September of 1996.

For the individual interviews, I developed a semi-structured interview guide based on eight areas to be explored with each person (see Appendix C). The areas to be covered were derived from the focus groups and from the research questions posed in the introduction to this thesis[11]. Patton (1990: 391) states that any researcher will bring certain concepts, which he describes as "sensitising concepts" to both data collection and data analysis. These concepts will come from other research literature, the researcher's theoretical perspective and from the researcher's own experience and involvement in the area under study. For example, the concepts of technical rationality, practical reflectivity and critical reflectivity outlined in the previous chapter, could be regarded as sensitising concepts in this research. Patton (1990) argues that it is legitimate to draw on these concepts so long as they seem useful to participants in the study and come out of the data. On reflection, I can see that I could have framed some direct questions around how

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a process of self-selection difficult. As it worked out none of the participants at the group meetings in either Palmerston North or New Plymouth became one of the individual interviewees.

[11] These inital sensitising research questions are:
Do fieldwork supervisors need to receive some preparation for taking on the tasks of student supervision ?
Where does the responsibility for supporting and training fieldwork supervisors lie?
What are the most appropriate locations, content and methods of education and training for fieldwork teaching?

fieldwork supervisors developed a capacity for critical thinking in their students. Instead, this emerged when interviewees responded to a question about "What makes a good supervisor?" (see Chapter Five), but could have been explored in greater depth. The decision to use an interview guide as Patton (1990: 283) states leaves me free "to build a conversation within a particular subject area", but ensures that "basically the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material". The areas explored with each individual interviewee which arose from the focus group discussions were:

- experiences of student supervision
- how the respondent learned about being a student supervisor
- motivation for taking a student on placement[12]
- roles respondents take on when they supervise a student
- agency attitudes towards student placements
- relationships with education and training institutions
- selection of student supervisors
- views on the quality of fieldwork education in social work

The interviews lasted no more than two hours and were tape-recorded. All of the interviews were completed between August and September 1996. Field notes were made immediately following each interview. I collected some background information about each respondent, which is reproduced in Figure Two which provides a profile of the individual participants. It would be true to say that the social workers I interviewed were highly motivated and committed fieldwork supervisors. They are therefore perhaps not typical of all student supervisors in that all but one had a tertiary qualification, all but one belonged to a professional association and six had attended supervision training courses. The interviews were transcribed in full by a transcriber (including the interviewer's questions and clarifications) and a transcript of each interview was returned to each individual interviewee at the end of November 1996 so that they could check through the transcript and correct or change it in any way they thought necessary.

Generally the changes made by participants to the transcripts were by way of minor editing or clarification of meaning. One participant indicated that she had changed her thinking about some aspects of consultant supervision since the interview. This same participant was also able to elaborate for me some thoughts she had about the

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[12] There is a relationship between motivation for taking a student on placement and the outcomes of the placement experience for both student and supervisor. This is discussed in the presentation of the research data in Chapter Five.

fragmentation of health social work into counselling and other specialities[13], which illustrates that research itself can provoke critical reflectivity on the part of the participants. Feedback from the participants in the individual interviews indicated that they had felt comfortable with the process and that the questions had been interesting and thought provoking. While the same content areas were covered with each participant, the transcripts showed that there was also the flexibility to pursue an issue which was important to that respondent, which may not have been raised by other participants. Ethnicity, practice setting, the number of times the respondent had supervised a student and the programmes from which the students came were also significant to particular issues raised by participants, as discussed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven which present the research data. The participants in this research had supervised students from both degree and diploma social work courses located at three universities, (Massey, Victoria and Canterbury) and one polytechnic (Wanganui). In presenting the data, the particular social work programmes have not been identified.

[13] At the time of her interview, these comments had been recorded on to a second tape of about twenty minutes, which unfortunately failed to record. This was the only material which was lost in the interview process.

Figure Two
Profile of Individual Interviewees

Gender	Present Area Of Practice	Location	Ethnicity	Number of Students	Students Course	Year Qualified	Supervisor Qualification and/or Professional Body
Female	Health (hospital)	Palmerston North	Maori - Ngati Raukawa, Nga Rauru	6	Massey		Member of NZASW
Female	Voluntary-Child and Family Support Service.	Palmerston North	Pakeha New Zealander	16	Massey Wanganui Polytechnic	1977	Overseas qualification Member of NZASW
Female	Child, Adolescent and Family Service	Palmerston North	Pakeha	10	Massey	1985	Bachelor of Social Work Member of NZASW
Male	Children Young Persons and Their Families Service	Palmerston North	European	90	Massey Victoria	1980	Bachelor of Social Work Member of NZASW
Female	Private Practice	Wellington	Tauiwi (born in U.K.)	120+	Massey Victoria Canterbury	1970	Overseas qualification Member of NZASW and NZAC
Female	Child and Adolescent Health Community Team	New Plymouth	European and Maori - Te Arawa and Ngati Pikiau	4+	Massey	1991	Bachelor of Social Work Member of NZASW
Female	Voluntary - Youth work	Wellington	Pakeha	4	Victoria	1986	Bachelor of Social Work Member NZAC
Female	Voluntary-Youth work	Wellington	Pakeha	1	Massey	1987	Bachelor of Social Work
Male	Community Corrections	Palmerston North	Irish	3	Massey Victoria	1995	Diploma in Social Science Member of NZASW

It was always part of the action research methodology, that after the series of individual in-depth interviews had been completed and I had some sense of emerging themes from the data, that a preliminary analysis of the data would be presented back to the original focus groups who would now act as critical reference groups. Unfortunately this stage of the research process was delayed until the second half of 1997 as my teaching and placement organisation workload was such that the data analysis had to be put on hold. While this may have meant that the research lost some of its momentum, it did minimise the risk of a conflict of interest (which is discussed in more detail in the section on Ethics) between my role as a Placement Coordinator and my role as a researcher, as the second round of group meetings occurred outside of the time period when students were on placement.

Second Group Meeting

In October 1997, invitations were sent to twenty nine fieldwork supervisors to attend a further group meeting at which I reported back to them on the research findings. All of the nine participants who had taken part in the in-depth interviews were asked to attend, as well as all the fieldwork supervisors who had been invited to the initial focus group meetings in Palmerston North and New Plymouth. As the meeting was held in Palmerston North, I did not expect that out of town participants would attend[14] and this proved to be the case. From the four Palmerston North based individual interviewees, one was out of the country, one was unable to attend and two attended. In total, eleven people attended the second group meeting (with five apologies)[15]. In the original research design, I had anticipated that the people who came together in the first group meetings would largely be the same group that came back together again to act as a critical reference group at the end of the research process. This did not prove to be the case, as there were only two people who had attended the first group meeting who attended the second group meeting in Palmerston North. This was disappointing and the reasons for this are discussed under the heading of involving participants in the section on ethics and politics.

Nevertheless, it was part of my commitment to an action research methodology to try and involve participants at all stages of the research project, so that what is learned through

[14] I asked participants from Wellington and New Plymouth if they would consider attending a meeting in their own region to hear about the results of the research, as I was prepared to travel to their region if there was sufficient interest. Four people from New Plymouth and two from Wellington responded to say that they would be interested in a meeting in their region. As the two people from Wellington were both individual interviewees and will in any case receive a copy of the Research report, I decided not to attempt to organise a meeting in Wellington. I also decided that the response from New Plymouth was not sufficient to justify attempting to organise a meeting there.

[15] So for some attendees, this was their first meeting, although they would have received an invitation to a previous group meeting, and thus known about the research.

the research is applied to solving problems that are important to the participants in the research. Therefore, it was important to me to present the research findings to a group of fieldwork supervisors and to receive their feedback. The research data was presented in the ten theme areas in which I have written up the analysis of the data (see Chapters Five, Six and Seven). There was an interactive process at the meeting whereby participants asked questions, made comments and gave feedback. I specifically asked how participants thought the conditions affecting fieldwork education had changed in 1997 and gave them a copy of the current issues and concerns which had been recorded at the 1996 meetings (see Figure One and Figure Three) in order for them to make comparisons. We also discussed and I recorded group members' thoughts about recommendations for future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education in social work (see Figure Three in the Data Analysis section). As we talked about the research findings and the difficulties in providing quality fieldwork experiences in the current political context in which both agencies and educational institutions are being restructured, the message which was reinforced for me was that no one stakeholder in fieldwork education can solve the problems around the provision and quality of student placements on their own. We need to work together.

I have described the research procedures as if they were straightforward, whereas in reality of course, political and ethical considerations were significant throughout the research process. The next section discusses some of the ethical issues which arose in carrying out this research project.

Ethics and Politics

I agree with Finch (1986: 219) who writes that "questions of ethics are not technical issues, but can only be considered with reference to the structures of power within which research operates" and that in this sense they are also questions of politics. This is especially true of action research which is often undertaken with less powerful groups and produces findings which are challenging to the status quo. As I have already argued there are multiple stakeholders in fieldwork education: educators, students, fieldwork supervisors, managers of social service agencies, clients of the agencies in which students are placed and professional and governmental bodies that control education and training in the social services which vary from country to country.[16] Clients and students are the least powerful stakeholders but this research and other published studies (Walker

[16] In Aotearoa/New Zealand, the bodies which have been significant are The Social Work Training Council, which was superseded by The Council For Education and Training in The Social Services, which was superseded by Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, the Industry Training Organisation for the Social Services. The professional association (NZASW) has made policy statements on social work education and training and has a Education and Training Standing Committee, but can only make recommendations.

et al, 1995), also indicate that fieldwork teachers have often felt relatively powerless when they take on the role of student supervisor, both within their agencies and in relation to the education and training institutions. For example, as reported in Chapter Six, in discussing their relationships with educational and training institutions, participants in this research emphasised the importance of feeling respected, appreciated and listened to and gave examples of times when they had felt unappreciated and unheard.

The ethical considerations in this research were related to my own situatedness in the terrain under study; conflicts of interest; including other cultural perspectives; involving participants at all stages of the research process in keeping with an action research methodology; confidentiality; and potential harm to participants.

My Involvement In The Area Under Study

My own experiences as a fieldwork supervisor (described in the introductory chapter) and my current role as a Placement Coordinator enhances my ability to understand the thoughts, feelings and actions of participants and the context in which they are situated. However there are also some disadvantages to my closeness to the area under study. I have to be careful that I fairly and accurately represent the views of participants especially in any recommendations for changes to the existing set of arrangements around fieldwork if these are found to be unsatisfactory in any way. As already noted, it is important to ensure that my involvement in the area under study does not lead to appropriation of the research findings according to my perspectives and interests (Opie, 1992). The action research methodology I have chosen requires me to critically examine my own assumptions and practices throughout the research process.

Two examples will show how I have tried to stay aware of my own biases. Prior to going into the fieldwork phase of my research, I had carried out an extensive literature review and was (almost) convinced that the solution to the problem of an under supply of fieldwork placements and better quality assurance measures, lay in the direction of the introduction of formal systems for the accreditation of student supervisors, additional training for fieldwork supervisors and the approval of agencies in which students completed their fieldwork. Throughout the research period, I have also been involved in the development of a Diploma in Social Service Supervision, of which one specialist module could be on practice teaching for fieldwork supervisors. However having discussed the issue of selection of student supervisors extensively with participants in the research and having read more recent literature which evaluates the introduction of formal systems and courses leading to qualifications in Practice Teaching in other countries, I

have become aware firstly, that this will probably not solve the problem of a shortage of fieldwork placements; and secondly, that, as one respondent in this research commented "just because you have formal processes in place doesn't necessarily mean better outcomes" (Supervisor, CYPFS).

I began this study with the provisional title of my thesis as "Through The Looking Glass - ***Fieldwork Teachers'*** (my emphasis) Perceptions of Their Role and Needs for Support, Education and Training". As I report in the presentation of the research data in Chapter Six, social workers who take students on placement in Aotearoa/New Zealand dislike the job title of fieldwork teacher, preferring fieldwork supervisor or student supervisor which they perceive to be a much more inclusive term. I realised that I had been influenced by the literature from other countries where the term fieldwork teacher, field educator or practice teacher is the accepted term, but that this does not fit our cultural context. Thus the final title of my thesis has changed to "Fieldwork Supervisors' Perceptions of Their Role and Needs for Support, Education and Training" and in writing up the research, I have used the term fieldwork supervisor when referring to Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Conflicts of Interest

One conflict of interest is that some participants could be relating to me both as a researcher and as a Placement Coordinator for the Bachelor of Social Work programme at Massey University, who places students with them. Participants' perceptions of and relationships to me in the role of Placement Coordinator could affect their relationship with me as a researcher. I was very careful in negotiating access to participants to ensure that they felt under no obligation to participate in the research because of another relationship with me as Placement Coordinator. Thus I only initially sent information about the research to those who had indicated a willingness to receive it and it was then up to them whether or not they decided to take part. For reasons discussed earlier, I did approach some of the individual interviewees directly. However feedback from these respondents indicates that their motivation for participation arose from their interest in the area of student supervision, not from any previous relationship with myself.

Other safeguards which were put in place were to be explicit about the change in role and relationships and to the greatest extent possible to timetable research meetings and interviews outside of the placement period, so that my dual roles would not cause confusion. My experience was that both at the group meetings and in the individual interviews, respondents did not raise any issues with regard to current placements, which suggested that they were quite clear that they were relating to me as the researcher. In fact

only four of the individual interviewees had a student from Massey on placement in the year that I interviewed them. However I did at times feel that respondents felt more comfortable about being critical about social work training programmes other than Massey, which indicated their association of myself with the Massey programme. This is not to say that some were not critical of the Massey programme. Particularly in the group meetings and group data (see Appendix B) a lot of the responses of participants refer to the social work programme at Massey University, although I had explained that I was interested in all of their experiences of student supervision, regardless of which education and training institution the student came from. This most probably indicates that because the group meetings were held in Palmerston North and New Plymouth, most of the participants who attended had mainly acted as fieldwork supervisors for the Massey programme. However, it may also indicate that they gave feedback about the Massey programme because they associated me with the Massey social work course. Equally, I had to be careful how I responded, when respondents were critical of other education and training institutions, and to ensure that I followed up the issue and did not get drawn into commenting on the practice of other institutions.

Including Other Cultural Perspectives

This section is written with regard to the inclusion of a Tangata Whenua perspective in the research. However, I am certain that ***many of the issues raised here are equally true for other cultures.*** As I began thinking about research into fieldwork education, I was convinced that it was important to include Maori perspectives and this was reinforced when I came to data collection, as supervisors wanted to talk about cultural issues in student supervision. Placements for Maori students in Maori agencies with Maori fieldwork supervisors are likely to increase with the development of Iwi Social Services and Maori Health Services. Of the thirty-five fieldwork supervisors who expressed interest in receiving more information about my research, only five to my knowledge are Maori. I decided that if I was to include Maori perspectives, I would need to ensure following Stokes (1985) that Maori cultural frameworks were respected both in the group meetings and the individual interviews. The only way to achieve this would have been by having a Maori co-facilitator for the groups; a Maori researcher to interview Maori participants in the intensive study, and by finding a bi-cultural transcriber who understood Maori concepts, all of which would have greatly increased the resources needed to undertake the research and would have then raised issues of "ownership" of the research and so on. After reading the research report by Ballard et al (1992) which had attempted to include "a Maori perspective" on the issues of family and disability and their

discussion of some of the difficulties which arose for this group of Pakeha researchers[17], I decided that it would be preferable to signal that this is important research which needs to be carried out, but in a separate study by Maori researchers under a Maori kaupapa. Two of the individual interviewees and one group participant were Maori and I think that the research is richer for the issues they and other participants raised, which are discussed in Chapter Five under the heading of "Cultural Issues in Student Supervision". While I have presented cultural issues because these were raised by participants in this study (see Chapter Five), I make no claims to have represented Maori or other cultural viewpoints on fieldwork education and can only reiterate that this is an area needing further research.

Involving Participants At All Stages of the Research Process

An action research methodology engages collaboratively with participants at every stage of the research. As already noted, in order to make the research manageable for a single researcher, I had anticipated that on a continuum of involvement from researcher consultation with participants through to participants and researcher working together on all phases of the project, this research would fall at the end of the continuum described by Olesen (1994: 166) as "researcher consultation". The research agenda was defined in consultation with participants by means of the focus groups described in the research design. As discussed in the section on research design, I had hoped that participants in the group process would remain the same but this did not prove to be the case. Only two people from the original focus groups attended the second group meeting. I think that there are probably several reasons why this occurred. Firstly, the length of time from start to finish of the fieldwork phase of the research project (March 1996 through to November 1997) meant that some participants had moved away from the region and others had perhaps simply lost interest. Secondly, it proved difficult to find a day and time that was suitable for all who were interested in attending both the initial and final group meetings. I think this reflects the marginality and externality of fieldwork. If something occurred in the agency on the day of the research meeting, or if participants had to make a choice between the research meeting and training related to their work for their agencies, they prioritised the agency demands. Thirdly, I had to make decisions with regard to the second round of group meetings given the costs of travel and venue hire, about the minimum number of people for whom I was prepared to run a meeting. Therefore it was decided not to attempt a second group meeting anywhere other than Palmerston North. Thus I do not feel that I established a group which could be said to

[17] The Otago Family Network did employ a single Maori researcher for six months of the study. While the researchers state that they fully intended that the kaupapa was to be developed by Maori (Ballard et al, 1992: 90) they set the research agenda without giving enough consideration to the premise that Maori research needs to take place in a Maori cultural framework and be fully accountable to Iwi Maori.

have acted collectively as a critical reference group throughout the study. However, from feedback from both group and individual participants, they clearly felt that they were consulted and were able to contribute and give direction to the research.

I hope that the research has achieved another goal of an action research methodology which is that the knowledge gained will be used, as the opening quotation states "in the service of participants to achieve their goals" (Kerr, 1995: 42). Participants in the second group meeting could identify with the issues raised by the research and participated in the development of recommendations for future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education in social work. What was less clear for me was how to involve participants in translating ideas into action. One of the problems with the group meetings was that we ran out of time, so while we talked about ideas which could serve as the basis for changes to the existing set of arrangements around fieldwork education in social work, we did not develop a plan of action. The group appeared to perceive that their role was to give feedback on the research findings and to contribute their ideas. While those in decision making positions within their agencies were challenged to work towards student placements being included in job descriptions and agency outputs, this may or may not happen and certainly was not part of a deliberate action plan. Equally some fieldwork supervisors went away with a concern to raise the status of social work supervision in their agencies (which would clearly have a flow on effect for student supervision), but with no clear plan as to how they might achieve this. Participants expressed interest in seeing the research findings published in a more accessible way than a thesis, for example in journal articles or a book, for dissemination to a wider audience of groups with an interest in fieldwork education in social work and this is one way in which the research can contribute to ongoing debate about how best to organise and provide fieldwork experiences for social work students. So in some ways the winding up of the research has run into a common problem with action research, about how to move from understanding to action.

Confidentiality

In small scale qualitative research projects, individuals are more easily identifiable (Finch, 1986: 203). Therefore it was important to present the data in such a way that it could not be used to identify individuals. Respondents in the group meetings are simply identified as group participant. Respondents in the individual in-depth interviews are simply identified by the title Supervisor and by their field of practice. The profiles of the individual participants which are contained in Figure Two were completed by respondents and they could have chosen not to complete all or any part of the profile. As respondents have at times been critical of their agencies, it is important that there is no

way that the identity of the individual interviewees can be disclosed. Some safeguards to confidentiality included sending all of the participants in the in-depth interviews a copy of their interview transcript to read through and they were able to delete any material they did not wish to be included. When I was writing up the data, I also decided that at times identifying the geographical location might put the identity of the interviewee at risk, and in this case the place was omitted. Similarly, I made a decision not to identify particular training institutions. I believe that the research findings offer many suggestions for ways in which cooperation between agencies and educational and training institutions around fieldwork education can be improved and it is the lessons which can be learned from what fieldwork supervisors told me that are important, not identifying the institution. As Beddoe and Worrall (1997a: 27) point out, within the dominant ethos of market forces, there is a very real pressure for education and training institutions to compete with one another for placements, rather than trying to work cooperatively.

Other safeguards to confidentiality were that the raw data was seen only by myself and the transcriber. As a condition of her employment, the confidential nature of the material was communicated to the transcriber. There were also issues of confidentiality within the groups, which were resolved by setting some ground rules about confidentiality of material shared about experiences within the group at the beginning of the meetings.

Potential Harm To Participants

There is always the risk that "telling their story" may harm rather than promote the cause of those being researched. Therefore participants need to have a clear understanding of the reasons for and goals of the research, so that they can decide whether or not they want to take part. Potential participants were all sent a written information sheet about the nature of the research and the consequences for them of taking part and were asked to give their consent in writing. There was an additional information sheet and consent form for the individual interviewees (see Appendix A). The notion of reciprocity is an important principle in this research. I would feel uncomfortable about obtaining information from participants simply as a means to an end of completing a thesis (although this is certainly one of my goals), which is why I chose an action research methodology which aims to share information and understandings; to work collaboratively with participants on issues and concerns which they identify as important; and to give something back to the field in terms of recommendations for further research and changes to policy and practice around fieldwork education if the existing set of arrangements are found to be unsatisfactory in any way.

Another area of potential harm in an action research methodology, is if the researcher articulates policy recommendations on the basis of their interpretations of the group's needs, rather than "providing a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms" (Patton, 1990: 290). As the next section which discusses the analytical frameworks used to organise and understand the data covers ways of ensuring the quality and credibility of qualitative data, the strategies for guarding against what Opie (1992: 52) has described as researcher appropriation of participant-generated data are briefly summarised here. The research design includes processes which ensure:- a clear agreement about the ways in which the information collected will be used[18]; asking participants to check through and make any amendments, deletions or additions to their interview data; using the group process to check if the findings ring true to fieldwork supervisors; and including participants' own words throughout the presentation of the data. It is important that the research findings are reported "fully and fairly without camouflaging findings that the researchers personally regret or blowing out of proportion findings they happen to like" (Weiss, 1987: 68). I am accountable to the research participants, to the Massey University Ethics Committee, to my thesis supervisors and to myself for the integrity with which I have carried out the research.

Data Analysis

This section outlines the processes for interpreting the research data, including a discussion of some of the difficulties in analysing qualitative data and how these problems may be overcome. Patton (1990) describes some ways of determining a focus for the analysis of data in qualitative evaluations. Firstly, he suggests a focus on looking for answers to the questions, issues and concerns of the stakeholders. Action research, like responsive evaluation[19] is concerned with providing clear, relevant and useful information on which to make some policy decisions. Secondly, Patton suggests content analysis of all the data collected, both by using categories developed and articulated by the respondents themselves to represent themes and patterns and by the researcher articulating "categories or patterns for which the participants did not have labels or terms" (Patton, 1990: 390). Both of these seemed useful strategies for developing an analytical framework to organise and understand the data from this research. Before I describe how

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[18] It was stated in the information sheet which was given to all participants in the study, that the information collected would only be used for the purposes of the research, the research report and for publication of academic work.

[19] Guba and Lincoln (1986, 1989) trace the historical evolution from first-generation evaluation models which they characterise as measurement-oriented, through second-generation evaluation models which they characterise as description-oriented, to third-generation models of evaluation which they characterise as judgement-oriented. They describe the emergence of fourth-generation models of evaluation which are based on responsiveness to claims, concerns and issues put forth by members of a variety of stakeholding audiences. In addition to the observer, describer and illuminator roles of the first three generations, the researcher now also takes on the roles of collaborator, negotiator and change agent.

I went about the analysis of the data, I address some of the problems in analysing qualitative data and the ways in which I attempted to guard against these.

Problems in Analysing Qualitative Data

Qualitative methods generate a large amount of data for the researcher to make sense of and it is important to consider how to minimise the selective perception, personal bias and theoretical predispositions of the researcher from unduly influencing the analysis and interpretation of the data. There are two arguments which can be made in response to this issue. Firstly, that it is neither possible nor desirable to exclude values from the research act (Denzin, 1989a: 23). Research is a political act and researchers have to acknowledge their own situatedness in the landscape they set out to describe, which is a fundamental principle of the action research methodology utilised in this study. Therefore my assumptions and practices are part of what is critically examined in the research process and I have provided some examples of how I have attempted to do this in the section on Ethics and Politics. Secondly, once it is acknowledged that every researcher brings preconceptions and interpretations to the problem under study, then as Patton (1990) proposes, the credibility and competence of the researcher become the issue rather than his or her subjectivity. Guba and Lincoln (1986, 1989) argue that the criteria for validity, reliability and objectivity in the positivist inquiry paradigm are replaced in a constructivist paradigm by criteria for trustworthiness and authenticity.[20] From a critical perspective, the ultimate test of validity is whether the research is of practical utility to the participants and offers them a way to act that frees them of some constraints (Fay, 1976, 1987).

As Patton (1990: 372) points out, while "there are no straightforward tests for reliability and validity" of qualitative data, there are guidelines for analysing qualitative data which will increase its credibility, but these still require the "judgement and creativity" of the researcher. Some of the strategies which were utilised in the data analysis stage of this research were: data triangulation[21]; testing out of rival explanations; looking for cases which did not fit any patterns or themes which seemed to be emerging; discussing the

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[20] The trustworthiness criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The authenticity criteria are fairness (in other words the researcher is true to the multiple perspectives and complexities as they emerge and balanced in reporting both confirming and disconfirming evidence - see also Patton, 1990: 55); ontological authenticity (in other words, enlarging personal constructions); educative authenticity (in other words, leading to improved understanding of the constructions of others); catalytic authenticity (in other words, stimulating to action); and tactical authenticity (in other words, empowering action) - see Guba and Lincoln, 1994:114, in Denzin, N and Lincoln, Y. (1994). Handbook of Qualitative Research.

[21] Data triangulation refers to the use of a variety of data sources in a study, for example direct observations, interview data, and written documents. It is one of four kinds of triangulation described by Denzin (1978). The others are: investigator triangulation (the use of several different researchers); theory triangulation (the use of multiple theoretical perspectives to interpret a single set of data); and methodological triangulation (the combination of multiple methods in a single study).

analysis with my thesis supervisors by submitting drafts of the work in progress; checking with participants that the interpretation fitted with their reality (by returning transcripts to individual interviewees for comment and by presenting a preliminary analysis of the research findings at the second group meeting); making comparisons with other studies in the same area; and reporting on both the strengths and weaknesses of the research process.

Organising the Data

According to Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, and Alexander (1995: 254).the aim of data analysis is "to extract the essence of the informants' meanings as they are verbalised". Patton (1990: 372) also offers some helpful advice about the tasks of data analysis, stating that this requires: reducing the volume of information; identifying themes and patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal. I began by developing a coding system as a means of organising the data in themes. As Miles and Huberman (1994, cited in Minichiello et al, 1995: 257) state codes "are retrieval and organising devices that cluster the relevant segment of the data relating to a particular theme or proposition". According to Minichiello et al (1995: 257) coding can also "play an important role in the process of discovering themes or developing propositions". For example, as I comment in Chapter Five, cultural issues in student supervision was not an area that I specifically asked about in the research. However, in my dialogue with fieldwork supervisors, it became apparent that there were significant issues for Pakeha supervisors supervising Maori students, for Maori supervisors supervising Pakeha students and for Maori supervisors who were supervising Maori students in "mainstream" agencies.

The nine in-depth individual interviews yielded 279 double-spaced pages of transcriptions. As I explained in the research design I utilised a semi-structured interview guide for the individual interviews, which explored the eight topic areas outlined earlier in this chapter with each interviewee. As I read through each topic area in each of the transcriptions, I became aware we had at times followed up an interesting line of conversation in the course of exploring one topic area that actually related to another topic area. Therefore in my initial coding of the data, I developed two strategies. Firstly I colour-coded key points relating to major themes (including data related to that theme which appeared in another topic area). Secondly, I made notes in the margins of other key areas, which were either subsets of a main topic area or a new idea or theme which arose out of the data. For example the assessment of "marginal" students could be considered as a subset of the question about positive and negative experiences of student supervision, but it also arose again under relationships with educational and training

institutions. In addition, on the initial reading through of the transcriptions, I noted comments that were surprising and I also noted comparisons to other studies from the literature. For example, in reading one participant's story about the difficulties of failing a student on placement, I noted that the reasons for her difficulties were similar to those of other fieldwork supervisors reported in studies carried out by Heycox and Hughes (1994) in Australia.

The next step was to decide on major topic headings under which the data could be presented. Motivation for taking a student on placement; roles taken on as a student supervisor; the importance the agency gives to student placements; relationships with educational and training institutions and the quality of fieldwork education in social work; were continued as important topic areas from both the group meetings and the interview guide for the individual interviews. In addition, some new topic areas were developed both because they were related to the original research questions outlined in Chapter One and because they emerged from the data. These were: experiences of student supervision; cultural issues in student supervision; selection of student supervisors; the need for training in practice teaching and the possible content and modes of delivery of such training; and models of fieldwork education. Thus ten major theme areas emerged from the initial data analysis. Within each of these major topic headings, sub-headings were developed, usually as questions to which the data could then provide comment, clarification, discussion and debate. For example under the main topic area of "Selection of Student Supervisors", sub-headings utilised to further organise the data were:

•What are the minimum requirements for being a supervisor of social work students?
•Do we need more formal processes for accreditation of fieldwork supervisors?
•How personally motivated would participants feel to go through an accreditation process?
•Who would meet the costs if more formal processes of accreditation of student supervisors were introduced?
•What are the advantages and disadvantages of accreditation of fieldwork supervisors?

The next step was to work through the transcriptions again under each sub category and select quotations which elucidated a point, raised questions, expressed similar or different points of view (either to other respondents or to the existing literature), offered some new insights and suggested areas for further research. I also tried to include responses from a range of practice settings in order to show similarities and differences in conceptualisations of the fieldwork supervisors' roles and needs for preparation, support, education and training in order to carry out these activities across different fields of practice. Once this task was completed and I had checked that there were no pieces of

important data that could not be included in any of the categories developed, I then finalised the sub-headings under which the data are presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven.

In writing up the data, a further process of interpretation takes place and this occurs in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. These three chapters present the views of participants in the research; provide a commentary on the findings; make links with the literature and theory chapters, and lead into the final chapter which considers the implications of the research findings for the argument for a critical reflective model of fieldwork in social work education[22], as well as offering conclusions and recommendations from the research. The process of interpreting the data is aptly described by Patton (1990: 423) who writes

> Interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, offering explanation, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, building linkages, attaching meanings, imposing order and dealing with rival explanations, disconfirming cases and data irregularities as part of testing the viability of an interpretation.

Analysis of the data from the first group meetings took place prior to the individual interviews, as the main purpose of these focus groups was to develop areas which could be explored in greater depth with a smaller number of respondents. As participants in the focus group meetings took place in a postbox technique described in the section on research design, there was also some individual data generated from the focus group meetings. Generally as I have stated, the input of the group participants was to sensitise me about what are the current issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors (reported in Figure One), and it was their collective input which was important. However, in writing up the data, I became aware that their individual responses to the questions on cards were also important data (see Appendix B) and where their responses were significant in adding something which was not addressed by an individual interviewee, these have been included and identified as a response from a group participant, in the chapters which present the data.

The second group meeting was held in order to give participants in both the focus groups and the individual interviews, the opportunity to give feedback on the research findings in a group setting and also so that they could offer suggestions for future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education in social work. Figure Three summarises the data which came out of the final group meeting.

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[22] See Chapter Three.

Figure Three - Recommendations for Future Directions In Policy, Practice and Research In Fieldwork Education From Second Group Meeting Held in Palmerston North in November 1997

How have things changed from 1996 to 1997?	Recommendations
Implications of the imposition of a managerial framework in social service agencies for social work education:-	•more emphasis on practical training throughout social work education •university tutors also taking more responsibility for student supervision during the placement
•conflict with social work philosophy	•culturally appropriate models and processes
•introduction of unit standards	•social workers need to be more 'political' about their knowledge base and hold on to the holistic focus of social work
•status of social work supervision	•students need more knowledge about the purposes of supervision and their responsibilities before going on placement (also relates to the value placed on supervision in the organisational culture of the agencies in which students are placed)
Devolution to Iwi Social Services challenges us to develop culturally appropriate models and processes	•review assessment processes - for example a panel process at the end of a placement would give the opportunity for more in-depth feedback. Education and Training Institutions to improve selection processes for students training to become a social worker.

Further elaboration and discussion of Figure Three takes place in the final chapter of the thesis which provides a discussion and critique of the research findings and develops some recommendations.

Conclusion

In this chapter the research process followed in this study has been outlined and the participants in the research have been introduced. As the quotation which opened this chapter highlights, the action research process requires ongoing dialogue between the researcher and participants in the study. As I have described, this study has utilised both individual in-depth interviews and a group process. At the beginning of the study, the

groups acted as focus groups helping to refine the broad research questions identified in Chapter One and to define current issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors which could be further explored in the individual interviews. In the writing phase of the study, the group process was utilised to offer critical reflection on a preliminary analysis of the findings and to suggest future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education. Some of the ethical issues which had to be considered in carrying out this research have been discussed and the ways in which these were resolved. Finally the analytical frameworks used to organise and understand the data have been presented. This chapter has prepared the ground for the presentation, interpretation and discussion of the research findings in the following three chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPERIENCES OF STUDENT SUPERVISION

"The role of the practice teacher as the bridge between academic and practice sub-cultures is ripe for creative development"

Sawdon, D. (1991: 79)

Introduction

As I have already stated, there are many stakeholders in fieldwork education in social work, including students, educators, fieldwork supervisors, managers of social service agencies, clients of the agencies in which students are placed, the professional association of social workers and the Industry Training Organisation. While this research focuses on the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors, it is important to remember that the interrelationships between all of the stakeholders are critical to developing ideas about future directions in fieldwork education. Fieldwork supervisors are both providers and consumers of placement experiences and are therefore in a pivotal position, as the opening quotation highlights.

The research findings are presented in three separate chapters. This chapter presents the personal experiences and perceptions of participants in this research about the roles of the fieldwork supervisor, including any differences in practice which flow from how the role is conceptualised. Chapter Six looks at the network of relationships around the practicum both within agencies and with education and training institutions, while Chapter Seven looks at the wider social and political context and how participants thought this affects field education in social work. As I begin the presentation of the research findings, it seems important to briefly consider the views of some of the other groups with an interest in fieldwork education in social work. Chapter Eight, which looks at implications and recommendations for future directions in fieldwork education in social work, broadens the debate about possible changes to policy and practice suggested by participants in this study and explores the viability of these recommendations in light of the perspectives of other interest groups.

As Preston-Shoot (1989) points out, it is essential that all parties to the fieldwork experience are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities. As the literature shows, students have perceptions and expectations about the role and responsibilities of their fieldwork supervisors. Syson and Baginsky (1981) point out that fieldwork is a developmental experience for students. In their first placement, students are most concerned about "getting the feel of social work itself, of a particular setting, of relating to clients" (Syson and Baginsky, 1981: 75). If they have not experienced social work supervision previously, they may not really know what to expect from their fieldwork supervisor. Whereas in subsequent placements, students are more concerned with building onto and consolidating previous learning and are much more likely to have clear ideas about what they want from supervision as a result of their supervision experiences in their previous placement(s). In their study into predictors of satisfaction with placements from students' perspectives, Fortune and Abramson (1993) found that three aspects of field instruction were particularly valued by students. These were firstly, a supervisory relationship which "includes trust, support, openness and availability"; secondly, students expected to be actively involved in constructing learning experiences and actively encouraged to express ideas; and thirdly, students valued "conceptual input" into their learning, "including critical feedback, connections with the next steps in learning and role modelling" (Fortune and Abramson, 1993: 106). Students also vary in their willingness to share responsibility with their fieldwork supervisor for ensuring a positive learning experience and meeting course requirements in the practicum, with some students being very proactive and others leaving most of the responsibility to the supervisor.

Educators also have perceptions and expectations of fieldwork supervisors, which are usually set out in placement handbooks and discussed at supervisor training workshops. These include such expectations as providing a positive learning environment, linking theory and practice, developing a well-defined learning and supervision contract together with the student, orienting the student to the agency and being clear about the assessment criteria on which the student's performance will be judged. Agency managers also have perceptions about the role that social workers will take on with regard to students, usually along the lines that this will not interfere with the social worker's normal work for the agency! It is interesting to keep the views of students, educators and agency managers in mind while reading about fieldwork supervisors' perceptions of their role and responsibilities in this chapter and in the following two chapters, as all parties are influential in a successful outcome to the placement experience.

This chapter first explores participants' own experiences of student supervision and their thoughts about what makes a good student supervisor. Then the factors which motivate

participants to offer to supervise a student placement are discussed. This is followed by a discussion of cultural issues in student supervision. Lastly, participants' conceptualisations of the role of student supervisor are presented, including any differences in practice arising from how the role is perceived.

Experiences of Student Supervision

I was interested in how respondents first became involved in supervising students because their motivation for offering a placement and their previous experiences of supervising are likely to affect the outcome of the placement experience. For five of the interviewees, supervising students was their first experience of being a supervisor, while the rest were already involved in supervising other staff before they took on students. Five interviewees became involved in supervising students because they were approached directly by the course. Of the rest, one became involved when he was employed as a Student Unit Supervisor, while another volunteered to take a student when a request for placements came to the agency she was working in at the time. Another became involved "by default", when the agency he was working for agreed to take on a student and as the person in the agency who did most of the supervision, he ended up also supervising the student and the last respondent began supervising students at the same time as she was undertaking a course leading to a Certificate in Supervision.

I began by asking interviewees to tell me about their experiences of student supervision both positive and negative. I asked respondents about their own experiences of receiving supervision in order to explore how what they value for themselves in supervision is, or is not, related to taking on the role of supervisor for a student. Interviewees had been on the receiving end of a mixed bag of supervision experiences, described by one respondent as "the good, the bad and the ugly" (Supervisor, Community Corrections), all of which had influenced their own supervision practice with students.

Several respondents commented on the significance of their own placement supervision experiences. Students are of course in a very vulnerable position in a placement if they do not "gel" with their supervisor and one supervisor recalled this happening to her on one of her placements when she was training. She comments that:

> ***While in personal terms, there was a lot we*** (herself and the supervisor) ***had in common, neither of us addressed until too far on, the differences we had in philosophy and perspective in social work with the result that when the assessment report arrived at the university it was sufficiently bad for my tutor to say, "Oh dear X, we will really have to look at this***

carefully. We don't want to leave this as it is and have nothing else to back you up".
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Interestingly, when asked what makes a good supervisor, this respondent spoke particularly of the need for fieldwork supervisors to appreciate that their preferred learning styles may not match those of the student and the need to be able to respond to the learning needs of the student. In terms of Gardiner's (1989) research into supervisor/student interactions, this ability to recognise that not all students learn in the same way and to adapt her approach accordingly, demonstrates a level three conception of learning on the part of this supervisor which encourages "deep" rather than "surface" learning on the part of the student.

From this respondent's perspective, a good student supervisor is one who "has an understanding of the student and what they want from the placement". She continues:

I have always wanted lots of reading and lots of help in seeking out appropriate reading material and there will be some students in amongst the students that I work with that are really much less interested in that and are much more interested in having practice, probably in a ratio of two to three times the amount of practice to reading. I hope I listen to them.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Another respondent also commented on the significance of her own placement supervision:

I think going through the social work degree, I experienced three very different types of supervision which as a student I had very little control over because my supervisors in terms of placements were basically set, but positively that meant that I experienced three very different styles which I think in terms of preparing me for my own supervision and my own practice meant that I had already done quite a lot of reflection about what it was that I personally wanted and needed out of supervision.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

My own experiences of placement supervision, described in the introductory chapter, were similar to the experiences of this respondent. Another supervisor, who qualified in 1980, contrasts his work experience in a statutory agency in the late 1970s where he had "a caseload of about 140 kids and no supervision" with his experiences of supervision on

his placements while completing a Bachelor of Social Work at X University. He concludes that:

> ***The experience at X*** (name of university) ***really highlighted the centrality and importance of supervision and I learned about supervision through my placements.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Another respondent made a direct link between the kind of supervision she has received and the kind of supervision she provides for students:

> ***I have had good supervision. I have always had supervision of the sort where I felt empowered, supported, challenged and learnt a lot, so that is what I have tried to do back for my students.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Interestingly, this same supervisor when asked about her motivation for taking students on placement commented that:

> ***I want them to have a good supervisor who is supportive and I do remember from my own student days that some students would come back and they had a terrible placement. I don't want them to have a bad time and not learn what they need to.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

What Makes A Good Student Supervisor?

The responses of participants to the question about what makes a good supervisor begin to illuminate the research question about how social workers who take students on placement conceptualise their role. Each respondent highlighted different aspects including, the need to be flexible according to the needs of the student; the importance of building rapport; the importance of clear expectations; the need to know about the impact of any personal issues the student may be facing on the placement; both affirming and challenging the student; and stimulating learning by linking placement experiences with ideas from theory and research. As already stated in the Chapter Four, there is a sense in which the supervisors I interviewed are very committed to providing a quality learning experience, which may or may not be true of all social workers who offer a placement. Some agencies may offer a placement because they are short staffed and see the student as an additional worker.

The views of participants about what makes a good student supervisor are similar to other published studies on supportive and constructive supervision. For example, Fisher (1990: 16) identified as helpful supervisory behaviours, those aimed at: conveying respect and commitment; encouragement, constructive feedback; challenging and developing the student's practice; and providing good role modelling for the student.

Several respondents emphasise the importance of affirming the student:

> ***I think that what makes a good supervisor is getting alongside the student, affirming the belief in them and that is where I work from really, I believe in the student, a student is capable or they wouldn't be there in the first place.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

> ***I think the prerequisites*** (of good supervision) ***are the interpersonal stuff. A supervisor has got to be able to relate with the person that they are supervising.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

> ***I have great faith in people that what they bring in terms of their own skills and learning levels are really important and it is very sacred, so that working from there you are building on to whatever they feel they need, but also challenging them as well.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency).***

While interviewees emphasise the need for placement supervision to be an affirming encounter, they also recognise a responsibility to challenge students to step outside of their "comfort zone" at times and therefore do show some evidence of including critical reflectivity in their conceptualisation of the role of a fieldwork supervisor. For example one respondent stated:

> ***My definition of a good supervisor would be somebody who listens to me and challenges me and pushes me to learn new things, or to look at things in a different way, who has got ideas about books, lectures or seminars or whatever, somebody who really helps me to grow and to expand and who is affirming.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Another respondent thought that a good supervisor is:

Someone who is able to construct a good challenge, who I guess encourages you to take things into another dimension, another plane and is stretching you.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Another participant stated that:

A good supervisor is one who knows when to be supportive and when to be challenging. There are times for being very challenging and there are times when it is not really appropriate, particularly when people have personal issues that are actually impacting with their work.
(Supervisor, Community Corrections)

Another supervisor in a mental health setting picks up on the point about the impact on the placement of issues going on in the student's personal life, stating that:

For me as a supervisor, I insist that they (students) ***as part of the contract let me know if there is anything going on in their personal life that is on their mind. I don't have to deal with it but I do need to know so that I can protect them and the client from getting caught up in all that.***
(Supervisor, Health)

The importance of clear expectations and the supervisor directly observing the student's practice was emphasised by participants in the focus groups. For example one group member stated that good student supervision is about:

Being very clear about expectations, boundaries and processes and being able to go out with the student during the course of working with clients
(Group Participant)

Another supervisor also pointed out the dangers of placing too much reliance on students' self-report, stating that

My ideal model of student supervision would contain time and space for the supervisor to do more observing of the student "in action", rather than having to rely mainly on feedback from colleagues and students themselves as to how they are going.
(Group Participant)

The comments about supervisors directly observing students are supported in the research literature. For example, Shardlow and Doel (1993: 72) are critical of too much

emphasis on "retrospective student self-report as a method of examining competence" in the fieldwork component of social work education.

Five supervisors particularly emphasised that helping students link theory and practice is an important part of their role. For example, one supervisor stated that:

> ***A good supervisor is one who stimulates learning in terms of actually asking questions which get people to reflect on what they have done, get them to generalise what their experience is and to take it a bit further and then to link it with some research knowledge or knowledge from theory so that they have got some framework that they are operating from which has got some basis.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

Another supervisor who has supervised mainly young students emphasised the developmental aspect of the student supervisor's role which requires:

> ***The ability to work with and cope with young people who are just beginning or think they know what they are doing, but really are on the beginning step and helping to guide them through some of their problems and theories and philosophies and all those things that they have learnt at X*** (name of university) ***or wherever and are trying to put into practice.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

A group participant made a similar point about the need to be flexible according to the needs of the student, stating that:

> ***The ability of the supervisor to be able to provide a level of support which changes with the changing needs of the student as the placement progresses is very important.***
> ***(Group Participant)***

One supervisor felt very strongly that student supervisors need to have a good theoretical grounding, yet often this is an area that student supervisors feel least confident about. Her views link with other research, for example the study by Fortune and Abramson (1993), which emphasises that unless fieldwork supervisors are able to conceptualise and be clear about how they link theory and practice, they are unlikely to be able to offer conceptual frameworks to students. This respondent stated that a good supervisor has to have:

a really good strong grounding in theory because I guess that is an area that I think I need to grow in.
(Supervisor, Health)

This same interviewee also makes a point that I will return to in discussing the selection of student supervisors in Chapter Seven, that she is "horrified at the thought of anyone supervising me who hasn't done any supervision training" (Supervisor, Health).

One supervisor summarises all of the aspects highlighted by the other respondents and makes the links between his own experiences of supervision and what he offers to the people he supervises. I have included his thoughts on what makes a good student supervisor in full:

I think it is a whole range of things really. When I think of who have been good supervisors for me, it has been people who I could respect in terms of both personal and professional. People who knew the landscape of social work, who could allow room for development and yet be a guide. I think it is quite a delicate role. It is a balancing role, balancing a whole lot of factors, balancing both personal and professional things. It is knowing how to support and yet not to be intrusive. It is being able to challenge without crushing. It is being able to inspire without taking over the person's own integrity and ideals. I see it very much as a balancing act, a double balancing act - you are balancing your own process in yourself and you are balancing your relationship with the student social worker across a whole lot of dimensions, knowledge, skills, values, gender issues, ethnicity issues. It is sort of like this cake mix really, there is a lot of chemistry goes on and so there is a lot of flexibility needed.
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

The last area to be explored within this theme of the participants' experiences of student supervision is whether or not respondents who also supervise other people, have found the experience of supervising students different and in what ways. In asking this question, I was hoping to explore some of the unique aspects of student supervision. Several respondents commented that student supervision requires a more time consuming and intensive involvement. For example one supervisor stated that:

With students, ultimately I am responsible for their caseload and their day to day wellbeing, so it is a lot more intensive and apart from the hour's supervision a week, I have tried to have an "open door" policy and I have tried to make them feel welcome and see that I catch up with

them during the day, first thing if I can and at the end of the day if I can.
(Supervisor, Health)

Student supervision is also perceived as:

... more varied, with more opportunities to explore , as the situation is less fixed to a job that is needing to be done.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Other differences between student and staff supervision are perceived as related to differences in status and power relationships between students and other staff in the agency. For example one respondent thought that in his agency:

Students are often more keen and more able to make use of supervision than some of the more experienced workers. They (students) ***are more amenable to supervision and more proactive in getting what they need from it for their own development, that is one of the obvious differences.***
(Supervisor, Community Corrections)

One interviewee saw student and staff supervision as "worlds apart" in the sense that she saw:

... a placement as being an ongoing learning experience, the type of work that most students would do would be fairly limited realistically and appropriately so, definitely very clear learning goals. ...There is a much clearer contract in terms of what the learning goals are than there would be with staff that I supervise.
(Supervisor, Health)

Two respondents commented that there was more scope in student supervision for emphasis on the educative and reconstructive aspects of supervision. One felt she had more freedom to challenge students whereas other considerations can get in the way if you are also the manager of staff you supervise:

There is a lot more scope in the student supervision for that educative role and the administrative part, like the agency pressures in terms of accountability, while it is important, doesn't feature quite so much. As well you don't get the power relationships intruding.
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

When one is supervising staff, you have to be aware of issues such as harassment and constructive dismissal, so I am a very careful staff supervisor. I think it is quite good with students to experience the freedom of being able to challenge a little bit more.
(Supervisor, Health)

While these supervisors perceive a more equal power relationship between students and fieldwork supervisors, it is important not to minimise the relatively powerless position of students in the practicum as the literature highlights. For example, Preston-Shoot (1989) suggests that practice teachers are in a powerful position in relation to students. He asks "how much influence can students have when practice teachers are more practised in such interactions and have greater knowledge of their agency; when students are dependent on them for information and entry into the profession; and when there are covert pressures to agree (to go to a particular placement) because of the shortage of placements and of time to negotiate them" (Preston-Shoot, 1989: 10). As I have argued in Chapter Three, the way in which the practicum is conceptualised has significant implications with regard to questions about power relationships between students and supervisors. I am supportive of a critical reflective model of the practicum (Schön, 1987) because it implies an equality, reciprocity and respect in relationships between students and fieldwork educators. These attributes may not be evident in other models of learning in the practicum, which conceptualise the role of the fieldwork supervisor as the "expert" and the purpose of the practicum as inducting students into the technical skills and competencies necessary to perform in a particular practice setting.

Motivation For Taking A Student On Placement

When asked what motivates them to offer to supervise a student placement, supervisors gave similar reasons to other published studies (Syson and Baginsky, 1981; Walker, McCarthy, Morgan and Timms, 1995). Firstly many respondents talked about a sense of responsibility to the profession to train the next generation of social workers, for example:

It is almost like a biological, genetic thing, of sort of keeping the species going as it were, of supporting a profession and supporting the people who are wanting to develop in the profession.
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

Some supervisors were keen to encourage students' interest in less popular areas of practice, for example this response from a group respondent, whose motivation came

from "a commitment to social work training and practice, especially raising the status of geriatric social work" (Group Participant).

Secondly, supervisors saw that student supervision enhanced their own professional development as student supervision is often a step up to staff supervision and can be included on their Curriculum Vitae, for example:

> ***It was a kind of career thing really, that supervising students was a move up to having staff supervision.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

It is important to note that improving the quality of student supervision, by providing better training for fieldwork supervisors, could have a flow on effect on the overall quality of social work supervision as these social workers move into staff supervision in their agencies.

Thirdly, respondents stated they offered placements out of loyalty to the course which had trained the supervisor:

> ***I think a lot of it (the motivation for offering a placement) is out of loyalty to my own university and what it has given me. X*** (name of university) ***has given me a heck of a lot, so I have got a strong loyalty to the programme and that has never waned.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Fourthly, a number of responses which I have grouped, emphasised student placements as a means of keeping up to date with new knowledge; a sense of satisfaction in helping students develop both personally and professionally; an opportunity to reassess the supervisor's own work and the knowledge that having a good supervisor can make a placement and that having a poor supervisor can break a placement. These same points are evident in the data from the group meetings (see Appendix B).

For example with regard to keeping up to date with new knowledge, some typical responses were:

> ***The link with the training institution can be a source of stretching my day to day supervision and practice.***
> ***(Group Participant)***

> ***You get updated on latest thoughts and theories about how things can be done and all that, because in the workplace you don't get a lot of***

time to get into going off and keeping up to date with the latest thoughts and theories.
(Supervisor, Voluntary agency)

For example, with regard to helping students to develop both personally and professionally, one respondent stated that:

I think the thing that I have really enjoyed about it (student supervision) ***is seeing students develop, seeing the personal and professional development in the students, so it has given me a lot of pleasure to be able to support students in their learning.***
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

Another participant said:

It is good to watch someone else develop, even in the short space of time like a placement. Sometimes, even in one session, suddenly something clicks and they realise that there is a link between what they've learnt up on the hill and the person that they are dealing with, and that is really valuable, and it is also really nice to see.
(Supervisor, Community Corrections)

For example, with regard to the fact that students bring a fresh perspective and ask difficult questions, supervisors felt challenged to reassess their own practice. A supervisor who was new to student supervision found that:

A new person coming into the Department brings a whole fresh perspective. I think that our day to day work means that we often don't go back and look at theoretical bases or models of working and particularly, I mean I had no comparison, but the student I had was very much a critical analyser which made me think about this Department and how it was working, so that was really helpful.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Finally, in this group of responses, there was an emphasis that the supervision provided for the student could make or break the placement. For example one person stated that:

I personally was keen to offer myself as a supervisor to students and that was just out of my own experience of being supervised as a student and finding that having a good supervisor really made or broke my training. I have personally found that in my own training in the BSW (Bachelor of Social Work) ***that being on placement was where a lot of things came together. It was where I found a lot of my confidence***

grew, that my spark and desire to work with people was kindled and so on that premise, I take supervision of students on placement really very seriously. I think it is an incredible learning opportunity and that the relationship between supervisor and the supervisee is crucial.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Another area which was evident in the responses of participants in this research was a real sense that they personally and/or their agency had something special to offer to students. For example one respondent said that:

I know that I work in a very good team, in a very good environment with a lot of areas for professional development, with a lot to offer and I think that we have a lot to offer a student, so I think we can provide a good placement and that motivates me.
(Supervisor, Health)

A Maori supervisor talked about the special responsibility placed on Maori practitioners both to nurture Tangata Whenua students but also if she takes Tauiwi students on placement to assist them to develop their practice with Maori clients. She stated:

I also believe that I have got a lot to offer that students won't get in a lot of other places, as a Maori supervisor in the community which gives them the opportunity, Tauiwi students as well, to see it from another perspective.
(Supervisor, Health)

The responses to the question about motivation highlight that there is a lot that is altruistic in the provision of student placements. Some commentators have argued that "the voluntary and altruistic nature of field placement supervision provides an uncertain and ambivalent base for something as important as field education" (Todd, 1989, cited in Fook and Cleak, 1994: 38). In my role as a Placement Coordinator, I have some sympathy with Todd's frustration about the reliance on a "goodwill" model for the provision of fieldwork placements. However my conversations with fieldwork supervisors have led me to think that what is identified as a weakness of the present arrangements for fieldwork, may also paradoxically, be its strength. While I am in favour of better quality assurance measures and an adequate resource base for fieldwork which is contributed to by all of the stakeholders, I would be cautious about turning the provision of fieldwork placements into commercial transactions for similar reasons to the arguments made by Titmuss (1970) about moving away from a gift relationship in the donation of blood. I see moves in this direction as part of a wider ethos of reaching for contractual rather than humanistic solutions to all sorts of problems.

Another area that became evident in the responses to the question about motivation for offering student placements is that generally supervisors like students who are proactive, keen about their own learning and willing to make the most of the placement, a point which had been emphasised in the focus group meetings. The following response is typical:

> ***The interest which new, young social workers bring to a job where many tasks and ideas may have become routine. The challenge of new input from them and the institutions they come from is creative and energy producing.***
> ***(Group Participant)***

As all students are of course, not like this, it raises the whole issue of how supervisors and agencies cope with students who they feel are not making the grade? One participant commented on the differences in how students present themselves:

> ***I have had a couple of students who have been really just quite outstanding, by that I mean bright, assertive, keen and they have been very flexible in their style and have fitted in really well in the team. I have had a couple of other students who I guess have been a little bit more tentative, perhaps their presentation hasn't been quite as good, they have been a bit less willing to be flexible or acknowledge areas that they need to improve on, and so in some ways the impact of that hasn't been quite so positive.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

The difficulties for fieldwork supervisors around students who are identified as "marginal" for whatever reasons, will be considered later in this chapter in a discussion about assessment and also in Chapter Six in the section on relationships between educational and field settings.

Cultural Issues In Student Supervision

This was not an area that I specifically asked about in the research, although at the focus group meeting in Palmerston North, a Maori supervisor had raised the issue of models of fieldwork which meet different cultural needs (see Figure One in Chapter Four). In the in-depth individual interviews with fieldwork supervisors, it emerged that there were significant issues for Pakeha supervisors supervising Maori students, for Maori supervisors supervising Pakeha students and for Maori supervisors in supervising Maori students in "mainstream" agencies. As I did not interview any Maori supervisors who

were working in Maori settings[1], I cannot comment on the issues which may arise with regard to student placements from this perspective. I have grouped the issues which supervisors spoke about into two main areas. Firstly, there were issues around personal difficulties in working cross-culturally including boundary issues. An example of a boundary issue is the expectation from a Maori perspective that "students are more than likely to be working with people with whom they are genealogically linked" (Walker, 1996: 65), whereas in mainstream organisations run from a Pakeha perspective, it is generally seen as unacceptable to work with friends or relatives. Secondly, there were structural difficulties in working cross-culturally including: cultural considerations of ethnicity and gender in matching students to placements and to supervisors; culturally appropriate models of fieldwork and assessment; and social work practice theories which it is appropriate to draw on. This whole area of cultural issues in student placements is worthy of further exploration in its own right.

When I asked about experiences of student supervision, one Pakeha supervisor recalled that the only placement she had difficulty with was partly because of cultural issues. This placement had taken place several years ago, before the establishment of Maori Mental Health teams where the student would have been much better placed. She remembered particularly her feelings that she and the student had been talking past each other:

> ***I talked to the Maori social worker*** (in the agency) ***about it and I'm not sure it was all cultural. I have since believed it was like the student was waiting to be given permission to go ahead. On the other hand the Pakeha students have just gone ahead and taken some initiative, and it wasn't that the student didn't have initiative, it was that in a way she was waiting for me to give her permission to do some things that I was expecting her to do anyhow.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Later, this supervisor discovered that although there had been a selection process for the placement and the student had come along for the interview with other students and had chosen and been chosen for the placement, "she didn't really want to work in our agency in the first place". This raises a number of issues about how the university matches students with placements, why the student felt unable to say she didn't really feel comfortable about the placement and about the isolation of a field setting model of placements for Maori students.

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[1] I did not interview Maori supervisors in Maori settings, because, as I have discussed in Chapter Four, I felt this would have been inappropriate for a Pakeha researcher.

A Maori supervisor commented that it is easier to work with a student from your own culture:

> ***In most cases to me working with Maori students is much easier ... I feel, and this might just be me, that some of things that we do and say, I don't have to spend a long time explaining what it means, what is happening or why it is happening*** (to Maori students) ***and therefore that is why it is just that little bit easier. Otherwise*** (if the student is not Maori) ***you spend a lot of time looking at what is happening and if you are working with Maori families explaining what is happening for them and to make sure the student understands what is going on***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Here the supervisor gave the example of visiting a Maori patient who talked about the other (unseen) people in the room. As she points out without an understanding of Maori spiritual concepts of kaitiaki and kehua:

> ***Some of our students could be quite phased-out or taken aback, but knowing for us as people we always say we bring our people with us so it doesn't matter. But you need to talk about these people that she*** (the patient) ***sees and talks to. That can be quite a challenge to some students as being 'oh this client is actually mad, out of her head, dippy'.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

This same supervisor also expressed the view that when she supervised Maori students, she used a different model of supervision:

> ***I use different styles of looking at their work I suppose, coming from a Maori perspective I use a lot of Maori things to look at what is happening for them and in their lives.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Some of the structural difficulties which arise in matching students to placements and with supervisors are particularly challenging with regard to considerations of ethnicity and gender. A Pakeha supervisor who works in a team with Maori and Pacific Island (Samoan) workers, working with young people from all of these cultures commented on the need to get the match of student and supervisor right:

> *X* (another staff member) ***and I work with women and often its Pakeha whereas our Maori woman would work with Maori young women and our males would work with males. So in terms of somebody coming on***

placement, if they are Pacific Island male, well wow, you know there are some matches there possibly in terms of facilitating groups, but if it was a male to facilitate with us, it would be inappropriate. If it was a Maori woman, great! So there are those things in terms of gender and ethnicity. The whole supervisor and supervisee match is really important and age too. For in terms of the Samoan population, somebody older would be appropriate.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

The requirement by courses that students are supervised by someone with a formal social work qualification creates difficulties in that it may exclude a supervisor who within their own culture is eminently qualified as a mentor for a student. The problem is often solved by attaching a consultant supervisor to the placement[2]. One of the Pakeha supervisors I interviewed was in this situation:

The placement is marae based, the student is already known to me, and I have had a supervisory relationship with her and it is agreed that I will have a role to play because I have the piece of paper, also the reality of the practice, but also thinking for that student, that student has already identified that it is really important to have somebody who is able to talk the university language that she is in a position of having to juggle culturally. She has to have a supervisor who has a qualification. She doesn't see it as a racial thing against her people, she sees it as somebody who has to have a complementary input.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

With the development of Iwi based Social Services, multi-tribal urban organisations and Maori teams within mainstream organisations, relationships around fieldwork placements will need to be carefully negotiated that are respectful to all parties. This is a developing area of placement provision. As Walker (1996: 67) points out, Maori students often go into placements in Maori settings with very high expectations and need to be reminded that "indigenous organisations function with a large number of volunteers and are woefully under-resourced" and also that "many of these organisations are coming to terms with reclaiming indigenous processes, subsumed under the colonial yoke" (Walker, 1996: 67).

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[2] However, this raises issues of who "finds" the consultant supervisor, the student, the agency or the university. To attach a Consultant Supervisor to a placement may be interpreted as an insult to the agency supervisor who from a cultural perspective is well qualified.

Another Pakeha supervisor talked about the response of his agency to providing cultural supervision for Maori and Pacific Island workers, which is to contract people from that culture to provide the supervision. While the respondent is talking about staff supervision here, his comments are equally applicable to students. He thought that the agency:

> ***... haven't actually thought through the processes and especially the reporting processes involved in consultant cultural supervision and what do they do if somebody is going to be dangerous?***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

At the time of the interview, I did not explore this question further with him, but on reflection I think he is making a very important point about the difficulties of negotiating cross-culturally, about trust and about whose judgement is going to be relied upon.

Often Maori social workers particularly in mainstream agencies have to justify healing practices from their cultural base which are not legitimated by the Western theories and models these agencies work from. In working with students, this tension can be highlighted. One Maori supervisor made this very point:

> ***Of course a lot of my supervision comes from my own background which is a Maori background and one of the challenges that I had to use just recently was - were they*** (by 'they' here it is not clear if the supervisor was talking specifically about Maori students or Maori social workers in general, as she supervises both) ***as practitioners, Maori social workers or were they social workers who were Maori? That means that they have to stop and think what sort of practice their actual theory comes from.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

When Maori students are placed in mainstream agencies with Pakeha supervisors, they may not be given the opportunity to explore Maori knowledge bases and practices, as these may not be known by the Pakeha supervisor. Walker (1996: 63-64) discusses the positive aspects of placements in Maori settings for Maori students, including the points that the student's cultural perspective is acknowledged and appreciated and that "theories, processes and practices are Maori". However these placements are demanding and challenging for the students because "not only are they expected to know their own language, processes and customs, they are also expected to know the language, theories and processes of Pakeha" (Walker, 1996: 66). One of the Maori supervisors I interviewed makes the same point as Walker that when they are placed in Maori settings, Maori social work students have tremendous expectations placed on them:

> ***I mean students in any place have got hard roads to hoe, but the ideal situation for most Maori social workers is to go back into their own area, but in going back into their own areas, they get battered quite often because of the expectations of their own people about what they should and shouldn't be doing.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

She felt that at times these students:

> ***...almost have to be schizophrenic because to be a good qualified social worker they have to be this and to be a good Maori qualified social worker a lot of the aspects of what they have learnt as a social worker go against the grain.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Hopefully, this situation will change for Maori students as social work programmes move from a curriculum which acknowledges a tokenistic representation of Maori world views to a curriculum in which Maori world views, theories and models are presented equally with views from a Western heritage of ideas. Also hopefully the situation will change as more placements become available in Maori social service settings with Maori supervisors.

I am sure that many of the issues raised here for Maori students are equally true for students from other cultures. In the context of Aotearoa/New Zealand, there would be similar issues for students from Pacific Island cultures and students from Asian cultures. As none of my respondents came from these cultures, I can only suggest that this is an area which needs further research. I would suggest that with regard to fieldwork placements, we need to look carefully at processes around the matching of students to placements and supervisors; how these placements are supported and by whom; how supervision arrangements are negotiated and that assessment processes are culturally appropriate. The field setting model of placements is isolating for Maori and Pacific Island students unless they are placed in a Maori or Pacific Island team. Student Units were seen as a culturally appropriate model because of the support for one another that could be provided.

The Roles and Responsibilities of Fieldwork Supervisors

As already stated in Chapter Two, the words used to describe the role of taking a social work student on placement vary from 'practice teacher' in Britain, to 'field educator' in Australia, to 'field instructor' in Canada and North America to 'fieldwork supervisor' or

'student supervisor' in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I was interested to find out what job title participants in this research preferred and why. While this is only a small sample, the findings were surprising, in that there was overwhelming support for being called either a "student supervisor" or "fieldwork supervisor". From the group meetings, twelve participants liked "student supervisor", two liked "fieldwork supervisor" and only one liked "practice teacher". From the individual interviews, four liked "student supervisor", one was happy with either "fieldwork supervisor" or "student supervisor", three liked just "supervisor" and one commented that the programme she supervises for calls her a "practice teacher", but that she has to negotiate what that means with the student. Another supervisor commented that X university were starting to use the term "practice tutor" and she continued:

> ***I am not sure about the title practice tutor because that is not clear. I don't see my role as a student supervisor is a tutor's role, so I don't like that title.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

The term "fieldwork supervisor" was seen by all of the interviewees in this research as a more inclusive and preferred term to "practice teacher". This is an interesting finding in direct contrast to the literature, particularly from Britain, where "supervisor" is seen as a narrower term than "practice teacher" which is seen as emphasising the teaching component of a student supervisor's role (Danbury, 1994). Thus it was interesting to explore the resistance of participants in this research to the job title of practice teacher. One respondent commented that:

> ***I prefer to be a supervisor full stop. I am a supervisor of the student. I don't actually like the practice teacher notion. I think there is more to it than teaching. When I think about teaching, it is almost like that bank of learning, someone stands up and provides input and someone receives, well supervision of students shouldn't be like that.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

In a similar vein another respondent stated that:

> ***I don't like teacher. I think there is a whole lot more to it than teaching so I think it is more sharing. Teaching seems to me to be a one up position, like I am the expert, and yes I am to a certain extent, but I am more than teaching. I am listening, hearing, guiding, advocating, supporting, all those things and a teacher to me teaches and it doesn't allow for the other stuff.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

As noted, some education and training institutions in Aotearoa/New Zealand are beginning to use the term "practice tutor" and these research findings suggest that fieldwork supervisors dislike this term because they perceive that placements are about learning, not about teaching. A term like mentor or coach, suggested by Schön (1987) may be more appropriate than either practice teacher or supervisor.

Participants were given a list taken from the literature of all of the roles which a fieldwork supervisor can potentially take on when supervising a student on placement (Thompson, Osada and Anderson, 1994). The idea of presenting a stimulus list had been trialed at the group meetings and had generated some useful discussion. The roles which were used as prompts were: enabler, supporter, challenger, teacher, manager (of the placement), assessor (of the student's performance), role model and advocate (for the student, which may be with the agency and/or with the course). Respondents were asked about any other roles which are missing from the list which they thought were important. One participant suggested that mentor is missing in the sense of "students being able to see me actually doing the trade of a social worker" (Supervisor, Health) which is akin to the apprenticeship model of social work education. Another supervisor alluded to the notion of "giving positive stories and sharing positive experiences of being a social worker" (Supervisor, Voluntary Agency), which to me is similar to the mentor, but she called it a "stimulator". Another supervisor felt that he would like "something about encouraging or empowering students". He continued:

> ***I think that part of a supervisor's role is to actually encourage people who are learning to put the learning into practice and to develop themselves further.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

Two supervisors wanted something that reflected looking out for the student's general well-being and included looking out for their stress and any signs of "burn-out". Both thought that this caring role could probably come under "supporter".

The discussion about roles which were missing from the stimulus list, was followed by a discussion about which roles supervisors found easiest and which they felt least comfortable or prepared to take on. In clarifying what they understood each role to be about, participants mapped out each role in much greater detail. For me this helped to illuminate two of the research questions. Firstly, it told me more about how social workers conceptualise the role of student supervisor and secondly, it showed how differences in practice are likely to follow from how the role is conceived. All of this information is helpful in understanding what kind of preparation is needed to prepare social workers to take on the role of student supervisor. It leads on to a discussion about

how to ensure that student supervisors have the knowledge and skills to creatively play their part in providing a positive learning experience from which students can develop practice competence.

Most respondents felt comfortable being a role model for the student and thought that this role involved:

> ***... being professional in my approach, modelling consistency, being prepared and punctual, involving the student in their supervision as much as possible, involving them in their placement as much as possible. It is their placement so hopefully the process is modelled for what they need to be doing with clients.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

Another respondent commented that role modelling is important because:

> ***... that is how they (students) will learn a lot really, is sitting alongside me and watching how I do things.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

However the same supervisor makes the important point that:

> ***The important thing about that*** (being a role model) ***for me, is that they*** (students) ***see that they have to use themselves, that they can't do as I do because they are not me, but they have to use their own self within that. So yes they can pick up from me but they can't do it exactly the same as me because they are not me.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

One supervisor, in responding to the stimulus list emphasised the shared responsibility of the supervisor and student for each of the roles. I have quoted her response to the question about the roles she felt most comfortable and prepared to take on in full:

> ***Probably the enabler, and I see the word as being a guider, and part of that is enabling people to assess where they are at and what they need and help them with that. Other roles supporter and challenger. I guess there is a teaching element in there but I see it as an equal thing, a two-way thing where we both are learning and teaching each other. I would expect that the student would be a manager of their placement as well*** (as the supervisor). ***We both assess. In terms of role model, I guess they*** (students) ***are looking at you as a role model, but I think that it also a two-way thing that there are things that I learn too from the student.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

Several respondents felt that enabler and supporter were very general terms which had both positive and negative aspects. For example:

> ***I don't like the word "enabler" because it implies that I have got power and the other person hasn't.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Another said:

> ***I think a lot of the role is enabling. I don't particularly like that word as a role, but a lot of it is that, enabling the student to fit into the agency and enabling them to work with clients and enabling them to process their own personal, academic and professional growth.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

This same supervisor also felt that supporter can have both positive and negative connotations:

> ***I mean you can support someone by taking over their reality and that is not supporting. The whole thing of support can easily descend then into a sort of co-dependence or over dependence so it is a tricky one, but yet it is a very important role.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

He also makes the point that support for students can be at two different levels by which he means:

> ***... support through an individual crisis situation and then there is sort of like a background support of the person knowing that you will be there for them, that you regard them positively and that you are there to enhance their growth. I call that background support, a fundamental positive regard for the person, no matter what sort of "balls up" they make.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

From his perspective, this background support is there "even when students really bomb out and do things that are quite marginal and close to unethical" (Supervisor, CYPFS).

The roles which supervisors experienced as more difficult were challenger, manager, advocate, teacher, and assessor. The lack of comfort experienced with the role of teacher and assessor mirrors other published studies described in the literature review in Chapter Two. Just because a role is perceived as difficult is not to say that supervisors do not

perceive that role to be necessary and important, but rather that of all the roles, these are the ones they need more preparation to take on.

Challenger

One supervisor talked about the positive and negative aspects of challenging:

> ***I think sometimes you can challenge to really shock someone in a major way but you actually come from outside their frame of reference and you give them a jolt. Now I have never done that and I don't believe in that sort of challenge because I think it puts the person into contraction and defence... By and large I see challenge as working with a person through normal supervision processes so that they get to the point of challenging themselves... Sometimes challenging is by setting goals and saying "I expect you to have this completed by the end of the week".***
>
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

One supervisor talked about what happens if you challenge and the student is, for whatever reason, unable to deal with the challenge. A situation had arisen for this supervisor with one student, where she felt that some of the things that this student was saying to clients were "really not o.k. and the student still didn't get why these things were a problem". She continues:

> ***Both myself as a consultant supervisor and the day to day supervisor felt that challenges issued to the student were not taken on board, weren't even registered and I found that very frustrating.***
>
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Another supervisor pointed out that students can be challenging in different ways:

> ***If you have got a 'good' student and they are continually challenging you and you have got to keep up with them, that can be a stress and if you have got a student who doesn't keep up with the challenges, that is another stress.***
>
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Another respondent thought that challenging is an important aspect of the fieldwork supervisor's role but that like assessor, it can conflict with the non-judgemental ethos of social work:

> ***The older I get the less I want to kind of sit in judgement on anyone's performance and I think I am a bit grey and wishy-washy, compared to***

how I used to be and I have to think quite a bit about challenging now, although it is something I have always valued for myself.
(Supervisor, Health)

As I was writing up this data, it occurred to me that it would be valuable stimulus material for a discussion about student supervisor's roles at a training day. Participants' views about the role of challenge in student supervision are interesting given what adult learning theorists such as Brookfield (1986) have to say about adult learners needing to be challenged to step outside of their comfort zone and engage in a reexamination of themselves and/or previously unchallenged norms. If we are to develop a critical reflective practicum which will equip students for the "uncertainty, uniqueness, instability and value conflict" (Schön, 1983: 49) of contemporary social work practice, fieldwork supervisors need to be encouraged to look at how to develop critical reflectivity in their students, which surely must include an ability to frame a constructive challenge.

Manager

Fisher (1990) reports on some research in Britain into practice teachers' ideas about the key functions of the practice teacher role, which were identified as manager, enabler and assessor. In this research while participants certainly acknowledged their responsibility to organise the placement in terms of planning an orientation for the student and so on, they also expressed discomfort with the manager role. For example, this response is typical:

I don't sit easily with the manager's label. If you had put manager of anything else other than the placement, then I wouldn't have accepted it at all.
(Supervisor, Health)

For Fisher (1990: 10) "as a manager the practice teacher must monitor the student's work in order to protect clients and to ensure that the agency's responsibilities are being fulfilled". I am sure that participants in this research would agree that they do in fact take on the management role outlined in the above quotation. I suspect that the dislike of the term manager may reflect the way respondents have interpreted the role. As the management hierarchy within social service organisations is often distrusted by social workers for implementing restructuring which is not in the interests of either clients or workers, supervisors may have negative associations with the title of manager.

Advocate

While some supervisors made comments that they were not listened to by the social work programme when they were unhappy about aspects of a student's performance, at other times, supervisors felt constrained in their ability to be an advocate for the student in terms of relationships with the education and training institution. For example one supervisor stated:

> ***Perhaps the one that is a role that concerns me the most that I don't often feel that I have the real opportunity to do, is to be advocate for the student. I am thinking in terms of being able to feel that what I have said has been heard by*** *X* (name of university) ***in terms of advocating for student needs.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

Another supervisor commented that:

> ***I guess most of the advocacy has been within the agency and once or twice to advocate for students through the assessment processes at*** *X* (name of university). ***There was one student who I knew quite well who was doing another placement and got a failure. The university was going to fail. I knew something about this student's circumstances and something about the politics of the agency, so occasionally I have been a strong advocate, so that is quite a key role at times in terms of the vulnerability or the relative powerlessness of the student role.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

The situation described by this supervisor is complicated by the fact that as I understand it, he was not directly involved with the placement. However, his comments highlight some of the issues around assessment and whose judgement is listened to which will be discussed shortly. In Britain, the practice teacher's judgement as to whether the student passes or fails the placement cannot be overruled by the education and training institution (P. Blackman, personal communication, 7th April 1998). Whereas in the social work programme which I am familiar with, the supervisor recommends a pass, fail or incomplete grade for the placement, but the university confirms the grade and thus has the power to overrule the supervisor. However, before turning to assessment, the next section further explores some of the difficulties participants expressed with the teaching role.

Teacher

With regard to the teaching component to the fieldwork supervisor's role, Fortune and Abramson (1993); Bogo and Power (1992) and Walker, McCarthy, Morgan and Timms (1995) all report that fieldwork teachers feel least confident about teaching and often do not have knowledge about how adults learn best. In the focus group meetings, approximately half of the respondents who answered a question about which of the roles they felt prepared to take on, indicated that they felt comfortable in taking on a teaching role. As social workers are not trained to teach, this surprised me and I was interested in following up with the individual interviewees, how they had learned about teaching. I found that while respondents stated that they felt prepared to take on the teaching aspect of placement supervision, this did not necessarily mean that they had an understanding and knowledge of adult learning processes or any formal training in this aspect of their role, which indicates an area where further preparation for fieldwork supervisors may be needed.

The lack of comfort with the teaching component of placement supervision also seems to be related to the conceptions held of the teaching role by participants, as discussed earlier in the section on participants' preferred job title. Some respondents thought that a teacher is the "expert", or that teaching implies a "banking model" of education. For example one supervisor stated that:

> ***I see teachers as being able to look at general material and draw out almost in a hierarchical way the information contained and present it in a simple and logical way and I never see myself in that, I have resisted teaching for all my life.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

This of course raises the question about what kind of educational theories and methods supervisors are drawing on in helping students to learn about social work practice as discussed in the chapter on theories, concepts and themes. As this research and other studies have shown, generally fieldwork supervisors do not receive any preparation for teaching about practice, and therefore tend to select on an ad hoc basis content and methods based on "how they were taught; what they think will be most effective; what fits with their practice orientation; what suits the organisation's culture; and what will get the job done" (Rogers and McDonald, 1995: 42). From their research, Rogers and McDonald (1995: 60) concluded that "field instructors need ongoing assistance to stay on an educational track with their students, rather than fall into the day to day exigencies of agency life which diminishes the primacy of the educational experience. Thus they need to be specially prepared to be field instructors".

Three participants in my research most clearly articulated a model of learning and teaching which they used in their supervision of students[3] and of these interviewees, two had been student unit supervisors and therefore received much more training from and contact with an educational setting. Their responses showed that they had developed teaching methods which were far removed from a banking model of education and which included practical and critical reflectivity and an understanding of adult learning processes which I have argued are necessary for preparing students for the complexities of social work practice [4]. For example one respondent (an ex student unit supervisor) described his model of teaching:

> ***I have a model that I call my Einsteinian model. It is based on students having a significant experience and then reflecting on that experience, and they can do that individually or as a group - reflect on their personal intuitions and feelings, what that experience actually means to them as a person and to link it very strongly with themselves and then ask them what sorts of conceptual frameworks or ideas make sense of both the experience and their personal perceptions and where they are at with that..... Often you get this "aha" sort of experience and you get this holographic sort of thing where you see the student suddenly go "ping".***
>
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

This supervisor is describing two of the stages of Kolb's learning cycle and no doubt, he would go on to complete the cycle by enabling the student to experiment, problem solve, explore alternatives and develop action strategies which are then implemented in practice, based on the insight gained into the situation. The research findings show that fieldwork supervisors recognise that the ability to teach about practice requires the ability to conceptualise your own practice and to assist students to do likewise. While some supervisors have developed their own models of teaching and learning through taking on the tasks of student supervision, it is argued that if supervisors received more training in understanding adult learning processes, this would enhance their ability to facilitate learning from experience.

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[3] This is not to say that the other participants did not have a model of learning and teaching, simply that in the course of their interview, they did not volunteer this information, possibly because I did not ask them directly about this.

[4] See Chapter Three and Chapter Eight.

Assessor

With regard to the assessor role, Heycox, Hughes and Eisenberg (1994) and Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes (1996) found that for the social worker in the role of fieldwork supervisor, the task of grading student performance conflicts with their other roles such as enabler and supporter of the student. On the basis on their research with fieldwork teachers, Heycox, Hughes and Eisenberg (1994, 1996) found many reasons why the assessment of the student's performance in the placement can be problematical for supervisors, especially if the student's performance is perceived as "marginal" in some respects. Firstly, there is evidence that the assessment criteria provided by the university may not be specific enough and that supervisors are unclear what standards the student is supposed to have achieved by the end of the placement. Secondly, there is evidence that fieldwork supervisors "use their own personal standards as much as they use the official university ones" (Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes, 1996: 38). Thirdly, as already mentioned, fieldwork supervisors can experience role conflict between their role as assessor of the student's performance and their roles as supporter and enabler of the student's development. Fourthly, a lack of training about assessment may leave the supervisor feeling unclear and lacking in confidence about what is required, especially in the case of a marginal student. Fifthly, where problems have arisen with regard to the student's performance on the placement, the supervisor may worry about how a negative assessment will affect the supervisory relationship with the student and/or how raising concerns about the student will reflect on the supervisor's performance and be interpreted as a failure on their part (Heycox et al, 1994: 8).

As well as the specific issues raised above, participants in this research expressed a general concern that assessment can get in the way of a student's learning, which perhaps reflects that some supervisors have a view of assessment as something which is done "to", rather than "with", the student. One participant expressed the dilemmas he feels about assessment and also offered some suggestions as to how he resolved them:

> ***... in an ideal world I would have liked that side of it (assessment) to be put to one side and like this is your opportunity to learn, don't worry about the other side of it, in terms of being assessed. I think sometimes in terms of peoples' learning, assessment gets in the way. I also understand why it is valuable ...unless something is radically wrong, I let the student know pretty early what I am thinking in terms of how they are going. Sometimes if I am satisfied having directly observed them do some work and what they have produced, I will say***

to them "look you don't need to worry about the pass part of this, let's get on and do some learning".
(Supervisor, Community Corrections)

Several supervisors made the point that while they may dislike the assessor role, they recognise that is an important part of their task as a student supervisor:

It may not be my favourite role but I think it is part of the job and it should be helpful to the student. So as I see it, if you are there to be a supervisor reporting back to the teaching body, that is part of the job and it should be a helpful part of the job.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Two supervisors made the important point that assessment needs to be an ongoing process throughout the placement, rather than trying to tie it all together at the end, which mirrors the findings of other studies (Fisher, 1990; Shardlow and Doel, 1993; Rogers and McDonald, 1995). It is likely that if that happens some common errors of assessment can creep in. Kadushin (1976, cited in Australian Association for Social Work and Welfare Education; Handbook for Field Educators in Social Work and Welfare Education, 1991: 121-122) describes some of the potential for error which can creep into assessments as follows:- the error of central tendency (if in doubt rate as fair or average); the halo effect (form an overall judgement and then see all performance as consistent with this); the contrast error (compare the student with someone else, for example a previous student, as the standard of expected performance); the leniency bias (a reluctance to evaluate negatively because it conflicts with the non-judgemental ethos of social work); and finally the recency bias (where a specific and often recent incident over influences the assessment). The Field Education Handbook Project group (1991: 122) added to Kadushin's list of common errors of assessment, "situations when: anticipated or hoped for developments are treated as actual developments; likes and dislikes are confused with performance; agreement or compromise is substituted for evaluation; personal growth is equated with competence; and effort and motivation are equated with competence".

If supervisors received more specific training in assessment processes, it is likely that their ability to recognise these errors of assessment and their confidence in recommending that a student is, or is not, ready for practice would increase. Currently as Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes (1996: 35) point out, Australian studies show a failure rate for social work students of only 2% but the rate of concern about students' performance expressed by field educators in research studies is approximately five times greater. Presently it seems as if supervisors devise their own strategies to overcome some of the dilemmas outlined above. For example, one supervisor stated that:

Assessor is one of the key roles of student supervision and ...there should be a no surprise basis to that. One of the things I have done in terms of supervision of students is to do a written summary of the supervision session and either have that in a common place or photocopy it and give it to the student. Then at the beginning of the next session just to review it so that there is continuous learning and assessment.
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

Another supervisor offers some suggestions about why the final assessment report is hard to complete, which mirror some of the role conflicts described in the literature:

I think often supervisors have difficulty with assessment in giving something that is adequate for the student, yet doesn't feel like taking up too much time. I think they are a little uncomfortable sometimes about getting the right words too, and it does take time and it takes more time if you are new. I have been doing it for so long that I have worked it out, but I know that it is a block for a lot of "would-be" supervisors, is that final assessment... I think it (the difficulty about assessment) ***is partly putting yourself on the line and critiquing the work enough, but so there is a balance between not saying they are wonderful and lovely and yet not upsetting, or being challenging enough without being too critical. So getting that balance really and getting the words right because you know that they*** (the students) ***are good enough but when someone else*** (at the university) ***reads it,*** (the assessment report) ***something may be lost in the interpretation, I think.***
(Supervisor, Health)

Another supervisor makes the important point that assessment ought to be about self-monitoring and because this is how the team she works for operates, it is a process of assessment she tries to model for students. She concluded that:

Hopefully if a student can role model themselves on practitioners who are similarly self-assessing themselves, they can take that into their own practice. That self-assessment is fundamental in terms of the safety of clients.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

What this respondent is promoting is similar to a recommendation by Cooper (1995a: 13) for a move in all aspects of social work education "from teacher directed to student

directed learning, and assisting students to develop judgements about their own work through self-assessment and peer assessment".[5]

The final issue in relation to assessment which was of concern to participants in this research was the question of how much support will be forthcoming from their agencies and from the social work programme if the placement runs into difficulties. As this relates to relationships within agencies and with educational institutions, it will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The presentation of the research findings has begun at the personal level, as fieldwork supervisors have reflected on their own experiences of student supervision and expressed their views about what makes a good student supervisor. It has been argued that the views of fieldwork supervisors presented in this chapter illustrate the altruistic nature of field placement provision. I have argued that there are aspects of partnership and reciprocity in the "goodwill" model of placement provision which it is important not to lose sight of, in the current ethos of market forces and the commodification of relationships (Uttley, 1994; Dominelli, 1996, 1997b).

Personal and structural issues in working cross-culturally have been identified and I have argued that the whole area of cultural issues in student supervision and culturally appropriate models of fieldwork and assessment needs further research. The data presented in this chapter begins to illuminate the research question about how fieldwork supervisors conceptualise their role and the aspects of student supervision which they feel most prepared and least prepared to undertake. The findings support the contention that fieldwork supervisors would benefit from some additional preparation and training, especially with regard to two areas which they identify as challenging, that is to say teaching and assessment. The next chapter begins to investigate the research question about the support and training currently offered to the fieldwork supervisors who participated in this research, both from their agencies and from education and training institutions. It also addresses the question about additional support and training student supervisors would like to receive.

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[5] Cooper (1995b) develops these ideas further in a paper presented to the Asia-Pacific Regional Social Services Conference in November 1995, entitled "Students as Collaborative Learners".

CHAPTER SIX

SUPPORT FOR FIELDWORK SUPERVISORS - WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

"A significant development of practice teaching is likely to depend upon the extent to which we can grasp the twin nettles of selection/accreditation and resourcing practice teachers within agencies".

Fisher, T. (1990: 9)

Introduction

This chapter looks at how the fieldwork supervisors who participated in this research are involved in a network of relationships around placements both within their agencies and with education and training institutions. It explores their perspectives of how these relationships impact on their task. The ways in which agencies are supportive of social workers who take students on placements are considered as well as additional support which fieldwork supervisors would like to receive from their agencies with regard to student placements. Similarly in looking at relationships with education and training institutions, support and training which is received and appreciated by fieldwork supervisors is explored, as well as additional support which would improve cooperation and liaison between agencies and social work courses. In the quotation which opened Chapter Two, Triseliotis and Marsh (1990: 1) stated that in order to prepare students for social work practice, firstly we have to define what is competent practice and secondly, we have to work out how "to teach it successfully in the classroom and in the field". The previous chapter presented participants' views on some of the core qualities of good student supervision and the myriad of roles taken on by fieldwork supervisors, thus contributing to a definition of the basis for competence in practice teaching in fieldwork education (which begins to address the statement by Triselotis and Marsh). However, in order for fieldwork supervisors to offer a quality learning experience to students, in addition to these core attributes, they need recognition, support and resources both from their own agencies and from education and training institutions. This chapter provides an overview of the current situation in Aotearoa/New Zealand with regard to who takes

responsibility for providing fieldwork supervisors with support and training and the kinds of support which are offered.

Agency Views About Student Placements

As Beddoe and Worrall (1997a: 21) point out "New Zealand social services have undergone considerable change over the past decade. An institutional model of social welfare has been replaced by a contracting model in which managerialist[1] policies prevail". Kelsey (1993) in New Zealand, Rees (1995) in Australia and Dominelli (1996, 1997) in Britain have all documented the human costs of the economic rationalist ideology and values which underpin managerialism. With regard to welfare, these policies advocate cutting back on the areas of responsibility of the State and relying instead on private providers, contracting to the voluntary sector and on families, for the provision of what would previously have been regarded as essential social services. The difficulties around the provision of fieldwork placements for social work students in Aotearoa/New Zealand are, as Beddoe and Worrall (1997a, 1997b) state, symptomatic of what is happening to both social service agencies and educational institutions as the welfare state is systematically restructured and some would say dismantled. As one of the respondents in this research commented:

> ***In the current economic climate, there is an anti social work bias, and if agencies are getting rid of that actual role, then how do you get students to have an actual social work placement?***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

How these macro changes are impacting at an agency level both on the willingness to offer placements and on the nature of the placements being offered is the focus of the first group of responses which look at what supervisors thought influenced their agencies' decisions to offer or not to offer student placements. Not surprisingly the impact of restructuring is felt across all sectors, Children Young Persons and Families Service, Health, Community Corrections and Voluntary agencies. For example, a respondent who manages a Child and Family Support Service stated:

> ***The year before last, X*** (name ofuniversity) ***asked us to take a student and I said no because we were in a very insecure funding situation and crises going on and were we going to exist? I said "no, I don't think its appropriate". Then last year when we were better off but not a lot better off, I felt this is real life for a student so they might as well***

[1] Rees (1995:15-26) provides a good overview and critique of the rise of managerialism, its key features and its relationship to economic rationalist values and ideology in a book he co-edited with Rodley, entitled *The Human Costs of Managerialism.*

come and experience that and so that is the reason why we had a student again this year.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Because fieldwork is time consuming and does not bring any funding into the agency, it is seen as expendable when organisations are being forced to cut costs, as the above comment illustrates. It may also be an accurate perception that when the agency is in crisis, it would not be able to offer the student a high quality learning experience, as another supervisor commented:

Sometimes a choice has been made not to take a student because as a team we haven't felt that this has been an environment that would be particularly conducive to the student's positive learning.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

The effects of restructuring on the provision of student placements have been particularly felt in the health sector. Several supervisors in health commented firstly, about the willingness to offer a placement at all and secondly, about how the restructuring in health has changed the nature of the work which can be given to a student. The following responses illustrate the effect of restructuring in the health sector on the number of placements offered:

We have seen an enormous growth in the number of students seeking placements at the same time as (social work) ***departments have had to withdraw from certain services and reduce the number of staff, so I think it is harder these days to get a placement.***
(Supervisor, Health)

...as departments aren't being funded adequately, people are feeling less and less inclined to have students because you are maybe doing much more work that you were doing four years ago and it is one more thing to supervise a student that you don't want to bother with.
(Supervisor, Health)

Secondly, supervisors commented on changes in the nature of the work offered to students as a result of restructuring. For example, one group participant stated:

As restructuring continues, generic health social work appears to be less valued, hence leading to a reduction of emphasis on comprehensive training.
(Group Participant)

Another individual interviewee commented:

> ***There are some areas where our services are being purchased according to contracts that come from the Regional Health Authority and it isn't like a few years earlier where we were a fully funded department of the hospital and we would stand up to anybody and say that this is the job that social workers do and our social work student is going to do such and such. It has changed in that social work services are only purchased for specific areas of work, so you have to be that much more careful with students. It might not be very satisfying for them either. (Supervisor, Health)***

These supervisors' comments illustrate a point made by Beddoe and Worrall (1997a) about what is happening to social work education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. They suggest that "agencies are questioning the relevance of a broad social work education with a focus on social problems, social policy and political economy when current practice is often defined in technical terms" (Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a: 24). Dominelli (1997b: 3) makes the same point in the British context, arguing that what is happening to social work education is symptomatic of "the transformation of higher education from a critical activity to short term training for the specific requirements of the labour market". Thus there is a tension for students in terms of what they are learning on their courses and the kinds of tasks and activities they may become involved in on their fieldwork placements. As the second individual respondent commented, because in her working life, she has experienced a more holistic conceptualisation of social work, she can see how much the social work role in health has been fragmented. She suggests that it may be that much harder for students to appreciate the fragmentation which has occurred in health social work if they only experience a Service Coordination/ Care Management model in health and disability services on their placements. As she put it:

> ***... in the work that one did with the Service Team*** (she is talking here about how health social work has been reorganised into multi-disciplinary service teams), ***you would do what they asked you to do but in the process you would change it to take a holistic view towards social work. You couldn't always trust that students could do that. (Supervisor, Health)***

I asked all of the individual interviewees if student supervision was included in their job descriptions, as I saw this as one indicator of the value the organisation placed on placement provision. Fieldwork supervision was **not** included in job descriptions, with the exception of two participants and then only when they had been Student Unit Supervisors. One participant in Community Corrections spoke about how, since the

disappearance of Student Units in his organisation, there is no resourcing for student placements. He blamed a lack of placement offers on:

> ***Agency policy in terms of what is required of workers and the time to actually deliver the outputs. If there are a lot of agency demands you are re-prioritising to ensure a student is serviced and that is another matter.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

He also commented on the impact of the disestablishment of Student Units and how staff in his office had wanted to register a strong protest about the loss of the position of Student Unit supervisor:

> ***At one stage locally, because we had a Student Unit and that unit got disestablished, the local policy was that we wouldn't take students because we lost our unit, and we never got the position replaced.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

Other respondents made comments on more immediate and practical considerations with regard to offering or not offering a student placement, which are not necessarily connected to restructuring. For example:

> ***... a shortage of office space and the difficulties of having to share an office with the student; fitting another person's needs into the normal routine operating of the agency; and having the ability to offer the kind of work experiences that the student is looking for and therefore being able to meet his or her learning needs.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

A group participant indicates how a lack of resources acts as a disincentive to offering a placement:

> ***It*** (a student placement) ***doesn't seem like a high profile, endorsed agency function. There is no avenue to acquire the necessary resources, for example, accommodation. We supervisors feel guilty about the extra demand on clerical workers, cars and so on.***
> ***(Group Participant)***

However despite restructuring, as the responses in the next section on agency support for placements demonstrate, generally, once agencies have agreed to take on a student or students, there is a commitment to provide a positive experience and positive support for the student.

Ways in Which Agencies Are Supportive of Student Placements

Although with the disappearance of Student Unit supervisors, student supervision was not included in any of the participants' job descriptions, several supervisors made the point that their agency does not question the time spent with students. For example, one supervisor commented:

> ***There has never been any question of me spending too much time with students or "it is not in your job description and what are you doing this for". I guess credit to the agency for that in terms of being able to incorporate that*** (student supervision) ***in my performance and that has been recognised as an important contribution. So there has been some sort of formal recognition there, even though it hasn't been part of the job description.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Another supervisor made the point that her agency is still supportive of student placements in spite of the uncertainties caused by restructuring.

> ***I think they*** (staff) ***do see them*** (students) ***as being very much part of the Social Work Unit and are willing and supportive of them in most cases.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

While it is hard to generalise, it does seem that where educational institutions have developed a relationship with a field setting over a long period of time, these organisations are more likely to continue to offer placements even in difficult times of change and uncertainty. Once agencies have agreed to take on a student, generally supervisors found that they were supported in terms of any resources needed for the placement, for example, pens, diaries, access for the student to an agency vehicle, a desk and a phone, support from administrative staff and so on. Students were also supported and valued in other ways too, for example this comment from a voluntary agency supervisor:

> ***In my experience the organisation has always been respectful and very keen to meet with students and impart knowledge and thoughts and ideas. They have always welcomed students in terms of their ideas too, for example, in what do you think of this issue, what are you learning about, tell me, and that is from the administration staff as well.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

One of the drawbacks of a field setting model of placement provision identified in the literature is that all of the responsibility for the student tends to fall on one person (Thompson and Marsh, 1991; Walker et al, 1995; Bogo and Globerman, 1995; Cooper, 1995a). Respondents in this research were firmly convinced of the necessity and benefits of making student placements a team responsibility and stressed that when you are working in multi-disciplinary settings, it is very important that other disciplines are supportive and willing to become involved with social work students. On the positive side, this appeared to be happening. From the voluntary sector, one respondent stated that:

> ***So in terms of a student it is seen to be a team effort and that is quite deliberate on our part too because it enables the student to benefit in the experience of many different ways of working and different perspectives.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

Similarly, in a mental health setting, one supervisor commented that all members of the multi-disciplinary team:

> ***...spend some time with the students, even working alongside them, doing assessments with them, taking them on school visits, crisis calls sometimes. There is a climate of support for students, an appreciation of the work they can do.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Another supervisor stated that in her agency, a Child and Adolescent Mental Health service, they have a policy that the team as a whole has to give permission for a student to come on placement. The benefits of this are that all the team then support the student in various ways. She continues:

> ***They would show support by allowing the student to observe their work, by involving them in activities that they are involved in, such as inviting them along to the groups that we run here. They give permission, if you like, for the student to be involved in all the allocation meetings where we allocate referrals. They support them coming along to in-service training.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

How might agencies be more supportive of student placements?

The additional support that supervisors would have liked to receive from their agencies is grouped under the headings of workload relief while the student is on placement; time off

for training that contributes to working with students; support from the higher echelons of management and more tangible rewards for supervising students. The findings in this research about the additional support which would be valuable, are similar to the views of field educators in other published studies (Syson and Baginsky, 1981; Thompson and Marsh, 1991; Walker et al, 1995), described in Chapter Two.

Workload Relief

All of the participants across all of the practice settings, emphasised that taking on a student has a significant effect on their own workload and that placements require a significant time commitment from the supervisor for which no workload relief is forthcoming. These are some typical responses to the question about workload relief:

> ***Good heavens no! You get more work because you have to supervise the students doing the other work. What we sometimes do is pick up extra I think, or a different type of work that can be given to students. We might take on a family that I might not normally have picked up because it creates something that the student can benefit from working with.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

> ***Workload relief, that never seems to work out because what happens is when we talk about having a student and I or somebody else will say "well I'm pleased that you guys all support this person coming and I will take prime responsibility for them day-to day"- and the next thing that is said, "well you are going to need a little bit of relief from your caseload aren't you". So we all sit around and nod and say yes, the reality is that it doesn't really happen.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

In answer to the question about what additional support the agency could provide, a supervisor in Children Young Persons and their Families Service said:

> ***The key thing is workloads for supervisors. My agency has got to a major dysfunctional place in terms of stress on social workers and supervisors. If they*** (management) ***did a survey of staff who were on Prozac and tranquillisers, I think they would be very surprised, incredible stress and students have to come into that situation and be supervised by people who are under extraordinary stress. I think students are treated like new staff and probably students tend to get***

thrown in the deep end of dealing with child abuse in a way that is far from ideal.
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

Time for training related to student supervision

Not surprisingly, given the finding that placements are seen as external to the main work of the organisation, none of the agencies saw it as their responsibility to provide any training related specifically to student supervision. With regard to time off to attend training provided by the social work programme that related to a practitioner's work with students, the findings were that agencies are cutting back on study leave therefore social workers have to make some difficult choices about their training priorities. The extra workload involved in taking on a student often means that the supervisor cannot participate in training related to the placement because they are too busy, even if their agency would be supportive of their attendance. One supervisor had an interesting story about support from agency management for time off for training:

The CHE (Crown Health Enterprise) ***were fine about me going to the Supervisors Day at X*** (name of university), ***but when I applied for a car*** (to travel to the university), ***my Service Manager turned it down and said "we are not funding that, you can approach X*** (name of university)***because it is their student and it is really costing us a lot to maintain the student. We will give you the leave to go and we won't take if off your study leave, you can just go and any travel time we will give you time in lieu, but we are not funding a car".***
(Supervisor, Health)

This story is indicative of the tensions discussed in the research literature about who "owns" and therefore whose responsibility it is to resource training for fieldwork supervisors, as when this social worker telephoned the education and training institution to ask if they would fund her travel to the supervisor's training day, they also turned her down. The story also illustrates a point made by several respondents about how the support or lack of support from the higher echelons of management is significant in the provision or non provision of student placements.

Management Support for Placements

In a situation where the costs of everything in which the agency is involved have to be accounted for, several supervisors particularly in health, commented that direct and

indirect costs may increasingly influence the willingness to offer training for students. So while at the moment there are:

> ***No management restrictions to taking student placements, management are fine and happy with it*** (the provision of placements). ***There are unsaid feelings about costs involved, by that I mean most specifically my time, other peoples' time, realistically quite a bit of time is devoted to students on placement and that costs the company and money is a big issue in health care at the moment.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

I asked individual interviewees about management support for placements, as this had come through as an issue at the focus group meetings. For example this comment from a group member:

> ***Commitment to taking students depends on the manager and local agency culture. The commitment to taking students is most strong when there are a high proportion of qualified staff and more so if the manager has social work qualifications.***
> ***(Group Participant)***

It appears that where former social workers have moved up into management positions, there is generally more support for having social work students on placement, than is the case if someone with a management qualification but no social work training is put in charge of a service area. This mirrors concerns expressed by Uttley (1994) and Dominelli (1997b) about the impact on social service organisations of appointing managers whose qualifications are in the business arena, to the ways in which social work tasks are being defined. For example, a supervisor in health commented on how placement approval now has to go up through the management hierarchy which fortunately in her organisation are still supportive of student placements. Her comments also highlight the point made earlier, that if the agency is cost-cutting, from a management perspective, the provision of student placements is seen as expendable:

> ***I offer, then X*** (her immediate manager) ***agrees, but then it has to also go to people like Y*** (the overall manager for that service area, who is a qualified social worker) ***because now it is more and more a business. If there is any questioning then it could be that if I have got time to take a student, I don't need that number of hours to work, so we will cut back on her hours. Every dollar counts.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health).***

Some Crown Health Enterprises are seeking to charge training providers for placements, despite a decision by the Ministry of Health in 1993 that social work clinical training is "fiscally neutral" (see Chapter One). Managers' attitudes to placements are a very current issue in fieldwork. Beddoe and Worrall (1997a: 25) writing of the current experience with regard to fieldwork in Aotearoa/New Zealand comment that "fieldwork is not particularly valued or understood by the new wave of managers, nor does it attract any funding".

Several supervisors described the shift in attitudes in their organisations to student placements over the past two decades. As reported in Chapter One, from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s, the Department of Social Welfare was a strong supporter of placements for social work students. A respondent who is a supervisor in the Children Young Persons and Families Service contrasted this time period with the present situation where Student Units have been disestablished and the student field placement allowance discontinued because placements do not contribute in any way to the organisation's outputs. Similarly a respondent in the health sector commented:

> ***When I was a Student Unit Supervisor, students were regarded as a very important part of the department and were valued, more and more when*** (social work) ***departments are asked to take students, it is done with some reluctance because it is a pressure.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

The change in attitudes towards student placements is also apparent in Community Corrections where one supervisor commented that this agency is going to hit a crisis with its decision to employ Probation officers who don't have a level B social work qualification which in his opinion means that:

> ***The whole professional practice area in terms of social work in probation is hitting a crisis mode. I think it is a very difficult time for students to come into this organisation. I am not sure what the future holds for students in terms of this organisation and its ability to provide a constructive learning environment.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections).***

There will of course, always be regional variations with regard to support for student placements and national policies are always be subject to review, so the situation is constantly changing. However, the above comments about three key statutory providers of social services, show how the redesign of work practices to reduce professional autonomy and the replacement of professionally qualified workers with less qualified workers (which is part of the new managerialist agenda, as discussed by Uttley, 1994;

and Dominelli, 1997b) is having an impact on the willingness of agencies to involve themselves in professional training. One organisation does not even see it as necessary to recruit professionally trained social workers, while the others are willing to employ social work graduates but are significantly reducing their contributions to the professional training and development of social workers.

Preston-Shoot (1989: 6)) suggests that in negotiating placements, "practice teachers should consider the attitudes of colleagues and managers", as he argues that this will force discussion about "the implications of a placement on the practice teacher's time and other work" and lead to reaching some "consensus about the place of practice teaching in their setting". He proposes that not only should there be a contract between the practice teacher, student and education and training institution, there should also be a contractual agreement between the practice teacher and the agency which takes account of such things as "changes in the practice teacher's workload in order to accommodate the time required for student supervision, the nature of the work to be allocated to the student, allocation procedures and training/support for the practice teacher" (Preston-Shoot, 1989: 6). If implemented, his suggestions would begin to address many of the concerns raised by participants in this research about workload relief and agency support and recognition for taking on the task of supervising a practicum.

Incentives for taking students on placements

With regard to rewards for taking students on placements, one supervisor commented that there is no financial reward for supervising students and contrasted this with taking on staff supervision:

> ***Supervising staff - we can go away and do the training and get funded for that and we actually get paid extra for supervising staff, but not students.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

These findings mirror other studies (Walker et al, 1995) which found that as well as workload relief, and additional training, fieldwork supervisors would have appreciated tangible (usually financial) rewards from their agencies when they take on a student placement.

Relationships With Education and Training Institutions

This section looks at the relationships the fieldwork supervisors in this research have with education and training institutions. Firstly, with regard to the support and training

which is received and appreciated from the social work programmes and secondly, with regard to additional support and training, not currently received, which fieldwork supervisors felt would improve cooperation and liaison with education and training institutions.

Support received from education and training institutions

The kinds of support which fieldwork supervisors were receiving from all of the social work programmes and which is valued are Placement Handbooks, newsletters, Supervisors' Training workshops, phone contact, personal contact and a letter of appreciation at the end of the placement. Two underlying themes in many of the responses are the importance of opportunities for networking and reciprocity between educational and agency settings and the importance of fieldwork supervisors feeling respected, appreciated and listened to by the education and training institutions. For example one supervisor stated:

> ***Those seminars for supervisors let you keep up to date with what is being taught on the courses. ...The opportunity to discuss issues around student supervision and share experiences that is really important and then to have some learning input. I don't think it necessarily has to be around supervision itself, but some sort of structured input so the supervisors feel that they are being cared for and respected and given something back for work that they put in.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

The same supervisor actually spelt out a direct link between education and training institutions keeping up networks and agency willingness to offer placements:

> ***The university keeping its contacts with the agency is a very important part of keeping agencies supportive of students and the university has helped (the agency) out several times by providing training for agency staff.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Several supervisors emphasised the importance of personal contact, which occurs through training seminars and visits to the placement by a staff member from the education and training institution. With regard to pre-placement organisation, the value of personal contact was reinforced by one supervisor's story about how the student was introduced to the agency:

X's (name of the student) ***tutor from the college came at the pre-placement stage to introduce her and that came over very well because that was a personal contact and we sat around and she met all the staff as well as X meeting all the staff, so that was a very good bonding process. There was a nice sense of the tutor bringing the student and sort of saying "well this is the student that I am responsible for. Here she is, be responsible for her too".***
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

The amount of personal contact between the education and training institution and agencies will be dependent on the numbers of students in the programme. In order for more personal contact between settings to occur in programmes with large numbers of students, support for students undertaking the fieldwork component of their course would need to be a shared responsibility amongst all staff in the social work department. Whereas at present, most educational and training institutions make fieldwork the responsibility of one or two staff members.

Another supervisor thought that the training seminars provided by the education and training institution offered the opportunity for building relationships between fieldwork supervisors and staff from the social work programme. She stated:

Probably one of the most valuable things in terms of training that has been offered by the institution is being able to put faces to names and that whole network and to personalise the institution and I'm sure its a two-way thing too.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Participants appreciated receiving feedback from the education and training institution on their assessments. A couple of supervisors commented that they had heard nothing back from the social work programme after the placement ended and therefore they were left wondering if they had done a good job. By giving feedback, the social work programme is recognising and valuing the work that has been put in by the fieldwork supervisor, as one supervisor indicated, when she said:

I like feedback on assessments, that is really good. I remember last time receiving a letter which commented quite specifically on my assessment and that was really good. I like that. I don't like blanket letters. I don't like the feeling that somebody has said the same thing to everybody, so I liked that this person pinpointed some things and I thought this is good, they have read it thoroughly.

She contrasted this with a time when:

I have had a student where as part of the assessment, we videotaped some initial interviews that the student had done and they were sent in as well as the assessment document. We didn't receive feedback in regard to those, I wasn't sure if somebody actually looked at them or not and to me they were quite important. I really like to have feedback about my assessment.
(Supervisor, Health)

Other examples of ways in which fieldwork supervisors felt recognised and appreciated varied from course to course, but included access to the university library and a reduction in course fees if the supervisor was taking a paper at the same educational institution.

Support If Things Go Wrong With A Placement

If things go wrong with the placement, then supervisors look for support from the liaison person from the education and training institution. A study by Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes (1996: 36) found that field educators perceived the university staff liaison person as a "consultant to the student and monitor of their progress, rather than as a consultant to themselves". Two respondents in this research recounted difficult experiences where the university liaison person had been very helpful to them and had definitely worked with them as well as the student, whereas another respondent recounted a story of feeling unsupported and frustrated with the social work programme she was dealing with. With regard to the positive experiences, one supervisor had the following to say:

... If you get into a fix with a student in terms of having to fail them or challenge them you really need support to do that unless you are on very clear ground, unless they have really stuffed it up and it is very clear. ...with the student who I think, I was trying to challenge about her value system. She was a very strong religious person and I was trying to sort out where religion came or didn't come into social work and I think that I had a bit too much of myself in that and the student went to Massey and the liaison person came out and had a session with me, with both of us and I could see that I was hooked in there as much as the student was, and so sort of having X (the liaison person) ***come in and talk about what the issues were, we sorted that through.***
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

With regard to a negative experience, another supervisor commented that:

> ***One of the biggest negatives I think in my experience of supervising students is that the universities are sometimes poor at being accountable while the students are on placement. In my experience with the students on placement, the university basically leaves it to the supervisor. ...I think there is a lot of onus being put on to the fieldwork practitioner as to whether a student makes it or breaks it in terms of her training. In the five students that I have had on placement, there has been a huge variance in ability to be able to relate what they are learning in a classroom to the reality of the fieldwork. I think in that respect there is a lot more, in terms of the university that I have particularly had contact with that needs to be done in preparing a student for placement and having respect for the supervisor. (Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

She comments on a particular instance where she was not the day to day supervisor, but was part of the team supporting the student placement and a situation arose where there was some doubt from the agency as to whether the student ought to graduate. As a observer of that situation, she felt that:

> ***Often it would appear that tutors are very busy and their aim is to not find difficulties but to whitewash the actual transaction. (Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

In summary, where difficulties are experienced on a placement, fieldwork supervisors appreciate a staff member from the social work programme spending time with them and processing how the placement is working out for the supervisor, not just discussing how the student is performing and what needs to be done about the student.

Supervisors also made comments about the importance of the amount of resources put into fieldwork education by the education and training institutions and the importance of having a position or positions dedicated to fieldwork at the university[2]. For example one participant stated:

> ***Placement Coordinators are key roles if student placements are to be regarded as important and there has to be the resources put into that. (Supervisor, CYPFS)***

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[2] Chapter Eight which looks at the viability of the suggestions for improvements to the current set of arrangements around fieldwork education in social work made by the fieldwork supervisors in this research, explains how the way in which the practicum in social work is funded in Aotearoa/New Zealand, means that fieldwork papers are grossly under-resourced.

How could relationships between education and training institutions and fieldwork supervisors be improved?

The final section in this chapter looks at what respondents had to say about how relationships with educational institutions could be improved under the headings of pre-placement planning; more support for new agencies and new fieldwork supervisors; responses to requests for assistance with the placement; peer support for fieldwork supervisors and training needs.

Pre-Placement Planning

The first area that supervisors made a lot of comments about was pre-placement selection and matching processes. Supervisors are frustrated by what they perceive to be a lack of coordination amongst education and training institutions over requests for placements. This had been raised as a current issue in fieldwork education in the focus group meetings. Group participants had suggested that education and training institutions stagger placements so they are not all looking at the same time and that social work programmes come to some agreement about territories so agencies are not pressured by several institutions and several students (see Appendix B). Participants in the individual interviews were also concerned about this issue. One supervisor commented that:

> ***I found it very irritating in the last couple of years to be rung by three different tutors at X*** (name of university) ***and maybe two different tutors from Y*** (name of university) ***asking me for a placement and having to say the same thing and maybe I have already taken one.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

When asked what might help this situation, she stated:

> ***I think it would really help if the training institutions could co-operate with each other, to say that we would like two placements at CYPFS, three at the hospital whatever, or, if you are going to approach Porirua CYPFS for a placement, we won't, or something like that - to have a more coordinated approach.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

As Beddoe and Worrall (1997a) comment, there are two possible responses from education and training institutions, one which mirrors the market model of competing with other courses for placements and doing deals with agencies, or a more collaborative approach over both requests for placements and the provision of training for fieldwork

supervisors. However, they question whether a collaborative approach will be sustainable with for example almost 500 social work students needing fieldwork placements in the Greater Auckland region alone. National programmes which place students all over the country, would have to negotiate with all of the other established and developing university based courses and with the existing and developing courses based in colleges and polytechnics, a seemingly impossible task from my perspective as a Placement Coordinator for a national programme! Some countries have developed either nationally or regionally based clearing houses for social work placements. Lindsay (1996) reports on one such development amongst Schools of Social Work in Melbourne, Australia. It would seem that regional clearing houses, while not without pitfalls, are more workable than national clearing houses.

Supervisors do not like being put under pressure to take a student with very little notice, a finding which is mirrored in research with practice teachers in other countries. For example, on the basis of research with practice teachers in Britain, Preston-Shoot (1989: 5) comments that "a placement is a major commitment and should not be a forced choice". One supervisor in this research felt like she was being emotionally blackmailed to offer a placement:

> ***We have had the experience of being asked a week before we are supposed to take the student and being told "you are the only place left, we didn't want to ring you, but you are the only one we know that can do this". ...I don't think that it is okay to put a student supervisor in that kind of position. It is not conducive to co-operation. Students don't like to be on a placement where "well, I've been dumped here because there is nowhere else for me". Supervisors don't like to feel "well, I've been used again".***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

One supervisor in this research told me a story about running around trying to find another placement for a student who had travelled some distance for a placement interview at their agency which was not the kind of placement he was looking for:

> ***We have had an experience here as a team in saying look this doesn't seem to be a match and feeling really, really lousy about that. ...and a lot of extra work mopping up both sides and making sure we felt okay about the fact that we were upfront in saying "this doesn't seem right" and the student being mopped up by saying "it isn't that you are not okay, but this isn't the right place for you". So I think the more profile stuff that you can do on both sides, in terms of the organisation offering a placement and the student putting themselves forward and***

> ***saying I'd like this type of placement. ...there could be a little bit more information before people make that face to face contact. It is very difficult, as a supervisor at a pre-placement interview to say no. (Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

This story suggests that placement selection is sometimes made on the basis of inadequate information about the kind of placement which the agency is offering.

Supervisors had some good ideas about how matching students and placements could be improved, for example by better profiles of the agency and placement being provided to the course and by better profiles of the student being provided to the agency, prior to an initial meeting between supervisor and student. Supervisors felt that this would help to avoid situations where there is not a match between the student's learning needs and what the placement agency can offer. Here the research findings are similar to the recommendations from a study by Preston-Shoot (1989: 6-8) and many social work programmes in Aotearoa/New Zealand have developed comprehensive profile forms both for agencies to send in and for students to send to agencies.

The same supervisor who in Chapter Five, talked about the importance of having a student who is keen, proactive and willing to get the most out of the placement experience, described how her agency has become increasingly selective about the students they will take on. She described their selection process for placements. She tells students:

> ***Write me a letter, tell me about yourself and tell me why you want the placement because we are not going to fling open the doors to any student. ...you better sell yourself to us because we want someone who is going to contribute something to this agency. We are not prepared to take just anybody because they can't find anything else, that is not a good enough reason to me. I need somebody in a placement who is committed to this area of work, who wants to be here, not because there is nothing better.*** (The next step in the selection process is) ***...to meet the students prior to taking them on and you pick out the ones that really impress and the ones who are less enthusiastic or who are going to take a little bit more work, I think.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

From my own experience as a Placement Coordinator, I have observed that the introduction of processes that are not dissimilar to a job selection interview are increasingly common in the allocation of placements across a wide range of field settings.

One of the reasons for this is that with the proliferation of social work programmes requiring placements, agencies can afford to be more choosy. However I also believe that with the pressures of restructuring, agencies want students who won't be a lot of work, as the above quote illustrates. I am not quite sure where this leaves those students who are less confident about selling themselves, less sure about what area of social work they are best suited to and so on.

At the focus group meetings the issue was raised about how much information is passed on to fieldwork supervisors by the social work programme prior to the placement. A group participant who had experienced some difficulties with a student on placement commented that:

> ***It would have been helpful if with one student I had concerns about, I could have had more information about her before I supervised her. Once I contacted X*** (name of the education and training institution) ***it seemed that they had similar concerns. This would have been good to know prior to the placement.***
> ***(Group Participant)***

Supervisors recognised that there were ethical and privacy issues around how much information is passed on to them about the student prior to the placement and who passes this information on, that is to say, the Placement Coordinator or the students themselves. Most supervisors took the view that if the course knew about something which was happening in the student's personal life that was likely to interfere with a placement, the course should be challenging the student and saying look how is this going to relate to your placement? However, supervisors also had stories about student issues which had affected placements which the social work programme hadn't known about, and issues which had arisen after the placement had begun, which they had to deal with. Supervisors also felt that students were entitled to better information about placement agencies. Participants who knew of students who had had bad placement experiences felt that the education and training institutions need better mechanisms for "weeding out" poor quality placements. For example one supervisor knew of a student who:

> ***...is on placement at a voluntary community agency at the moment, who doesn't even have a desk to sit at. Now as far as I am concerned that is really bad. Either the agency gets themselves into gear and improves things or that information should be available to the next student so that perhaps they can pick another placement.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

The sort of information, this supervisor thought should be made available to other students were things like:

> ***I did have supervision, but there was no orientation, those sort of basic things.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health).***

While most courses have some form of placement evaluations both from student and supervisor perspectives, which may give indications not to use an agency again, the situation is complicated in that agency personnel, organisational structure and activities can change rapidly and how long should an agency be excluded before the situation is re-evaluated? Equally one supervisor may prove unsuited to a particular student resulting in a very negative evaluation, but the same supervisor may suit another student very well. Thus the screening of supervisors and agencies is a complex process which will be explored further in the discussion on selection of student supervisors and quality assurance measures in fieldwork education in Chapter Seven.

In summary then, cooperation between agencies and education and training institutions is a difficult area in fieldwork education because to a large extent, as the British study by Thompson and Marsh (1991: 25) revealed, placements are seen by the field setting as "a service to courses" and not "as a role which is close to the central core of agency function", as indicated by this comment from a participant in this research:

> ***I think that the placement people at X*** (name of university) ***have tried really hard to give us what we want and have certainly asked us what we want. I don't know that they get too many answers because for me I haven't got time to do this and put it to the bottom of the pile.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Similarly, in Canada, Bogo and Globerman (1995: 188-191) point out that under a field setting model of placement provision "it is unlikely that a systematic and structured educational programme will be developed by the (field) setting"; that there are "few opportunities for organized reciprocity between the (field) setting and the university"; and that this model "reinforces social workers' own independent commitment to social work field education". The research findings presented in this chapter reinforce some of the above comments by Bogo and Globerman.

As I have already argued, the preoccupation with internal agency restructuring and funding crises makes focusing on external partnerships for any activities which are seen as peripheral to the agency's core business, unlikely to have a high priority in the present

political and economic climate. Therefore at a structural level, as one supervisor commented:

> ***Getting agencies to get together and discuss things*** (he was referring to placements) ***that are common to them, with a common goal, is often difficult. Then to get them together with training providers to discuss them which again is a common goal, becomes even more difficult.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

With regard to the research question about the additional kinds of support and training they would like to receive from education and training institutions, the next area to be emphasised by participants in this research was more support for new agencies and new fieldwork supervisors.

Additional Support for New Agencies and New Supervisors

One supervisor told me about her experiences acting as a consultant supervisor for a student who was placed in an agency which had no social work graduates on the staff, was at some geographical distance from the education and training institution and unfamiliar with the course curriculum. She stated:

> ***They are fine about having a student but it was a last minute situation for various reasons and they are really lost. ...This agency has really struggled to get their act together*** (in relation to the student placement) ***because they are not familiar with the programme. ...I certainly think there is a real need for more contact between the university and agency for situations like this one I am talking about , where they have never had a student before and they just really don't know what they are doing and are muddling along really with it.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

As well as perceiving that the university ought to provide more support to new supervisors and agencies taking on a student for the first time, as a matter of course, not just if difficulties arose, this participant also thought that other fieldwork supervisors in the same region could provide a mentoring role for new supervisors.

Peer Support for Fieldwork Supervisors

Peer support for fieldwork supervisors within a region during the placement was seen as having benefits for both new and experienced fieldwork supervisors. One respondent sums up the benefits of peer support groups for supervisors during the placement:

We haven't got together with other supervisors which I think would be really good because there is a real discrepancy or variety in terms of supervisors' experience of having a placement. ...That could be a way that we could help each other out resolving some of these smaller matters too, that would perhaps just take picking up the phone and talking to a more experienced supervisor to maybe resolve things that arise on placement, any problems.
(Supervisor, Health)

This kind of peer support for fieldwork supervisors was built into the Student Unit model and one of the participants who had been a student unit supervisor, remembered meeting regularly with other student unit supervisors and how this had been a really supportive arrangement.

Responses to Requests for Assistance With The Placement

Positive and negative experiences of the support provided for fieldwork supervisors by the education and training institutions when a placement has run into difficulties, have been discussed earlier in this chapter. In this section, participants offer suggestions about ways in which the situation could be improved. When difficulties arise in a placement, supervisors want a *timely* response from the education and training institution. For example, one participant felt that the most important way of improving relationships with courses:

... is knowing that there is someone out at X (name of education and training institution) ***that you can contact and making sure that person is well aware of what is happening for you or for the student so that it is acted on as soon as possible and that is today.***
(Supervisor, Health)

Another supervisor commented that she could imagine that it could be isolating to be in an agency situated in a town some distance from the social work programme, in terms of getting support. She commented:

For our service, because it is right in Palmerston North, I don't think it is a problem (getting support), ***but I would imagine, if I worked in Invercargill, it might well be, I don't know how they*** (the agency and the training institution) ***would connect.***
(Supervisor, Health)

This comment reinforces the point that all participants have made about *the importance of personal contact* between themselves and the education and training courses, especially if the placement runs into difficulties. A quick response and a personal visit are obviously more difficult for nationally as opposed to regionally based programmes. If none of the staff of the social work programme are known to the fieldwork supervisor, they may well feel less confident about approaching the educational institution. As one respondent commented:

> ***things may get too far down the line before things are done about what is happening, which may not be positive.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Additional Training Needs

As well as comments about additional support which they would value from the educational settings, supervisors also had some thoughts about additional training which could be provided by the social work programmes. Some ideas about additional training needs had also come out of the focus group discussions. These were: training on specific areas which supervisors found difficult in relation to student placements, for example assessment; supervision training; topic related workshops presented by staff from the education and training institution; and ongoing training prior to and during the placement. These issues were also important to participants in the individual interviews. In both the group meetings and in the individual interviews, participants expressed the view that the education and training institutions ought to provide training in the community on some occasions, rather than always expecting fieldwork supervisors to travel to the university or polytechnic. In the individual interviews, several supervisors across a variety of practice settings, commented particularly on the need for more training in supervision for student supervisors. Some typical responses were:

> ***They*** (student supervisors) ***have to have supervision training definitely. I am horrified at the thought of anyone supervising who hasn't done any supervision training.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

> ***What I do think social work lacks is a more detailed look at what social work supervision is, whether it is a fortnight's course of 3 days or 2 days or whatever, so I think that is a big lack that I have certainly found for myself.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

I do think there is a need for supervision training
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

Probably it would be good if there was more training and realistically it would be better to be pre-placement and then something at the end of the placement to just de-brief supervisors and gain, while it is fresh in your mind, what were the benefits of supervising and how did it go for them.
(Supervisor, Community Corrections)

The last comment illustrates the point that courses often provide the opportunities for students to review and process their placement experiences, but do not offer a similar opportunity to fieldwork supervisors. If supervisors were participating in peer support groups throughout the time a student is on placement, the opportunity to de-brief from the placement experience would occur naturally. Supervisors also had thoughts about the kind of training that would be manageable for them which are discussed further in Chapter Seven in the section on the content and modes of delivery of training in practice teaching.

Conclusion

Earlier in this chapter and also in Chapter Two, I have argued that the debate about whose responsibility it is to support and train fieldwork supervisors, reflects an underlying and unresolved tension about the "ownership" of placement provision (Thompson and Marsh, 1991). The views of fieldwork supervisors which have been presented in this chapter offer suggestions about gaps in support and training which need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of fieldwork education in social work. Participants in this research also offer some positive solutions to some of the difficulties around placement provision which could be acted on by agencies and by education and training institutions. From agencies, participants would like:

- workload relief;
- study leave for training related to student placements;
- support and recognition from management for practice teaching.

From education and training institutions, participants would like:

- better coordination amongst social work programmes over requests for placements;
- better matching processes between students and placements;

- sufficient information about the student to enable the supervisor to work effectively with the student;
- additional support for agencies and supervisors taking on a student for the first time;
- peer support groups for fieldwork supervisors in a region during the placement;
- a timely response and personal contact with a liaison staff person from the social work programme if things go wrong in the placement;
- additional training.

However, as the quotation which opens this chapter suggests, progress in the development of practice teaching and in the support and training of fieldwork supervisors will come only when agencies and education and training institutions can reach some agreement about their respective responsibilities, particularly around the resourcing of student placements (Fisher, 1990). Preston-Shoot (1989) offers some useful suggestions about where different aspects of the responsibility for supporting fieldwork supervisors might lie. He argues that "the educational agency is ultimately responsible for the student's progress and for deciding the acceptability of potential practice teachers" (Preston-Shoot, 1989: 9). The educational setting is also responsible for preparing students and practice teachers for the placement. However, this does not let the agency off the hook, as according to Preston-Shoot (1989: 9) "the professional development and support of practice teachers is an agency obligation". The next chapter looks at the views of participants in this research about the selection and accreditation of fieldwork supervisors, training for practice teaching and quality assurance measures in field education in social work in light of the wider political and economic context in which these issues are situated.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FIELDWORK IN CHANGING TIMES

"Fieldwork still remains the single most important factor in the preparation of social workers, yet it is the most vulnerable to mediocrity, lack of standardisation, poor quality controls, few resources and the myriad of other frailties so prevalent in the welfare and educational climates of today".

Slocombe, G. (1993: 49)

Introduction

This chapter explores with participants their views about how student supervisors ought to be selected, including a discussion of the potential for the introduction of more formal processes of accreditation by either a portfolio or training course. This leads on to a discussion of respondents' views about the need for additional preparation and training to take on the role of fieldwork supervisor and their ideas about the kinds of knowledge and skills which could be included in any further training for practice teaching. Finally, this chapter reports participants' views on the quality of fieldwork education in social work and their thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of different models of fieldwork education.

As discussed in Chapter Two, concerns that untrained fieldwork supervisors could be passing on poor attitudes and out of date practice to students (Freeman and Hansen, 1995), and concerns about how adequately social work graduates are prepared for practice by social work programmes (Gardiner, 1989) led in Britain to the introduction of a formal accreditation process for practice teachers (CCETSW, Paper 26.3, 1991) and the development of a curriculum for practice teaching. In Australia, similar concerns have led to the development of performance standards for field educators (Bourne and Cooper, 1996) and codes of conduct for students and field educators (Cooper and Forward, 1996). The aim of these quality control measures is about developing a pool of trained and competent practice teachers; increasing the number of placements offered and raising the status of fieldwork education. I was therefore interested to explore with participants in

this research, their views on the introduction of formal processes of selecting and accrediting student supervisors by means of either a portfolio or a course in practice teaching.[1]

Selection and Accreditation of Fieldwork Supervisors

The first part of this chapter presents participants' views on minimum standards for student supervisors; whether New Zealand needs to introduce more formal processes of selection and accreditation of fieldwork supervisors, how such a system might be resourced; and the advantages and disadvantages of selection and accreditation.

What are the minimum requirements for being a student supervisor?

Participants were asked their opinions about the minimum requirements for being a student supervisor. The bottom line for all participants is a social work qualification (degree or diploma) and a minimum amount of post-qualifying practice experience (three years). The following responses are typical of the reasons why supervisors thought that these were the minimum requirements. One supervisor reflected on her own experience of being supervised by someone who wasn't qualified:

> ***Prior to that I was supervised by somebody who was very caring and supportive but didn't have any academic qualification and no theoretical background and as a relatively new graduate that was frustrating for me. I don't think I grew over the two years of being supervised by a non-qualified person.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Another supervisor stated:

> ***I do think it is really important that students are supervised by trained people, however long somebody has been in the agency. It just gives the wrong messages to students to be supervised by people who are not trained.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Several participants expressed concern that with the shortage of practice placements for social work students, some social work programmes are dropping their standards. One respondent commented on the need for an absolute minimum of two to three years practice experience before taking on a student:

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[1] The British model described in Chapter Two.

> ***I am concerned that some students don't get the support they require and some social workers*** (who are being used by courses as supervisors of students) ***must only just be out of the degrees themselves.*** She continues: ***My concerns are that some of the supervisors are not trained supervisors really.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

In terms of minimum requirements for taking on the role of fieldwork supervisor, participants also felt that self-selection is important. For example this response from one participant:

> ***I think they*** (fieldwork supervisors) ***need to be committed to the task and I think it is the self-selection at the moment in terms of people being interested and having the energy for it, because people are being asked to do it*** (supervise students) ***in stressful circumstances.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

This reinforces the comments made in Chapter Five about the motivation for taking a student and the importance of voluntary participation in fieldwork supervision. Some supervisors quoted in Chapter Six, reported feeling pressured into taking a student on placement, usually by the social work programme. As Preston-Shoot (1989: 5) comments, "a placement is a major commitment and should not be a forced choice".

Another supervisor thought that it would be a good idea if it was compulsory for all new fieldwork supervisors to attend whatever training for supervisors the education and training institution provides. The social work programme she was familiar with makes attendance at their training day voluntary even for new supervisors.[2] Training in supervision was seen as desirable by most participants in this research, although they recognised that it would be difficult for education and training institutions to make this a compulsory requirement for student supervisors because of the shortage of placements and because of the lack of availability of courses in social work supervision.

Another supervisor was very definite that fieldwork supervisors ought to have supervision experience and training before taking on a student. He said:

> ***I think there is a need for a specific qualification or accreditation in terms of supervision per se. From there the student supervision***

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[2] In the present climate of a shortage of placements, it is difficult for education and training institutions to make attendance at supervisor's training days compulsory, particularly if no financial assistance is offered and the supervisor would have to travel some distance to attend.

> ***follows. Ideally students should have the best supervisors available and access to the best quality supervisors.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

In a similar vein another participant stated that for herself:

> ***I didn't want to supervise (a student) until I had done the full supervision training and I think that is right, I think that is needed. (Supervisor, Voluntary Agency).***

However she also recognised that courses were unable to insist on this because of the considerable pressure in finding enough placements.

The discussion about minimum standards for student supervisors, led to an exploration of the views of participants on the need for the introduction of more formal processes of accreditation for fieldwork supervisors, what these processes might be, who might meet the costs if a more formal system of accreditation for student supervisors were to be introduced and the advantages and disadvantages of introducing more formal processes of selection and accreditation of fieldwork supervisors.

Do we need more formal processes for accreditation of fieldwork supervisors?

Participants had mixed opinions about the need for more formal processes for accreditation of fieldwork supervisors. On the one hand, the proliferation of social work and counselling courses all needing practice placements can be seen as necessitating the introduction of better quality assurance measures and national performance standards for fieldwork supervisors. The lack of public confidence in social workers which was noted in the Mason Report (1992) and in the Coopers and Lybrand Report (1996) discussed in Chapter One, highlights the "uncertain professional standing of social work as an occupation in which registration does not exist" (Nash, 1997b: 18). As Nash (1997b: 19) points out, the fact that there is no one independent body with responsibility for setting professional standards in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand[3] must lead to concerns about accountability and quality assurance.

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[3] As Nash (1997: 19) points out "the ITO (Industry Training Organisation) may register further qualifications (in addition to the National Diploma and National Certificate already registered) but has no accrediting authority over undergraduate or postgraduate university degrees. Since the CQSW or 'B' level courses were at these levels, one can argue that there is no organisation responsible for setting professional standards in social work in New Zealand today".

One supervisor commented:

> ***With three placements, you can afford for one to be a bit of a bummer in terms of a good learning experience in some ways, because life is a bit like that, but with only two placements, I guess I would probably tend to insist on higher qualified supervisors for the students. There is so much pressure on students now with only two placements and those placements are really important. I would be for heading towards making sure your supervisors are of good quality by putting some processes in place to ensure that.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

We are entering an increasingly litigious environment where providers of any kind of services have to be increasingly conscious of the duty of care owed to consumers. As already noted, concerns over quality and accountability have led in Australia to the development of performance standards for field educators (Bourne and Cooper, 1996). In weighing up what directions New Zealand might take, the participants in this research could see both costs and benefits of introducing formal processes of accreditation. Although in favour of higher standards for the selection of student supervisors, one supervisor pointed out that:

> ***Just because you have got formal processes in place it doesn't necessarily mean better outcomes.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Research in Britain where a formal accreditation system for practice teachers has been in place since 1991, shows mixed findings. On the one hand, Jackson and Preston Shoot, 1996: 5) argue that the establishment of consortia of courses and agencies has not solved the problem of a shortage of practice placements. They comment that the consortium model was intended to encourage agencies to take responsibility for placement provision and to involve them in course planning whereas in reality few agency representatives attend Programme Management meetings (Jackson and Preston-Shoot, 1996) . They conclude that "fruitful collaboration between social work courses and agencies went on long before the partnerships were set up and there seems no reason why it should not continue without time-consuming and largely pointless formal structures" (Jackson and Preston-Shoot, 1996: 5). Thus the above comment from a participant in this research about formal processes not necessarily guaranteeing better outcomes seems particularly important to take note of, as New Zealand considers future directions in fieldwork education.

However, in direct contrast to Jackson and Preston-Shoot (1996) and based on her research into the British system, Rogers (1996b: 273) concludes that the new training/accreditation requirements have resulted in "a greater number of practice teachers who feel more competent and less marginalised, an increase in the number of placements, and enhanced partnerships between educational institutions and social service organisations". The reasons for these conflicting viewpoints reflect, I suspect, that it depends on which aspects of the British model, the commentators are focussing. There is a lot of research which supports the view that accreditation and training of practice teachers in Britain has not solved the problem of an under supply of placements (Fisher, 1990; Thompson and Marsh, 1991; and Jackson and Preston-Shoot, 1996) and that the portfolio route to the Practice Teaching award is not without difficulties (Slater, 1996). While some of the partnerships between courses and agencies may work more or less productively than others, it does appear that generally the British model has been successful in raising the status of practice teaching and the competence of practice teachers (Rogers, 1996b; Dominelli, 1997b: 187).

If New Zealand were to introduce a more formal process for selecting and accrediting student supervisors, a portfolio was seen as a more manageable option than a course leading to an award in practice teaching. For example a typical response was:

> ***A portfolio I think is realistic, unthreatening. I would like to think ideally it would be a portfolio and an interview and then once a person is accredited they can go on a supervisors' list.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

However, it seems to me that the portfolio route looks at the supervisor's past experience and validates that, which is a good beginning, but that additional training would provide the opportunity to share and reflect on experiences of student supervision with other supervisors, as well as collectively developing new knowledge and skills about facilitating learning from experience.

Another participant raised the issue of who would pay for accreditation and training:

> ***If you are looking at formal portfolios and people applying to be accredited they would probably want some remuneration at the end of it.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

Supervisors' views about who ought to meet the costs of accreditation will be outlined shortly, but first one supervisor put forward another option to either a portfolio or a course in practice teaching. She suggested:

> ***I wouldn't see that you would have to present a portfolio or other options because I can tell you that I am not going to do any of those things, but it might be that if you have got a Certificate of Competency (from the New Zealand Association of Social Workers) then you could automatically be a supervisor (because you will then have been assessed as meeting their Practice Standards).***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

While this is a good suggestion as the processes for being certified as competent (and re-certified every five years) by the Board of Competency of NZASW are now well established, one difficulty to this proposal is that at present, membership of the NZASW is voluntary, so that there may well be qualified and experienced social workers who would make excellent student supervisors who do not belong to the Association for whatever reason. Another difficulty is that there could be competent social workers who are members of the Association who would not make good student supervisors without additional preparation and training in what is a specialised field. For example, this suggestion does not address the concern expressed by most participants in this research that fieldwork supervisors must have had some supervision experience and training.

Personal Motivation to Become Accredited

When I personalised the question and asked how motivated the interviewees would be to become accredited if some more formal processes were introduced, there was a mixed set of responses ranging from not prepared to do any more training (one respondent); to it depends on other training needs (four respondents); to a very positive yes (four respondents). I have included one response of each type:

> ***I wouldn't do it. They would have me as I am or I don't, it is not my primary area of working. I would miss the students but I wouldn't be about to do any more training in that area.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

This comment illustrates the need for some form of Recognition of Prior Learning or "grandparenting" so that experienced student supervisors are not lost if new accreditation requirements are introduced.

In the "it depends" category, one supervisor stated:

> ***It depends what the accreditation procedure is, how much you have to put into it how much time you have to spend on a portfolio or being trained. It would be something you would just decide knowing those***

sorts of things. I don't know. I think it will probably come. There are so many things being accredited now and its probably a very good idea. I don't know how motivated people would be. Particularly, I guess they would want to know what is in it for them.
(Supervisor, Voluntary Organisation)

One supervisor who was very much in favour of the introduction of some form of accreditation of fieldwork supervisors commented:

I think it would be terrific. I would say "great, about time". I think also because I work closely with psychologists and I think there is no doubt about the fact that professionally (with regard to training) psychologists are streets ahead of social workers. I am not talking about the quality of the service that they provide, I am just saying that professionally they have got their act together, and the sorts of agencies and supervisors that are approved for BSW (Bachelor of Social Work) students, I know jolly well would never be approved for psychology students.
(Supervisor, Health)

In Australia, O'Connor (1997: 21) describes labour market trends towards "the declassification of many positions formerly designated as social work positions", so that graduates of social work programmes will be competing with other "human services workers for a place in the labour market" (O'Connor, 1997: 22). Similar trends are apparent in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Therefore it is relevant to compare arrangements for the practicum in related disciplines to social work, such as psychology, nursing, counselling and teaching. It appears that these other disciplines may be more rigorous in selecting students to their programmes and in assessing them while they are on practical work experience.[4] For example in one counselling programme[5], students are required to submit weekly activity sheets, have two visits while they are on placement (at one of which the tutor directly observes the student working) and in addition to the placement

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[4] I am not suggesting that social work should necessarily follow models of the practicum from other disciplines, only that comparisons with other disciplines may provide some useful insights. My comment that these other disciplines may be more rigorous in selecting students and in assessing them on the practicum is based on my personal knowledge of the requirements of the psychology and counselling programmes at my own university and on a workshop I attended on cross-disciplinary approaches to assessment in the preparation of teachers and counsellors at the University of Canterbury. Further research is needed as there are differences in the nature of the practice for which students are being prepared in each of these disciplines, so it may be entirely appropriate that there are different assessment practices and standards.

[5] This refers to assessment in the practicum in the counselling programme at the University of Canterbury, which was described in a cross-disciplinary workshop at a Fieldwork Symposium which I attended in July 1997.

Assessment Reports, students have to provide three videos of their work. Whereas in the social work programme I am familiar with, students may, but are certainly not required, to submit video or audio tapes of their work. They are not directly observed working by the staff visitor and may not be directly observed by their supervisor, which as discussed in Chapter Five, places too much reliance on self-report.

Writing of the British context, Rogers (1996b: 272) comments on the support and funding which has been forthcoming from government for "multidisciplinary collaboration in training practice teachers" and suggests that this is "an area ripe for creative development". It seems premature to consider such multidisciplinary collaboration in Aotearoa/New Zealand. There is a need for social work to first put its own house in order with regard to decisions about if and how formal processes for the selection and accreditation of fieldwork supervisors are to be introduced and monitored. However I argue that there may be some things which social work can learn from looking at the ways in which other related disciplines manage the practical component of professional education and training which will be elaborated on in Chapter Eight.

Who will meet the costs of the introduction of more formal processes of accreditation of fieldwork supervisors?

This section looks specifically at where fieldwork supervisors thought the responsibility for meeting the costs of a more formal system of accreditation of student supervisors ought to lie (if such a system were to be introduced in Aotearoa/New Zealand). The broader issues of the overall funding base for fieldwork education in social work are discussed in a later part of this chapter. The responses mirror the basic tension about "ownership" and therefore the resourcing of fieldwork. One supervisor thought that:

> ***The dilemma is that as student supervisor you are an employee of the agency as well as an employee of X*** (name of university).
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

I was interested in his comment about the student supervisor being an employee of the education and training institution. While Student Unit Supervisors (when these positions existed) were, and Consultant Fieldwork Supervisors are, seen as employees of the education and training institution, the vast majority of student supervisors have no employment status with the educational setting and receive no payment.

The same supervisor continues:

> ***I tend to think that if it is over and above what they*** (student supervisors) ***are already doing and it is not recognised by the agency, the remuneration probably should come from the training provider. (Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

Then he thought of another model:

> ***Perhaps supervisors ought to be taking the responsibility of doing it*** (providing student supervision) ***privately rather than through the agency. (Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

A discussion by Beddoe (1997) about models of accountability in developing a system of supervisor accreditation helps to illuminate some of the dilemmas expressed by this respondent. Her proposals are about social work supervision overall, but some of her arguments can be applied to debates about the accreditation of student supervisors. Beddoe (1997: 41) argues that there are three possible approaches to the development of a system of supervisor accreditation. These are a "bureaucratic approach" which "leaves supervision to the mercy of agency whims and financial constraints"; an "individual approach" in which supervision training is undertaken as a means of personal and career development for the individual social worker; and a "professional approach" which "requires both universal acceptance of standards for (supervision) practice" and the accreditation of individual supervisors by a recognised body (Beddoe suggests the NZASW could undertake this responsibility). In Britain which has already introduced a system for the accreditation of practice teachers, the decision about the acceptability of potential practice teachers is seen as an education provider responsibility (Preston-Shoot 1989: 9) but the funding for the system which has been put in place presently comes from government through the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW).

In Aotearoa/New Zealand, there is no government funding of the kind currently provided in Britain for fieldwork education in social work. The initial response of most participants in this research to the question about funding, was that the education and training institutions should meet all or most of the costs associated with the introduction of any formal system of accreditation of fieldwork supervisors. For example, this response is typical:

> ***The university should pay to train the supervisors (Supervisor, Health)***

However as some supervisors take students from a number of education and training institutions, there is a need for common standards and an independent body to oversee

accreditation, otherwise supervisors could be trained by one institution and then supervise students for another social work programme.

Some supervisors thought that the costs of seeking accreditation should be shared amongst all of the stakeholders in fieldwork education:

> ***I think that part of supervising students is about professional development and I guess it is something to put on my C.V. I think my agency's feeling is that they would give us study time. Now when it comes to funding accommodation or things like that which might be associated with going away and doing training, I don't think that it would be realistic to think that many agencies would fund their staff in that way to supervise students from X (name of university), so I think realistically the university is going to have to take some of the costs. We pick up the costs for having students.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Two other supervisors thought the education and training institutions ought to offer free or reduced cost training and meet any costs associated with accreditation because if processes of accreditation were to be introduced, there would have to be universal practice standards for the system to have credibility. However, in return agencies would guarantee to provide a certain number of placements.

When I asked the question about who ought to meet the costs of accreditation, some respondents clearly had not thought about choices other than education and training institutions or agencies. Therefore, I asked a follow up question about whether or not, they saw the Industry Training Organisation (ITO) or the New Zealand Association of Social Workers (NZASW) as having a role to play in the accreditation of fieldwork supervisors. Some supervisors were clearly unsure as to what role if any, the ITO or the NZASW might play. Other participants thought that with the introduction of the Diploma in Social Work, the ITO may impose some processes of accreditation of student supervisors as part of the criteria for course approval. As previously noted, the ITO and the Vice Chancellors Committee are currently having discussions about how undergraduate and postgraduate university degrees may be recognised as professional qualifications. The universities are not prepared to buy unit standards and be assessed by ITO trained assessors and are looking at other routes such as accreditation by the professional association[6]. At the time of writing, the ITO is investigating a model of

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[6] One of the difficulties to a role for the NZASW in accreditation is that membership of the professional association is voluntary.

accreditation for degree courses which would not have to go through New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) approval processes.

With regard to the potential role of the ITO one participant stated:

> ***I guess they could come into this. I haven't thought about it before. They could of course say these placements are not valid if you haven't got a trained supervisor.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Another supervisor commented that:

> ***With NZQA and the unit standards and the whole way education is going, I am not sure how much it is going to impact on the universities, but the whole move towards having formal assessors is very much part of the NZQA parameters. It is coming I think probably to a point where student supervisors are going to have to be formally accredited as assessors. I haven't got a clear picture of who should pay for that, I think it is probably a shared responsibility. The person*** (supervisor) ***gets something out of it for themselves professionally as an extra bit of paper. The agency gets something out of it having qualified staff and having the students there and the university gets something out of it. The students are paying as well so I would see it as somehow some sort of shared cost. I don't see it as the universities' responsibility to pay for assessors being accredited.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Advantages and Disadvantages of Accreditation of Fieldwork Supervisors

Finally, the views of respondents about the advantages and disadvantages of the introduction of a more formal system of accreditation for student supervisors were canvassed. In terms of benefits, participants saw the need to be able to "weed out" poor quality supervisors. Without more formal processes one supervisor pointed out that:

> ***Having an open system, you are also going to get the occasional supervisor, maybe one or two a year, who really don't give students an adequate deal.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Of course it is debatable whether the introduction of more formal processes will be completely successful in weeding out unsatisfactory supervisors. It is interesting to note that the quality assurance measures which were put in place for practice teachers in Britain

are currently being reviewed (Slater, 1996) because assessors for the Practice Teaching Award have found it hard to extract evidence from portfolios which clearly shows that the key requirements of the award have been met.

On the positive side, participants also thought that accreditation may encourage supervisors to really think about what they can offer to students personally in terms of their own skills and what their organisations can offer in terms of a learning experience. This mirrors what Fisher (1990) saw as one of the benefits of accreditation from the British experience. He writes that "the extended period of 'training' associated with the accreditation process could provide an opportunity for those considering practice teaching to consolidate and articulate their own practice view and to clarify and own practice competencies" (Fisher, 1990: 22). Some typical responses from participants in this research were:

> ***At the moment student placements are very much one way, it is about assessing them and seeing if they are making the grade, but what about me and the people supposedly doing the work, are they keeping the grade? ...It*** (accreditation) ***is another way of having an independent assessment about whether you are doing okay or not. ...I guess personally, it's one way of upskilling yourself in another area. I guess the thing I like about it is that I think it is a way for students to be assured that they are getting the best that can be given.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

> ***A diploma in practice teaching is an interesting idea. It probably is a way of encouraging supervisors to really think about what they personally have to offer, not only organisationally but personally in terms of their own skills. I am all for supervisors taking their role more seriously.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

Several supervisors saw that the introduction of a process of accreditation leading to something similar to a formal qualification in practice teaching (the British model) could have career development possibilities for social workers as they could develop private practice in student supervision. For example one person thought that:

> ***It may be that we contract ourselves out to organisations, or people or groups to do that*** (student supervision) ***if we have that certificate*** (in practice teaching).
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

The foundations for the development of this model are already laid to some extent, in arrangements for consultant supervision of students. Canterbury University social work programme, for example, has established a position of Outpost Fieldwork Teacher, whereby a social worker is employed by the social work programme to provide group supervision for a number of placements. Massey University social work programme employs a private practitioner as a Consultant Supervisor who works with a group of social work students completing their placements in schools.

The disadvantages of the introduction of more formal processes of accreditation were seen as missing out on good supervisors because of a lack of agency support for training in this area or as social workers have to make some hard decisions about their training priorities. For example one supervisor commented that the introduction of accreditation:

> ***...will raise issues for organisations, because you are talking about release of staff for more time, and certainly at this stage, being a supervisor is a voluntary position from the organisation's point of view. They are paying you to do your normal job and on top of that they are allowing you within their time to supervise a student.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

Another supervisor stated:

> ***I think if people had to put in a portfolio and maybe go to courses and the agency had to be approved, I think in the current climate you would get a dramatic drop off in the number of people who were prepared to be supervisors.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

This comment reflects the British experience where the introduction of formal accreditation processes for practice teachers has not solved the problem of an under supply of placements (Jackson and Preston-Shoot, 1996: 5).

Another supervisor thought that the introduction of formal processes of accreditation could change the "goodwill" model of placement provision and may actually support the position of some of the Crown Health Enterprises that they should receive payment for a service, that is to say, student placements, which their staff are providing for the education and training institutions.

> ***If the university was going to pay people*** (to supervise students) ***then certainly I would expect them*** (fieldwork supervisors) ***to have to do that*** (become accredited). ***That is a step on and I have a fear that ultimately that might come into being and people will do that*** (offer placements) ***when***

they don't really want students because they know there is money there for them.
(Supervisor, Health)

Another important consideration is that whenever formal systems and processes are introduced they reflect the needs of the dominant culture, unless care is taken to ensure a bi-cultural process. A Maori supervisor made this point exactly:

I think the other thing for me too in the Maori world, if you have got Maori students, finding a good supervisor and being able to go with it is far more important - someone who has those qualities but might not have those qualifications and being able to work with them and for them to be able to work with the students is very important.
(Supervisor, Health)

The Need for Additional Training for Fieldwork Supervisors

This section looks at what participants perceived as gaps in the preparation and training they needed in order to take on the roles of fieldwork supervisor and the ways in which they would like to gain access to additional support and training.

Most respondents felt that the supervision training currently offered, by the training institutions they were in contact with[7], was only covering the absolute basics. However, as already stated, participants also had mixed views on how much time they would be prepared to invest in any further training in this area. The following response is fairly typical of the need for further preparation for student supervisors:

They (the courses) ***don't really even offer a bare minimum. To offer student supervisors thorough training, it would have to be an ongoing thing, you would have to have five days or ten days or something where you actually looked at all of the roles, what to do in the supervision session, what to do outside of the session and so on. ...I think the university has an obligation to provide that sort of training and they are not doing it.***
(Supervisor, Health)

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[7] The education and training institutions with which participants in this study were in contact all provided training seminars or workshops of a short duration (one or two days) either pre-placement or while the students were on placement. In Britain, where courses leading to an award in Practice Teaching have been introduced, 150 hours of training is required, although not all of this is spent in direct contact time. Rogers (1995b) researched twenty practice teaching courses and found that the median number of taught days was 14.

Ideas about the sorts of knowledge and skills to be included in training for being a fieldwork supervisor

Supervisors had some clear ideas about what was either not covered in sufficient depth, or not covered at all, in the supervision training currently provided by the education and training institutions with which they had contact. All of the participants had attended at least some of the training sessions provided by the social work programme (or programmes) they were in contact with, and most had attended all of the training sessions on a fairly regular basis and are therefore well qualified to make suggestions for further training. Their suggestions are listed in no particular order. Sometimes I have quoted the supervisor directly and at other times I have summarised their comments. One participant represented the views of most supervisors when she stated that:

> ***Supervisors need very clear material about what expectations should be placed on students in terms of practice standards.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

As stated in Chapter Five, it is very difficult to fail students on the practicum, if there is no clear agreement about practice standards. The New Zealand Association of Social Workers has put considerable time and effort, in consultation with its Tangata Whenua caucus, into developing practice standards which members of the association have to meet in order to be certified as competent to practise as a social worker. It is suggested that there needs to be some link between the NZASW practice standards and practice standards for social work students in their fieldwork placements. This is an area which requires further research.

Supervisors also thought that they need to be familiar with the theories and models taught on the course. This could make training specific to a particular social work programme if education and training institutions are teaching different theories and models. Several supervisors who took students from more than one course, could see advantages in education and training institutions collaborating in the provision of training. One problem that some participants anticipated with regard to training for fieldwork supervisors is that the material would need to be contextualised for a wide variety of field settings in terms of social work placements. However another supervisor was of the opinion that there were a lot of issues with regard to student placements which are common across practice settings and he offered an outline for the generic aspects of a practice teaching course:

> ***What is supervision. How to contract a placement. How to run a supervision session. How to deal with difficulties. How to arrange an orientation period. How to provide feedback. How to receive***

challenges. Latest theoretical developments. Models of Supervision. Professional dangerousness and ethical issues. How to write reports. (Supervisor, Community Corrections)

Other supervisors mentioned the need to address the roles of a student supervisor; the rhythms of a placement; an understanding of adult learning; how to link theory to practice and practice to theory; training in assessment processes; and opportunities to discuss issues around student supervision and share experiences with other supervisors. Experiential learning by an action-reflection model (by which respondents meant the provision of some theoretical frameworks and models of supervision with the opportunity to try these out in practice with their students and then reflect on how this had gone) was seen as important. It is interesting to compare what participants in this research saw as the kinds of knowledge and skills which ought to be included in training for fieldwork supervisors, with the actual content of practice teaching courses which have been developed in Britain. Rogers (1995b) carried out a content analysis of the curriculum of 20 practice teaching courses in Britain. She found that the five main areas which were covered in the courses were:

- issues related to practice teaching and social work education
- the process of learning as an adult and as a professional
- principles and practices of working with students in placement
- supervision processes and methods
- evaluation of progress and assessment of competence

(Rogers, 1995 cited in Rogers, 1996b: 271).

Clearly there are many similarities between the training needs of fieldwork educators here and in Britain, as many of the knowledge and skill areas which participants in this research identified as lacking in their training and preparation for their role, are provided in the practice teacher programmes which have developed in Britain.

Mode of delivery of Training in Fieldwork Supervision

With regard to the mode of delivery of training in fieldwork teaching, supervisors were in favour of a range of pathways, although most popular was the idea of a modular course and the idea that any training in student supervision could be cross credited to another qualification, perhaps a Diploma in Supervision. One participant suggested:

I think maybe a paper on supervision or some sort of course - a course that gave me credit for something else, towards something, a Masters or Diploma, a paper that could be used.
(Supervisor, Health)

Another supervisor thought that a course in Clinical Supervision she has recently completed, would be a good model in terms of how training in practice teaching could be delivered:
It (the Clinical Supervision Course) ***was four days on campus, then six weeks out to do practice and then three days back and then making a presentation to a panel.***
(Supervisor, Health)

The point made by most supervisors was that any further training in the area of student placement supervision has to be a manageable time commitment with regard to time out of the agency, both in light of their own training priorities and in order for the agency to agree to their attendance. The suggestions which participants make with regard to additional training for practice teaching, all require a more time consuming involvement on their part. This conflicts with some of the responses in Chapters Five and Six which suggest that agency workloads are such that there is no more time available to give to student placements.

The Quality of Fieldwork Education In Social Work

Kadushin (1991: 11) writes that "there is a general consensus that field instruction is the most significant, most productive, most memorable component of social work education". According to Slocombe (1993: 49) in the quotation which opens this chapter "fieldwork still remains the single most important factor in the preparation of social workers, yet it is the most vulnerable to mediocrity, lack of standardisation, poor quality controls, few resources and the myriad of other frailties so prevalent in the welfare and educational climates of today". This section presents the views of participants on some of the issues raised in the above quotation, under the following headings: number of placements; timing and sequencing of fieldwork; the implications for fieldwork of generic versus specialist education; the influence of market forces on the quality of fieldwork education; the funding base for fieldwork education and models of fieldwork education in social work. Participants in this research all emphasised the centrality of fieldwork in the preparation of social workers. A typical response was:

I think that placement is the first time that students have the sense of "is this a job that they would really like to do and is it something they are going to be good at". Until they actually have a placement they really don't know that. It is the ideal opportunity to integrate their knowledge in the reality of the work setting.
(Supervisor, Health)

Number of Placements

I compared and contrasted the number of placements supervisors had completed in their own training with what they saw as the ideal number of placements necessary to train a social worker. One supervisor who had qualified in 1980 (in New Zealand) had completed four placements in his own training. Supervisors who had qualified in 1970 and 1977 (overseas) and 1985, 1986, 1987, and 1991 (in New Zealand) had all completed three placements in their own training. One supervisor who had taken a post-graduate diploma and qualified in 1995 had completed two placements. Of the supervisors I interviewed, three thought that you really needed three or more placements to train a social worker, while the remainder were happy with two placements with some reservations. The following statements represent the range of views:

Three or four. I would like to think one every year (of a four year degree course)
(Supervisor, Health)

You can't afford to make a mistake if you only have two placements. You can't have a dud placement really.
(Supervisor, Health)

Two placements absolute minimum and three is ideal. I am a bit sad that there are only two of them now.
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

This same very experienced fieldwork supervisor comments on what he has observed about the reduction in the number of placements:

I can see a real drop off in the depth of knowledge the students have, the opportunity for ideas to mature and grow and develop and the integration.
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

Of course what he observes may be attributable to factors other than the reduction in placements, for example the introduction of semesterisation by the education and training institutions.

With regard to the amount of time spent on the fieldwork component in training a social worker, another respondent thought:

> ***Minimum of two*** (placements). ***It would be nice if in the ideal world that throughout their course they*** (students) ***could have ongoing practice and being attached to someone*** (a social worker) ***in an agency from the time that they begin the course - just to watch that role modelling and to find out and be in touch with what the realities of practice are.***[8]
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

Another participant suggested that if you were only going to have two placements, students ought to be required to have done some voluntary social work prior to the course as part of the criteria for selection to a social work course.

Timing and Sequencing of Fieldwork

Participants also had some thoughts on the timing and sequencing of placements. For example one supervisor thought that some students (who have no previous social work experience) on a post-graduate social work course she was familiar with, who went out on a block placement eight weeks after starting the course, were at a disadvantage because the placement came too soon. Another supervisor wondered about ending the fourth year of a social work programme with a placement, as this limited the opportunities for an action-reflection model in which you complete some practical training and then undertake some in-depth reflection on that experience. She commented:

> ***I wondered, from a supervisor's point of view, in terms of ending a period of learning with a placement, what happens if the placement is not successful?***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

She thought that a mind set might develop whereby some students assumed:

> ***I'm just doing this and after this I graduate anyway.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

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[8] This has some similarities with the Contact Challenge model (Napan, 1997) described in Chapter Two.

I think that she is probably right in assuming that even though a few fourth year students on this particular social work programme have failed their final placements, the timing of the placement could encourage the attitude that "I can't fail" and certainly there is very little time[9] set aside to review and evaluate the learning from this final placement.

Generic versus Specialist Education and the Implications for Fieldwork

A current (and ever present) debate in social work education is the question of a generic versus a specialist education. In the current political and economic climate, the primary interests of the managers of the social service agencies which employ social workers are in training and recruiting people to perform the technical tasks necessary to work in their agency (Dominelli, 1997a; Ellis, 1997). Deals are already being struck whereby agencies will offer placements provided the student agrees to work for them on qualifying. Deals are also being suggested, whereby as a trade off for placements, courses prepare students for work in specialised areas of practice. Agencies are much less concerned than they used to be that students have a broad based humanistic and critical education with a good grounding in social policy, political economy and a range of practice experiences (Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a). Indeed these graduates may be perceived as "difficult" employees because they are critical and want to uphold professional standards. Papell (1996: 17), writing in the North American context, describes trends towards increasing the amount of specialisation in social work education as a retreat from "the ideology, humanism and wholeness of the social work mission". She is not arguing that social workers should not specialise in particular fields of practice, but she is concerned that specialisation is built on to a generic foundation at the undergraduate level of social work education to avoid an emphasis on the technical. One supervisor expressed similar sentiments that students ought to have:

> ***...a grounding in social science papers before they get into the professional*** (part of the programme). ***The educative rather than the training and the technical.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

All of the participants in this research, were in favour of a solid generic base on which to build specialisation and saw dangers in specialising too early particularly in the undergraduate social work programmes. With regard to fieldwork, this response is typical:

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[9] Only one day is set aside for reviewing the final placement in this social work programme, although individual time is spent with any students who have experienced difficulties on their final placement for any reasons. As the students are scattered throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand while completing their fieldwork, the education and training institution cannot run action-reflection groups, although the students are encouraged to set up peer supervision groups.

I think for an undergraduate course for new young people going in, I like the multiple placements, the range of placements, the broad look at getting to know the general landscape as it were before you actually specialise.
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

The Influence of Market Models on the Quality of Fieldwork Education

Some of the issues raised here, are also touched on in Chapter Six, when discussing the effects of agency restructuring on attitudes towards student placements. I found that participants commented on the impact of market forces on fieldwork education in response to questions about agency support for placements and again in response to questions about the quality of fieldwork education in social work. Therefore in this section, I have included only those issues which have not been covered elsewhere. This section links debates in the literature about what is happening to the status of professionals with the research findings.

Uttley (1995) argues that one of the consequences of the public sector reforms of the late 1980s in New Zealand has been that professional activity has been regarded with suspicion and subjected to greater controls in a climate of diminished resources. Beddoe and Worrall (1997a: 23) argue that "strict regulation of (professional) activity undermines the ability of social workers to stay current, have supervision, manage career and personal professional development and attend to the business of voluntary professional standard setting" because these activities are "regarded with suspicion as being outside core business" of social service organisations. The implications for fieldwork are twofold. Firstly, as several participants in the research commented, taking students on placements is not included in any of the agency outputs, therefore it is easily marginalised or excluded altogether.

Secondly, trends towards a competency based approach to education and assessment means that students have to demonstrate that they can meet technical competencies which are assessed by practice teachers over the course of the students' fieldwork placements. Underlying these trends, according to Howe (1990) is a battle for control over the education and training of social workers. Traditionally this has been in the universities and the content of the education and training has been defined by and large by the educational setting. In Britain, the ground is being prepared to take social work education out of the universities according to Dominelli (1997, personal communication, 8th September 1997). In Britain, as a consequence of CCETSW's requirement that managers and employers of social workers enter into partnerships with education and training

institutions, Dominelli (1997b: 7) argues that more than ever before, "employers have been able to exert direct control over both the academic and practice curricula" in social work education. As already noted, employers' demands are for compliant workers with practical and technical competence to meet output categories.

One participant picked up on the points raised above about what is happening to the status of the social work profession. I have paraphrased his argument which is that in the present ideological climate, economic value is primary, therefore the contribution of traditional social work values and the contribution of the social work profession to "well-being" is not valued. He states that:

> ***"the challenge for social workers is to argue from a different framework to the dominant economic rationalist framework" (Supervisor, Community Corrections).***

His views mirror the arguments of Kelsey (1993) and Nash (1997a) in New Zealand; Ife (1996) in Australia; and Dominelli (1996) in Britain about the commodification of social work and "the shift away from a concern about people and relationship building towards the product that is being purchased from a contractor" (Dominelli, 1996: 163-164) .

In response to threats to professional identity, the New Zealand Association of Social Workers has since 1993 resumed the debate over the establishment of a formal system of registration for social workers. Some large social service providers are supportive of the registration of social workers. However, one participant observed that the way in which his agency (CYPFS) is developing a professionalisation strategy needs to be deconstructed in the sense that:

> ***If social workers are professionally trained and they belong to a professional association then they are individually responsible for the on the job deaths*** (of children in care) ***so that there is no agency or ministerial responsibility for social work mistakes. ...Support for greater professionalisation and registration from the agency's point of view is pushing the responsibility onto social workers for the liabilities that go with the risks.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

He is not arguing that social workers ought not to be accountable for their practice, but that agencies also have to be accountable for structural factors affecting competent social work practice. This respondent highlights that it is in the nature of social work practice, particularly in the area of child protection, that it is virtually impossible to preclude risk and professional vulnerability. Moffatt (1996: 48) points out that when students go out on

placement, they very quickly "begin to realise how the reality of practice circumstances (including organisational context) can result in the distortion of their good intentions as a practitioner". The implications of the statement by Moffat and the comments of the supervisor quoted above, raises the issue of how students "can experience a sense of agency even within the most constraining environment" (Moffat, 1996: 50). This links to the argument I have made about the need for a critical reflective conceptualisation of the practicum in order to prepare social work students for the realities of practice in which social workers are engaged.

A social worker who worked in the health sector was also concerned that agencies were not allowed to abdicate their responsibilities for staff and student support. She stated that one of the factors affecting the quality of social work education was:

> ***Too many social workers are getting into places where they are not supported, where they are actually being abused*** (by the organisation). ***Like Children and Young Persons Service, and that is my concern about young social workers going out there and burning out too fast because they are not getting the support and supervision that they need. (Supervisor, Health)***

The Funding Base for Fieldwork Education in Social Work

As I have already argued, there is a basic unresolved tension about the "ownership" of placement provision, so that questions of resourcing and funding for fieldwork education tend to fall between the cracks. Therefore I was interested in fieldwork supervisors' views about who ought to pay for the costs associated with fieldwork education in social work.[10] Three supervisors from the health sector commented on the likelihood that Crown Health Enterprises (CHEs) would ask for payment from the training providers to take social work students on placement[11]. These are their responses:

> ***The training institutions are going to have to pay for it*** (clinical training). ***(Supervisor, Health)***

> ***My fear is that agencies are going to ask for payment and I will fight***

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[10] answers to this question mirrored responses to the question about who ought to meet the costs of a formal system of accreditation if such a system were to be introduced.

[11] Some CHEs are already imposing a charge for clinical training for social workers, with the result that no social work students are being placed with these CHEs. The social workers whom I interviewed were all employed by CHEs which at this stage had not actually imposed a charge. As other disciplines within the CHE structure pay for clinical training for students, for example doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and so on, the view that social work ought to follow suit is perhaps not surprising.

that and advocate for it not happening, but it is my fear because I have seen the trend going that way.
(Supervisor, Health)

The third supervisor from the health sector felt that there is a lack of acknowledgment from the education and training institutions about the costs to the agency associated with having a student:

I have had several students come and say that staff at X (name of university) ***have kind of raised their eyebrows because various CHE had made the suggestion that students will have to pay to be on placement. There are costs associated with having a student and I would like those acknowledged more by the university rather than having this attitude that they are doing us a favour.***
(Supervisor, Health)

A supervisor from the voluntary sector, thought that reciprocity from education and training institutions in ways other than financial remuneration, for example training, was acceptable:

We are managing at the moment. I think that we get on the whole, good help from our students, get value for money. We touched earlier on whether you (the social work programme) ***provides some sort of training in return for the student.***
(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)

This supervisor was very sympathetic to the plight of students and thought that if agencies charged for placements, the educational and training institutions would probably pass the costs on to students[12]. She felt that if students are asked to pay more for their practical training, the placement may be compromised because the student may also be trying to hold down part-time work in order to survive financially[13].

Another voluntary agency supervisor thought that if the education and training institutions were:

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[12] The funding structure for practical training in university based social work programmes is such that fieldwork papers are grossly under funded. In the present climate of cost cutting in the universities, it is highly likely that at least a proportion of the costs would be passed on to students. For example I know of two social work programmes which have introduced a $100 per placement fee to students, simply to cover a proportion of their costs in finding and servicing placements.

[13] In my experience as a Placement Coordinator, I have found that approximately one third of the students I place, are working up to 10 hours a week in order to meet costs of living.

> ***...paying something towards the organisation for the work that the fieldwork supervisor is doing on their behalf, then perhaps they would be a lot more careful to ensure that they were getting their money's worth, in terms of making sure that I was doing what I was meant to be doing and that the student was getting their money's worth.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Agency)***

However, she also thought that while offering some payment may act as an incentive to an organisation to offer a placement, this may or may not improve the quality of the fieldwork experience provided.

Several supervisors though that it would be a good idea to return to the days when students were paid an allowance while they are on placement, for example this response:

> ***The ideal would be it would be great if the students were paid. Even if it was a minimum wage, something to reflect the student status.***
> ***(Supervisor, Voluntary Organisation)***

Realistically she did not think that this was likely to happen in the current political and economic climate.

A respondent who had been a Student Unit Supervisor remembered the time when (under the Social Welfare Act of 1971), the Department of Social Welfare was given responsibility to provide practical training for social workers. She continued:

> ***The DSW traded off Student Units for its competency practice. It stopped having Student Units and it stopped paying for students to come on placement, which used to include students who come on placement in health and probation too. It would be good to think that the largest social work agency in the country would pay towards social workers' fieldwork education.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

It is interesting to see her comments alongside the recommendation in the Coopers and Lybrand Report (1996) that the Children Young Persons and Families Service consider the restoration of student units.

The majority of participants in this research, thought that funding fieldwork education in social work ought to be a shared responsibility, for example, this response:

I see it as a shared responsibility because all the stake holders get something out of it. I certainly don't see it being dumped on the universities or the students. I think agencies are key stakeholders in the process and should share some of the costs.
(Supervisor, CYPFS)

The challenge for agencies, education and training institutions and other stakeholders is to resolve the question about whose responsibility it is to resource fieldwork education. In order for this to happen, the funding issue needs to be seen as a collective problem, not just as a problem for the education and training institutions. Forums need to be established at which all of the interested parties can come together to discuss the issues over the funding of fieldwork education. This will not be easy to achieve with the focus within organisations on cost-cutting and internal restructuring. However, the Coopers and Lybrand Report (1996: 52) made recommendations for NZCYPFS to liaise with "relevant tertiary institutions" and develop closer ties with the New Zealand Association of Social Workers. If implemented, these recommendations could at least provide a forum for discussions between education and training institutions, the professional association and one of the major providers of social work services about a more secure funding base for the practical component of the education and training of social workers.

Models of Fieldwork Education In Social Work

This final section looks at models of fieldwork education in social work proposed by the participants in this research, in response to the question: "if there were no resource constraints, what would be the best possible model for fieldwork education in social work"? Figure Four compares and contrasts models of placement provision suggested by the research participants; models described in the literature review in Chapter Two; models proposed in a recent article by two other fieldwork educators in Aotearoa/New Zealand; and models proposed by the Industry Training Organisation. Together the four sources of information provide an overview of existing, new and developing models of placement provision. I have categorised the options for placement provision as *primarily agency* responsibility, *primarily education and training institution* responsibility or a *combined agency and education and training institution* responsibility, although it is acknowledged that in all cases there has to be involvement of both agency and educational settings.

Figure Four

Options for Fieldwork Placement Provision

	Proposed by:			
MODELS **Existing New or Developing**	**ITO**	**Beddoe & Worrall's new paradigms**	**Literature Review** **(Chapter 2)**	**Research Participants**
Action - Reflection Approach		√ A		
Agency based placements /Field Setting model	√ A		√ A	
Agency Recruitment Bursaries				√ A
Consortium model			√ C	
Consultant Supervision / Outpost Fieldwork Teaching				√ E & T
Contact - Challenge Model		√ C	√ C	
Contracting Model				√ C
Fieldwork Supervision Accreditation		√ C		
In-post placements	√ A	√ A	√ A	
Internship model	√ A	√ A	√ A	√ A
Ownership Model		√ C		
Pay Back Model		√ C		
Practice Centres	√ E & T			√ E & T
Reciprocity Model				√ C
Sponsorship Model		√ C		
Student units		√ C	√ C	√ C
Teaching Centre			√ A	
Training Centre			√ C	

Key:

A	Primarily Agency responsibility
E & T	Primarily Education & Training Institution responsibility
C	Combined Agency & Education & Training Institution responsibility

Figure Four highlights the alternative models of fieldwork education to the current field setting model, with the highest preferences, taking all four sources of information into account. These are: an Internship model; followed by Student Units; and In-post placements. The internship model and in-post placements are primarily under the control of the agency. Only the Student Unit model emphasises a more equal sharing of responsibility between agencies and education and training institutions with the potential for joint staff appointments.

When I was analysing the responses to the question about the best possible models for placement provision, I was interested to note that none of the respondents mentioned the field setting model of placement provision, which currently provides most of the fieldwork experiences for social work students. As it did not occur to me at the time, the reasons for not mentioning the field setting model, were not explored with participants. I can only speculate that respondents thought that the whole interview up to that point had been based around the strengths and weaknesses of the current model of placement provision, that is to say a field setting model, therefore they interpreted the question as inviting them to speculate about alternative arrangements. I do not think that the omission of the field setting model here, reflects that participants thought that this is not a good model. It may have more to do with the way in which the question was framed which focussed participants' attention on the ideal rather than the actual set of arrangements for the provision of placements.

Many of the models suggested by the research participants are revisions of models from the past, for example, agency-based Student Units. All of the proposed new/old models require the commitment of an adequate resource base to fieldwork education. The discussion with participants serves to illuminate some of the strengths and some of the weaknesses of different models of the practicum. Internships and Student Units generated the most discussion with all of the research participants considering these two models, so they are presented first. This is followed by a discussion of concurrent versus block placements. Concurrent placements appear to have become less popular than block placements, but some participants felt that the concurrent model was valuable in terms of the integration of class and field learning. While all of the models require partnership between agencies and education and training institutions, the remaining models proposed by participants in this research are presented as primarily agency based models or primarily education and training institution initiatives.[14] The reality is that we need a range of different ways of providing practice placements for social work students, because no one model can offer the number of placements currently required with the

[14] It should be noted that not all of the participants expressed views about all of these other models.

proliferation of social work training courses and the numbers of students needing fieldwork experience in social service organisations. It is also likely that other cultural models will evolve as new relationships are developed between Iwi Social Services and social work programmes.

The Internship Model

As discussed in Chapter Two, the internship model is currently under consideration by some education and training institutions in Aotearoa/New Zealand, particularly as the four year degree courses attempt to maintain their competitiveness by introducing specialisation in particular fields of practice for their final year students. Some participants in this research saw internship as a "foreign" model which came from other disciplines such as psychology and medicine. On the other hand, at least two participants who had trained overseas had experienced this model in their own social work training. One participant who qualified in Britain in 1970 commented:

> ***I trained as a Psychiatric Social Worker. You wouldn't be accepted on a (post-graduate) university course in psychiatric social work unless you had at least one years experience as an intern or social work assistant, supervised by somebody who was a member of the Association of Psychiatric Social Workers. The Association of Psychiatric Social Workers had this list of accredited supervisors and placements and so you had to write around and see if anyone had a space to take you on. I learned a great deal in that year. I think the practice I did was possibly in more depth than I even did when I was doing my placements. My experience of having an internship sort of year was great. (Supervisor, Health)***

What this supervisor describes is very similar to the psychology model whereby once they have completed their academic training, psychology students who want to become clinical psychologists spend a year working in an agency supervised by a Clinical Psychologist before they can become registered. Like psychologists completing their internship year, this supervisor was paid a low wage. Another supervisor saw internship as a model which did not have a history in social work education and training in Aotearoa/New Zealand. He commented that:

> ***...that is quite an old model in the health setting and in psychology. I think ideally that the internship model is quite a good model but there is a whole tradition behind that and there is not a clear tradition in social work and so there would need to be a lot of developmental work. (Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Several participants commented that the internship model works best for social work students who have a certain level of practice experience and are now ready to specialise. This reflects participants' concerns discussed in the section on generic versus specialised training, about the dangers of specialising too early. Moves towards the registration of social workers may lead to further consideration of an internship model for social work education and training. One supervisor, for example, thought that an internship year could become part of working towards registration. It is also a model that is attractive to agencies who want practitioners with skills and knowledge specific to that practice setting and fits with the trend to specialised contracts for very defined areas of work[15].

However, several respondents who were familiar with the internship model commented that it would only work if it was set up properly in the agencies. For example, a CYPFS social worker commented:

> ***I think unless the agency has due processes to care for its own new staff, they are just thrown in the deep end and there are a number of people who are really scarred and who have left social work and are traumatised by that experience. I think unless my agency actually gets that part sorted out, they are not going to be able to give students a decent internship.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Another supervisor questioned how many agencies would be willing to fund a social work internship, given the experience in her agency with psychology interns. She commented that:

> ***I am absolutely astounded that management ever agreed to fund this internship (for a psychology intern). I don't have any problems with the position, I think it is great but very expensive and I do wonder whether it is worth it.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

This supervisor described mixed experiences over the four years that her agency has offered a psychology internship. All of their interns have (appropriately) only been given a very small and limited caseload. Their first intern graduated and remained working for the agency, so this experience was seen as beneficial for the agency; their second intern failed his exams at the end of the year and had to repeat his internship, so his position had to be funded for two years; and their current intern has been very clear that when she

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[15] For example, the Coopers and Lybrand Report (1996: 50) on a professionalisation strategy for CYPFS, recommends the introduction of formally designated "trainee" positions for graduates (Recommendation 6: 42).

qualifies she does not want to remain in that geographical location. This story illustrates that providing internships is labour intensive and resource intensive for agencies. It is a model that can provide only a limited number of practicum experiences at a specialised level.

Student Units

Student Units were regarded very favourably by all of the supervisors I interviewed. The only drawbacks that were mentioned by two participants were that Student Units could be a "sheltered" experience where students were protected from the politics and tensions of the organisation, but in combination with another placement in a field setting, Student Units were perceived as a very positive learning experience for students. One ex Student Unit supervisor commented that when Student Units had been introduced in the mid 1970s, she had seen them as a temporary solution to a lack of qualified social workers. She stated:

> ***I saw them*** (Student Units) ***as something we would need for a very brief length of time and then as all social workers became qualified, they would take a student and you wouldn't need a Student Unit.***
> However, she continues: ***...My experience changed that because it was such a good learning opportunity to have eight, nine or ten people together in one placement. There was a great deal of learning that they did with each other.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

Another supervisor, also an ex student unit supervisor, sums up the benefits of this model:

> ***I am a fan of Student Units. I think there are a lot of benefits. It was an identified place for students to come. There were some sort of boundaries around it, there was some sort of containment of their experience and yet there was a cell within the agency - so they had some protection and yet they could go into the agency and do their work. There was some validation for the real processes that the student had to do, like the integration of theory and practice and the integration of personal and professional. I really like the Student Unit concept and it had all sorts of pay offs for the agencies as well. They got a look at a range of students.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

Culturally, the Student Unit model offers whanau support for Maori students. A Maori supervisor said:

> ***For Maori students, it was a good model because one of the most important things for us is that support and quite often when you send a student out on placement, unless they go home to their own areas, there is difficulty about their support systems. Where you have got a Unit and you have got a group working together, in most cases you have got that support and quite often that strength and also you have got that peer supervision as well.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

I was interested in participants' views about the chances of the reintroduction of Student Units in the 1990s, in light of comments in the literature that "in this market-driven environment, the state agencies are not committed to providing financial support for these (Student Units) again, because student learning cannot be viewed as a valid agency output" (Beddoe and Worrall 1997a: 29). The following response covers the range of ideas that participants had about pushing for the reintroduction of something similar to a Student Unit:

> ***I think it would have to be spelt out that it*** (a Student Unit) ***is cost effective for the agencies in terms of: they get extra work done by the group of students; that it was quality work; that it was a source of prospective employees; that it lifted the professional tone in the agency and there was a challenge to the agency in terms of its own professionalisation. I think there are major benefits. It*** (the concept of a Student Unit) ***would need to be modernised for the 90s and I am not sure how that would go, but I think it is really worth the push. We have been pushing the Department*** (of Social Welfare) ***in terms of pointing out the real losses that took place because of the loss of the Student Units.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

There are indicators that the reintroduction of something akin to student units is a real possibility if the funding issues can be resolved. As already noted, the Coopers and Lybrand Report prepared for CYPFS in 1996 has recommended a restoration of student units in that organisation. In my position as a Placement Coordinator, I am also noticing a trend in some Crown Health Enterprises to appoint a Professional Social Work Adviser and to make one of the responsibilities of this position, the management of social work student placements within CHE services and this role could be expanded. Some social work programmes are establishing a model of fieldwork education described as group consultant supervision or outpost fieldwork teaching which is not dissimilar to a Student Unit in that it provides opportunities for peer support and peer assessment as well as mentoring by an experienced practitioner. Student Units have a successful history in

Aotearoa/New Zealand. They are still one means of placement provision in other countries, for example, a survey of field education in Australia (Fook and Cleak, 1994: 35) revealed that nine Schools of Social Work operated Student Units. It is likely that as Iwi Social Services increase their role in providing practical training for Maori students, a whanau model will be developed, as a one to one model, such as the field setting model is not culturally appropriate. The literature shows that educators are beginning to question the sustainability of the field setting model as the primary model of placement provision because of its intensity in terms of both supervisor time and agency resources (Cooper, 1995a; Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a). All of the above illustrates that some seeds have already been sown for the restoration of the Student Unit model.

Concurrent or Block Placements?

Many of the supervisors I interviewed, had experienced both block and concurrent placements in their own training. Predominantly, supervisors took students from courses which had block placements, although one course had a concurrent model. Participants had mixed views on the advantages and disadvantages of the concurrent placement. For example, against concurrent placements, two supervisors commented that:

> ***The concurrent placements were two days a week*** (in the agency) ***and it was very pressured trying to do two things at once.***
> ***(Supervisor, CYPFS)***

> ***Where you are spending some time on the course and some time in placement, I find that bitsy.***
> ***(Supervisor, Health)***

However, while commenting that concurrent placements seemed to be less popular now, several supervisors preferred the concurrent model. Some typical responses were:

> ***I tend to like to see ongoing things so I guess I would probably be more in favour of concurrent than block. I think the dilemma with the block is that it is done and not integrated, whereas if something is ongoing it also stimulates ongoing action-reflection.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

> ***I like the idea of concurrent because I like the idea of having the opportunity to make a link between the reality of what is going on in your placement and what you are being taught at X*** (name of university). ***I like the opportunity of being able to go back to X*** (name of university) ***and***

say "hey, what you have been teaching me is really relevant", or "gee, it doesn't hold up at all".
(Supervisor, Health)

Another supervisor thought that there were advantages and disadvantages with both block and concurrent placements and that the ideal model would be for students to experience both. She argued that:

A block placement really doesn't give a student time to do a longitudinal piece of work so they don't have time to reflect on what they have done and what changes might have been either in the person or in the community. I remember really enjoying the concurrent placements because they were longer so they gave you the length of time to undertake the social work process. The block placement was interesting for learning about the organisation and learning about a community quickly, but it is harder to manage the work.
(Supervisor, Health)

Agency Recruitment Bursaries

Student bursaries are a variation on the theme of agencies wanting to have a very limited financial input into student education and training (in contrast to the level of financial support for education and training provided at the time of Student Units and Student placement allowances - see Chapter One), and at the same time wanting to ensure a more certain pay off for the agency. Student Bursaries[16] for selected students were offered by NZCYPFS for the first time in 1992. They provided approximately 10-20 recruitment bursaries across the whole country in the first year and less in subsequent years. The current situation is that NZCYPFS Area Managers have the discretion to use some of their budget for recruitment bursaries if they wish and as many choose not to, this source of funding has virtually dried up. Community Corrections also offered one student bursary to my knowledge, in 1995.

Students competed for the bursaries which as already stated, were very limited in number. Often students were offered a bursary as a result of having successfully completed one placement in the agency. In some cases they were then required to complete their final year placement in the same agency (this was the case in the Community Corrections bursary) which limits the student's range of fieldwork experiences. In other cases, this has not been a requirement, although completing a

[16] The CYPFS bursary paid for fees, books and provided a student allowance of $5,000 in the student's final year of study, in return for which the student was bonded to the agency for a certain period of time.

placement in a practice setting which is related to the work of the agency which is offering the bursary, is regarded as highly desirable. One respondent in Community Corrections who had experienced having a student on an agency bursary commented that he felt that:

> ***Staff attitudes to the student were more positive, perhaps because they knew she was going to stick around, staff seemed more willing to take her places and involve her in what they were doing.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

This model is attractive to students because it provides them with financial assistance in their final year of study. From an agency perspective, it can be seen as a proactive recruiting policy, although funding cutbacks in agencies have limited the availability of student bursaries. A drawback is that it does restrict the range of placement settings the student experiences, thereby encouraging early specialisation. This is a model which only affects fieldwork indirectly in that it may restrict the student's choice of placement. At the time of writing (1998) the Central Region of Community Corrections is offering three Study Awards worth $750, for Maori and/or Pacific Island social work students, in return for completing their final placement with Community Corrections, so this model is a direct trade off for a placement. For those students who are selected for bursaries or study awards, it lessens their student debt and in the case of recruitment bursaries, guarantees them employment on graduation. However it is a model which currently only secures a very limited number of placements.

Contracting Model

Another agency based model of placement provision suggested by one respondent was that student education and training be included in a Staff Training and Development Unit within the organisation with agencies contracting with training institutions to take a certain number of students per year. This idea came out of a question I had asked about how education and training institutions can "sell" placements to agencies which is something that as a Placement Coordinator, I have to try and do every year. His response was:

> ***They*** (education and training institutions) ***shouldn't have to! If an agency is committed to professional development of the staff and to ongoing recruitment and to quality, it should be looking for people and the agency should be proactive in coming to the university and saying "let's have a look at your fourth year students, we want to take these ones for placement to have a look at them in terms of future employment".***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

As he thought about this, he decided that a model that was like a Student Unit, but located within a broader Training and Development Unit for all staff, could be a possibility at least for the larger social service organisations. If such a unit had a function in relation to all staff, not just students, then the agency may be more willing to look at resourcing it. This model and the Student Unit model do not preclude the possibility of partnerships with a position or positions jointly funded by the agency and one or more education and training providers.

Reciprocity Model

Several supervisors proposed variations on a reciprocity model of fieldwork education. For example, one supervisor thought that the best model for fieldwork education in social work would be one in which:

> ***It would be ongoing from day one of someone walking into a*** (social work) ***programme that they were linked with some sort of agency and as they learned their theoretical stuff, they were also involved either by observation or participation in an agency.***
> ***(Supervisor, Community Corrections)***

This idea is similar to a European model of fieldwork education described as the Contact-Challenge model (Napan 1997)[17].

If we move to a formal system of accreditation of fieldwork supervisors as discussed in the section on the selection of student supervisors, then another reciprocity model suggested by several participants could be for education and training institutions to offer practice teacher training at no cost or reduced cost in exchange for taking a student on placement. Supervisors would have to take a student on placement, in order to complete the training and become accredited.

Interestingly none of the interviewees in this research expressed an interest in having a greater input into the teaching curriculum than is currently offered to them through feedback channels such as Placement Monitoring groups[18]. They did not appear to want the kind of involvement with the course curriculum that the Consortium model adopted in Britain, provides. This may of course simply reflect that they didn't know enough about

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[17] See Chapter Two for a description of this model.

[18] The social work programme I am familiar with, has a Placement Monitoring Committee which meets three or four times a year. Membership consists of Placement staff from the education and training institution, supervisor representatives from different fields of practice (health, justice, CYPFS and community and voluntary sector), a representative of the Regional Placement Advisors, a Consultant supervisor, a representative from NZASW and student representatives from each of the social work programmes (BSW years two, three and four and Masters Applied).

the British model to consider its advantages and disadvantages. Certainly fieldwork supervisors wanted their expertise to be valued and recognised by the education and training institution. However, most if not all, felt overwhelmed by their own workloads in their agencies and so while some participants would be willing to present a workshop or seminar for the course, participate in a panel and so on, they personally did not express a wish for any greater involvement and input into the content of the social work curriculum. This is different to the argument that, at a broader political level, there is a trend for the content of education and training in the social services "industry" to be driven by managers rather than educators.

Consultant Supervision and Outpost Fieldwork Teaching

In order to solve the problem of a shortage of practice placements, education and training institutions sometimes use consultant supervisors, as a response to either a lack of a qualified supervisor in a field setting or in response to agencies who are willing to host a student placement, but for various reasons are unable to provide in-house supervisors. Social workers who are employed to provide consultant supervision are variously described as consultant supervisors or outpost fieldwork teachers. Consultant supervision may be provided on a one to one basis or for a group of students. The benefits of this model are that it provides additional placements in a situation where demand exceeds supply. The use of consultant supervisors is also seen as important in giving students the opportunity to have placements in developing areas of practice, for example school social work. Where the roles and responsibilities of the agency supervisor and the consultant supervisor are carefully negotiated, this model of placement provision can work well, but where this does not happen, difficulties can arise.

Issues which participants in this research who had acted as consultant supervisors had experienced were related to no formal power in the agency; no control over work given to the student (either too much or too little work and appropriate referrals) if this became an issue for the student; negotiating relationships with the student and the agency person responsible for the placement; and negotiating access to direct observation of the student's work. One participant summed up some of the difficulties she has experienced in taking on this role:

> ***Because I am not part of the agency, I don't necessarily understand what some of the covert rules of the agency are and some of the dynamics. I actually don't see what the student is doing day by day, not that that bothers me because you can pick up a lot in your supervision sessions. I don't have any control over the work that they have, so I have maybe supervised people that I would have pushed a***

little bit had I been their supervisor in post, and I would have given them more work to do, or I have felt that they haven't really been given good social work referrals and there is not a great deal one can do about that as a Consultant Supervisor.
(Supervisor, Health)

Practice Centre Model

Another model suggested by several participants is for the education and training institution itself to establish a practice learning centre and tender for contracts to provide social and community work services and/or carry out projects in consultation with social service agencies. This model has been tried in Australia (Pilcher and Shamley, 1986) and Canada (Bogo and Globerman, 1995). This is different from a Student Unit in that the Practice Learning Centre collaborates with, but is not part of, any agency other than the education and training institution. The model has some potential in light of the shortage of placements. However, respondents could also see pitfalls, in that it could be difficult to get work and students could only complete one of their placements at such a centre. Also supervisors pointed out that social work is about working with people in their homes, neighbourhoods and communities, so that the centre could only be a base from which students would go out into the community, depending on the nature of the service or project undertaken. In thinking about this model, one supervisor suggested that possibly a group of agencies and a training provider could get together to set up and staff a Practice Centre and apply for funding from the Community Funding Agency or the Transitional Health Authority in the same way that other community groups do.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes the presentation of the research findings. It builds on to Chapters Five and Six, by exploring participants' understandings about the wider social, economic and political context and how this affects fieldwork education in social work. Participants had mixed opinions about the need for the introduction of more formal processes for accreditation of fieldwork supervisors and whether this would solve the problem of a shortage of placements. Overall, participants thought that with the proliferation of social work courses all requiring practice placements, there is a need for the introduction of better quality assurance measures and common performance standards for fieldwork supervisors. In summary, with regard to the benefits of accreditation, participants saw that accreditation may:

- increase the status of fieldwork supervisors and fieldwork supervision

- make fieldwork supervisors more accountable by encouraging them to really think about what they can offer to students in terms of their own knowledge and skills and what their agencies can offer in terms of a learning experience and thus help to "weed out" poor supervisors

- provide career opportunities for social workers to develop private practice in student supervision

- provide placements - as social workers would have to take a students on placement in order to complete the requirements for certification

In terms of the disadvantages of the introduction of a more formal system, participants thought that accreditation may:

- act as a deterrent to some good fieldwork supervisors because of a lack of agency support for training in this area; because social workers gave other training needs a higher priority; and because of the time involved in preparing a portfolio or attending a training course. Thus accreditation could lead to a decrease in placements.

- support the position of some organisations which provide fieldwork experiences for social work students who want to receive payment for providing this training from the education and training institutions, particularly if agency time is involved in assisting the fieldwork supervisor to become accredited

- be to the detriment of Maori and Pacific Island fieldwork supervisors, as whenever formal systems and processes are introduced, they tend to reflect the needs of the dominant Pakeha culture.

Supervisors in this research were clearly unsure as to what role if any, the ITO or the NZASW might play in the introduction of more formal processes of accreditation for fieldwork supervisors, indicating a need for these bodies to consider their potential role in this area of social work education and training.

The next area explored in this chapter was participants' views about the kinds of knowledge and skills which ought to be included in any additional training for practice teaching, which relates directly to the third research question posed at the beginning of this study (see Chapter Two). In summary the main findings were firstly, that the areas

which fieldwork supervisors in Aotearoa/New Zealand perceived as gaps in their training are very similar to the areas which are covered in training courses for practice teachers which have developed in Britain, since the introduction of a Practice Teaching qualification in 1991. Secondly, most supervisors made the point that any further training in the area of student placement supervision has to be a manageable time commitment with regard to time out of their agencies, both in light of their own training priorities and in order for the agency to agree to their attendance.

Finally this chapter looked at participants' views about the quality of fieldwork education in social work. Fieldwork supervisors have some valuable suggestions and recommendations about the effects of an overall reduction in the number of placements in social work education and training; the timing and sequencing of fieldwork; the implications for fieldwork of generic versus specialist education; the influence of market forces on the quality of fieldwork education; and the funding base for fieldwork education. The views of participants presented in this chapter support the argument that the challenge for agencies and education and training institutions is to resolve the question about whose responsibility it is to resource fieldwork education. In order for this to happen, like many of the participants in this research, I believe that the funding issue needs to be seen as a collective problem, not just as a problem for the education and training institutions. Forums need to be established at which all of the interested parties can come together to discuss the issues over the funding of fieldwork education in social work. All of the existing and alternative models for fieldwork proposed by participants in this study require the commitment of an adequate resource base to fieldwork education. If the "mediocrity, lack of standardisation, poor quality controls and few resources", identified by Slocombe (1993: 49) in the opening quotation, as plaguing fieldwork education in social work are to be resolved, we can reorganise and regulate until we are blue in the face, but as Fisher (1990: 24) so succinctly states, "reorganisation and regulation will not serve in place of resources".

The next and final chapter of the thesis summarises all of the themes and recommendations which emerge from the research and makes some suggestions for future directions in policy practice and research in fieldwork education in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Compromise resolutions, which lack the consent of all participants, fail to incorporate their concerns and cannot dissolve contradictory tensions, will prove inadequate

Dominelli, L. (1997a: 176).

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore the current experiences, issues and concerns of fieldwork supervisors in social work education. The action research methodology utilised in the study means that it was always the intention that the research would provide recommendations for changes to the existing set of arrangements pertaining to fieldwork education in social work, if these arrangements were found to be unsatisfactory in any way to participants. This final chapter looks at the implications of the research findings for future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education in social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The first part of the chapter returns to the three initial research questions and examines how the findings illuminate these questions. Next, in line with the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Straus, 1967; Wells, 1995)[1] an argument is developed for a critical reflective model of the practicum in social work education, which connects the nature and context of social work practice with the professional education and training which prepares students for this practice[2].

The next part of this chapter summarises and discusses some of the key themes which emerge from the research. This section makes connections with both the findings of this study, presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, and also with documents and other research described in Chapters One and Two. The perspectives of other stakeholders in fieldwork education are also considered, for as the opening quotation from Dominelli (1997a: 176) highlights, solutions to current debates over the professional and educational mandate for social work are unlikely to be solved without collaboration by all of the interested parties. In this respect the fieldwork component of social work education

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[1] Described in Chapter Four.

[2] This argument builds on to ideas which were introduced in Chapter Three.

is critical because placements are the point at which educators, students, agency social workers and managers of social service organisations come together, thus creating the necessity for dialogue between all of the interest groups. This chapter concludes by offering some suggestions for future directions in fieldwork education in social work at both a micro and macro level.

The Research Findings In Relation To The Research Questions

In Chapter One, three research questions were identified which developed out of my own involvement in the area under study as well as from an extensive review of the literature on fieldwork education up to the end of 1997. In concluding the thesis, the ways in which the research findings have illuminated these initial "sensitising" questions are evaluated. Two basic questions which the research was intended to illuminate were: where does the responsibility for supporting and training fieldwork supervisors lie; and what are the most appropriate locations, content and methods of education and training for fieldwork teaching? However it seemed that there was a prior question here which related to whether or not fieldwork supervisors need to receive some preparation for this role? Thus the first research question asked:

- **Do fieldwork supervisors need to receive some preparation for taking on the tasks of student supervision?**

The research findings which are especially relevant to addressing this question are presented in Chapter Five which looks at how the fieldwork supervisors who participated in this research conceptualised their role. Participants' views about what makes a good student supervisor help to clarify what fieldwork supervisors perceive as their tasks and responsibilities. The roles which supervisors felt most comfortable about and the roles which they expressed some difficulty with, indicate the areas in which more preparation for fieldwork teaching would be helpful. The roles which participants in this research found most difficult related to the tasks of teaching and assessment which suggests that these are areas in which fieldwork supervisors would benefit from additional preparation and training. The findings of this research mirror those of other studies which have identified a lack of understanding of teaching and learning processes on the part of fieldwork supervisors (Gardiner, 1989; Rogers and McDonald, 1995). The research findings are also similar to studies which have explored the difficulties experienced by fieldwork supervisors with the role of assessor (Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes, 1994, 1996).

This research offers some insights as to why the tasks of teaching and assessment are problematic for fieldwork supervisors[3] With regard to teaching, the research shows that while fieldwork supervisors acknowledge that teaching about practice is a significant part of their role, most have no formal training in preparation for becoming an educator. If fieldwork supervisors received more training in understanding adult learning processes, their ability to assist their students to learn about practice would be enhanced. The lack of comfort which some participants in this study expressed about the teaching aspects of placement supervision also seemed to be related to their conceptions of the teaching role as implying that the teacher is the "expert".

With regard to assessment, fieldwork supervisors are required to measure competence by providing assessment reports on students, but these research findings show that this is another aspect of their role about which they feel least comfortable for a number of reasons. These are discussed in Chapter Five. The findings of this study confirm what is reported in the research literature that the whole area of assessing competence in the practicum is an area in which fieldwork supervisors experience difficulties and need more guidance (Shardlow and Doel, 1993; Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes, 1996). In the new world of competency based assessment, education and training, it is likely that fieldwork supervisors will be expected to take on a greater responsibility for the teaching of specific unit standards and in assessing students against these unit standards. If this is the case, then this research indicates that supervisors will need to be better prepared to undertake the role of assessor. Suggestions for ways of improving the preparation of student supervisors in the area of assessment are discussed later in the section on recommendations for future directions in practice.

The role conflicts experienced by participants in this research which are described in the section on the roles and responsibilities of fieldwork supervisors in Chapter Five, also indicate areas where supervisors would benefit from additional preparation, education and training. As I have emphasized throughout this thesis, social workers employed in large social service organisations, are caught in the tensions created by the new managerialist agenda which aims to restrict autonomous professional practice (Uttley, 1994). When social workers take on the role of fieldwork supervisors they face the same dilemmas as educators, about the knowledge, skills and values which need to be passed on in order to prepare social work students for contemporary practice. In light of the changing environment in educational and social service organisations in the 1990s, highlighted by participants in this research, it is argued that it is timely for agencies and educational and

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[3] See Chapter Five.

training institutions to review the preparation and training which fieldwork supervisors receive in order to take on the role of student supervisor.

The literature review in Chapter Two and the theoretical material presented in Chapter Three also support the contention that social workers need some preparation to take on the role of student supervisor. This is related to their own professional development as supervisors and also to the key role fieldwork supervisors play in assisting students to learn from experience. The need for additional preparation to undertake a practice teaching role is also related to wider issues about quality assurance in fieldwork education in social work.

The second research question asked:

- **Where does the responsibility for supporting and training fieldwork supervisors lie?**

Chapter Six in particular illuminates this research question. The findings of this research support the argument put forward in the review of the literature, that there is an unresolved tension about the "ownership" of placement provision (Thompson and Marsh, 1991; Walker et al, 1995). As discussed in Chapter One, there have been several attempts to clarify the respective responsibilities of education and training providers and agencies in relation to student placements. For example, in 1993, the New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services suggested a dual responsibility in that while "the training and recruitment of fieldwork teachers is a provider responsibility" (NZCETSS, 1993: 9); social service organisations are also expected "to make a commitment to the fieldwork teacher in terms of his/her workload, support and resources so as to ensure that the fieldwork teacher has the allocated time, assistance and resources to fulfil the role in a professional manner" (NZCETSS, 1993: 10).

In Chapter One, it was suggested that the NZCETSS Guidelines on Fieldwork (1993) could provide benchmarks against which the research findings could be considered. The experiences of participants in this research reported in Chapter Six, demonstrate that there is still a great deal of work to be done on quality assurance measures for social work practice placements. In 1997, fieldwork supervisors in this research are still asking for workload relief; study leave for training related to student placements; and for support and recognition from agency managers for practice teaching. They are also asking the education and training institutions to provide: better coordination over placement requests; improvements in matching students to placements; additional support for supervisors taking a student for the first time; peer support groups for fieldwork supervisors during

the placement; and supervision training. In 1993, NZCETSS advocated for "accreditation programmes for fieldwork teachers" (NZCETSS, 1993: 10). In 1997, there are still no national performance standards for fieldwork supervisors, which is one significant factor in the extremely variable educational experiences which social work students encounter in their practice placements.

In Chapter Seven, I suggest that one of the main reasons why progress has not been made in the areas outlined above relates to questions of funding for fieldwork education. The funding problem is not unique to social work and is apparent in other disciplines in which students undertake practical training for example, counselling, nursing, and teaching. It would be useful to have some cross-disciplinary discussions about the issues around the resourcing of practical training and the training of field educators. The fieldwork supervisors in this research, both individual and group participants, were supportive of the position that the responsibility for funding fieldwork education ought to be a collective responsibility and not just seen as the problem of the education and training institutions. However, with the current focus in both agency and educational settings on cost-cutting and internal restructuring, it will not be easy to bring all of the interested parties together to consider external partnerships in the funding of fieldwork education.

The third research question asked:

- **What are the most appropriate locations, content and methods of education and training for fieldwork teaching?**

This research question is linked to the first research question in that the kind of preparation fieldwork supervisors perceive they need in order to fulfil the role of student supervisor depends on their conceptualisations about the nature of social work practice and the purposes of the practicum. It also depends on their perceptions about what constitutes good practice teaching and how this can be promoted. The responses of participants in this research which are considered below, offer some practical suggestions about the kinds of knowledge and skills which ought to be included in education and training for practice teaching. Participants' thoughts about the content and pedagogy of courses in fieldwork teaching also led to an exploration of how a critical reflective model of the practicum could be incorporated into any additional training for fieldwork supervisors. This builds on to the theoretical ideas presented in Chapter Three. The implications of the research for a critical reflective model of the practicum in social work education are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

With regard to the kinds of knowledge and skills which ought to be included in the content or curriculum of education and training for practice teaching, Rogers and McDonald (1995: 42) suggest that in the absence of any preparation and training for practice teaching, fieldwork supervisors select both content and methods of placement supervision based on "how they were taught; what they think will be most effective; what fits with their practice orientation; what suits the organisations's culture and what will get the job done". There was some evidence in this research that fieldwork supervisors similarly felt left to do the best they could to provide students with good learning experiences with limited resources and support. The reasons for this appear to be related to agency demands which limit the time supervisors have to give to student placements and limit the time they can be released from agency duties to attend any training related to placement supervision. It also relates (as one participant states in Chapter Seven) to a feeling that the educational and training institutions are only able to provide "a bare minimum of training" to fieldwork supervisors.

Participants in this research expressed their ideas about the areas in which they thought their training for student placement supervision was inadequate. These are reported in Chapter Seven and include: a lack of clarity about what to expect of students in terms of practice standards; a lack of familiarity with theories and models which students had learned in the academic setting; difficulties with some of the roles supervisors are expected to take on in relation to students, particularly assessor and teacher; a lack of knowledge about teaching and learning processes; a lack of knowledge of a range of models of supervision; and finally a lack of opportunities to discuss issues around student supervision and share experiences and problems with other fieldwork supervisors.

The areas that fieldwork supervisors in Aotearoa/New Zealand perceive to be lacking in the training that is currently provided for them by the educational and training institutions, are very similar to the areas which have been included in the curriculum for practice teacher training programmes in countries such as Britain, where courses for practice teachers have been developed (Doel, 1988; Rogers, 1996b; Shardlow and Doel, 1996). Some good suggestions emerge from participants in this study and from the literature, about the content of any courses in practice teacher training which may be developed in Aotearoa/New Zealand[4].

With regard to the location of education and training for fieldwork teaching, participants were in favour of the educational and training institutions providing outreach regional courses, rather than expecting supervisors to travel to the university, polytechnic or

[4] See Chapter Seven.

college site. As agencies are cutting back on study leave, participants in this research saw that there would be advantages in linking any training specific to student placement supervision to another qualification such as a Diploma in Supervision, in preference to following the British model of a Diploma or Certificate in Practice Teaching. Participants also pointed out that they have to consider their commitment to further training in the area of student supervision in the light of other training priorities. Supervisors perceived that managers were more likely to be supportive of training directly related to the social worker's main agency function and more likely to approve short courses. The implication is that training related to student placements is likely to be low on management's priorities and that social workers may find it difficult to secure support (leave and/or financial assistance) from their agencies to undertake further training in this area. As discussed in Chapter Five, student supervision is not included in any of the participants' job descriptions.

With regard to methods of training, the most popular option for additional training in fieldwork teaching which emerged from this study, was a modular course based on an action-reflection model. One supervisor suggested a four day course of theoretical input, followed by six weeks out in practice supervising a student and then three further training days with other supervisors to reflect on supervision experiences. The preference for an action-reflection model of learning on the part of supervisors is interesting, given the argument made in the following section for a critical reflective model of the practicum. If it is seen as desirable for supervisors to incorporate critical reflectivity into their supervision of students, then it would make sense for education and training institutions to model this in the preparation and training of fieldwork supervisors.

Implications of the Research Findings for a Critical Reflective Model of the Practicum

In this section I develop the argument made in Chapter Three for a critical reflective model of the practicum in social work education which connects the nature of actual social work practice to the professional education and training to prepare students for this practice. There is a growing body of literature which supports the case for the inclusion of practical reflectivity in teaching and learning about social work (Papell and Skolnik, 1992; Gould and Taylor, 1996). I argue that, as well as practical reflectivity, the development of the capacity for critical reflectivity is crucial for social workers, who work with a diversity of client groups, many of whom are marginalised and extremely vulnerable. According to Fay (1987) it is only because we are able to think reflectively that we can challenge taken-for-granted social roles and expectations and habitual ways of acting which are oppressive to some groups in society. Fook (1997: 11) argues that social work educators

(including field educators) need to develop a framework for "*involved* (her empahsis) critical practice". By this she means "developing critical models of practice which actually do engage with the issues and policies with which people are working, in ways which allow them to be challenged and improved along social justice lines" (Fook, 1997: 11). In preparing students for the uncertainty, uniqueness and value conflict (Schön, 1987) inherent in the situations social workers encounter in their day to day practice, it seems essential that fieldwork supervisors, who provide up to half of the professional component of the social work programme, are trained to develop a capacity for critical reflectivity in their students.

In Chapter Two, it is argued that the earliest model of teaching on placements was the apprenticeship model where students learned by observing an experienced practitioner at work. Dominelli (1997a: 182) comments that "the apprenticeship model is more akin to training than education. Moreover this approach focuses largely on learning by assimilation". The implications for fieldwork teaching of this conceptualisation of the practicum is that students are socialised into a technical and non-critical understanding of the way in which the organisation operates and what is required of them in that practice setting. The current emphasis on the technical skills and competencies of social work graduates[5] shows that a technical rationalist view of professional activity is in the ascendancy (Timms, 1991; Uttley, 1994; Dominelli, 1997a, 1997b). How then can a critical reflective model of the practicum be developed and why should this model be promoted as it is swimming against the tide of a competency based approach to social work education and training? In order to answer this question, I first examine the findings of this research and then refer to the findings of two other studies which have explored critical reflectivity in the practicum.

The findings in this research show that participants do perceive that it is part of their role to encourage students to reflect critically on their practice[6] . From their comments, my interpretation is that participants are describing what I have termed "practical reflectivity" in Chapter Three. In other words, the supervisors interviewed considered that it was important to provide a supervisory process of action, reflection, and interpretation to facilitate student's discovery of new understandings and alternative action strategies. It is less clear from their responses the extent to which supervisors promoted "critical reflectivity" in their work with students. Like Fook (1997) I have used the term "critical reflectivity" to mean a concern that the actions of social workers and the organisations in which they are situated, are directed to the goal of a just society. The reasons why critical

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[5] See Chapters Two and Three for a discusssion of the competency based approach to social work education.

[6] See Chapter Five.

reflectivity is not emphasised by research participants may simply demonstrate that they were not directly asked about how they included social justice[7] in their work with students. Furthermore, it is not suggested that supervision provides the only opportunity for students on placement to develop "involved critical practice" (Fook, 1997:11) as this can happen in a number of ways depending on the nature of the activities with which the student is engaged (learning journals, course assignments and peer groups to name a few). The lack of emphasis on social justice may reflect that currently social workers are feeling that there is no alternative to the technical rationalist view of professional activity and along with educators, students and consumers of social services, are simply trying to survive in the new "enterprise culture" (Cannan, 1995: 8). However as Fook (1997: 9) argues:

> To choose to believe that there is not room for difference, and for change, and to choose not to see the possibilities for using and developing points of resistance, is the first decisive act we take in our own defeat.

It is a pity if placements are not a time for the development of critical reflectivity, for as Moffatt (1996: 48) points out, it is often in their fieldwork experiences that students struggle most directly with how the reality of practice circumstances can result in the distortion of everyone's good intentions. According to Moffatt (1996: 50) practising reflexively offers students the opportunity to "experience a sense of agency even within the most constraining environment".

Like field educators, social work educators in the classroom are having to respond to the introduction of an industry-driven vocational model of social work education and training (De Maria, 1993; Dominelli, 1997b). Students are also caught up in the fallout from the restructuring in welfare agencies and educational settings and the debates over professional and managerialist conceptualisations of social work practice, so that they may experience tensions between what they are being taught on their social work courses and the kinds of tasks and activities they become involved with in their practical training. Tensions whereby the education and training settings value and reward practical and critical reflectivity[8] and agency settings value and reward technical competence are highlighted in an earlier New Zealand study by Harré-Hindmarsh (1992) of new social work graduates' experiences of these pressures as they entered the workforce. Several participants in this research made the point that in their training and in their social work

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[7] Social justice is a concept that is able to be interpreted widely and diversely, depending on one's perspective. The exploration of how critical reflectivity might be promoted in the practicum is worthy of further research in its own right.

[8] In the tertiary education sector, the universities have a mandate to act as critic and conscience of society although some commentators are questioning how well the universities are fulfilling this role (Kelsey, J. personal communication)

practice, they have been exposed to a holistic conceptualisation of social work, so they can see and perhaps resist the fragmentation of the social work role and the lack of emphasis on social justice issues[9] in the current environment. One of the respondents who raised this as an issue was very concerned that the next generation of social workers may be having very different experiences in their practical training because of the emphasis on outputs and managing packages of care in social service agencies[10].

In the final group meeting, which offered participants the opportunity to reflect with the researcher on the research findings, there was a recommendation from the supervisors who attended, that social workers become more "political" about their knowledge base and hold on to the holistic focus of social work and the mandate to engage in action to change structures that create and perpetuate injustice. Regrettably there was not enough time to unpack what participants meant by becoming "more political", but this recommendation implies structural analysis and structural change. As already noted in a footnote, how to promote critical reflectivity in the practicum requires further research. My interpretation is that at least some of the fieldwork supervisors who took part in this research, show an awareness and desire to include a political analysis of social justice issues in their work with students, but perhaps need some encouragement and preparation as to how they might facilitate this kind of learning. There is a developing body of literature on the application of experiential learning theory to social work education (Gould and Taylor, 1996), and some research (Rogers and McDonald, 1992; Harris, 1996; and Gould and Harris, 1996) which is of particular relevance to fieldwork supervisors in their task of assisting students to learn from experience.

I was therefore interested in the findings of a Canadian study by Rogers and McDonald[11] (1992: 166) which evaluated a ten week, (twenty hours) training course for field instructors designed "to challenge participants to think critically about their practice and experience in relation to adult education concepts, models and techniques used in field instruction", with the aim that field instructors would then utilise and model this approach in their supervision of students. As Rogers and McDonald (1992: 166) comment, their intention was to move away from the bare minimum approach to field instructor preparation which has tended to consist "of simply orienting field instructors to the curriculum, policies and expectations of a particular social work programme".

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[9] From a management perspective. There are many community and voluntary groups fighting the economic rationalist and managerialist agenda.

[10] See Chapter Six.

[11] This study was outlined in a footnote in Chapter Three, and is described in greater depth here because of its direct relevance to the argument for the development of a critical reflective model of the practicum.

The study compared the results of a group of field instructors who participated in the training programme on a Critical Thinking Appraisal test instrument[12] with a group of field instructors who had not attended the course. While there were no significant differences between the two groups on all of the pre-course tests, there were significant post-course differences, in that the group of field instructors who had attended the course scored higher on critical thinking than the control group. While this was only a small scale study, it suggests some areas for further research. Firstly, if the promotion of critical reflectivity in the practicum is seen as a positive future direction, then this study offers some suggestions for the curriculum of courses in practice teaching. Secondly, this study signals a need for further research to explore the impact on students of being supervised by supervisors who encourage critical reflectivity. Rogers and McDonald (1992: 175) suggest the need to find out if the students who are supervised by field instructors whose critical thinking skills have been developed, feel that they are better prepared for the everyday realities of social work practice.

A comparative study of student social workers and student teachers by Gould and Harris (1996) is also significant to developing the argument made in Chapter Three, that the content of professional education ought to include critical reflectivity and the notion of problem posing (Freire, 1972) in order to encourage students to develop processes of "active construction and reconstruction of theory and practice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986: 148). An approach to professional education and development which emphasises learning from experience and reflection highlights "personal theorizing and exploring constructs culled directly from students' experience" (Harris, 1996: 44).

Gould and Harris (1996) looked at the ways in which students develop the knowledge which subsequently guides them in their social work practice or teaching practice and the influence of the images of professional practice they hold at the beginning of their professional training. They found that whereas student teachers expressed a more "technicist viewpoint which indicated a view of teacher education as the acquisition of skills and procedures but within a politically neutral environment", student social workers in comparison expressed a perception of themselves as social activists (Gould and Harris, 1996: 233). While a receptivity to greater political awareness was evident in the social work students, the study also showed that only some of the respondents demonstrated the ability to use practical work experiences for critical reflective learning about the experience. This finding is similar to the discussion in the final group meeting in this research where social workers expressed a desire to become more political and hold on to

[12] The instrument used was the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (1980) which measures five aspects of critical thinking.

the dual focus of social work on both personal and social change, but seemed unsure as to how to move from awareness to transformative action.

The study described above supports the argument for a reflective paradigm for the practicum. At the level of practical reflectivity, it shows that if supervisors have a better understanding of the processes by which students develop, understand, articulate and utilize practical knowledge, the more they will be able to assist students to become reflective learners and enhance learning from practice experiences. Gould and Harris (1996: 225) argue that reflection in action can occur for students on placement in two ways. Firstly, it can occur in the daily encounters of students with clients, which they term reflection *in* practice (my emphasis). Secondly, it can occur through "structured opportunities such as supervision or professional collaborations", which they term reflection *on* practice (my emphasis). Boud and Miller (1996) suggest that in order to learn from experience, the learner needs to revisit the experience. This happens in supervision and the fieldwork supervisor has a significant role in modelling and facilitating reflection on practice, in assisting students to consider what they could have done differently and in the identification of ethical and social justice issues. According to Taylor (1996: 80), when students experience an emphasis on reflective learning in their placements, they become "confident in responding to the unpredictable and unknown".

In summary, I have argued it is essential that the fieldwork component of social work education prepares students for the "messy" situations professionals are confronted with in their day to day practice (Schön, 1987) and that a critical reflective conceptualisation of the practicum is most likely to achieve this. The promotion of critical reflectivity in fieldwork supervision is also about developing a framework for "involved critical practice" (Fook, 1997: 11) which challenges social workers and social work educators to recommit to our ethical responsibilites and professional mandate to engage in action to change structures that create and perpetuate injustice (New Zealand Association of Social Workers, Preamble to Code of Ethics, 1993).

Significant Themes From The Research Findings

This section summarises the key themes which emerge out of the research. The first theme area relates to the competing human interests in the area of fieldwork education in social work. Placements are the point at which power struggles between all of the groups with an interest in social work education (educators, managers, fieldwork supervisors, students, clients and other bodies such as the Industry Training Organisation and the New Zealand Association of Social Workers) become most apparent. The second significant

theme is related to the lack of quality assurance measures in fieldwork education which leads to a consideration of how we select and accredit fieldwork supervisors and whether it is necessary to introduce a more formal system of accreditation in Aotearoa/New Zealand?

The third theme area relates to the funding base for fieldwork education in social work. The fourth theme area relates to a discussion about which of the models of placement provision presented in the research, are the most viable in the current social, political, economic and cultural contexts? The lack of culturally specific models of fieldwork and culturally appropriate models of assessment of the practicum could also be considered to be a significant theme which has emerged from the research but rather than discussing this issue here, I have chosen to include it in the final section of this chapter which considers recommendations for further research which emerge from this thesis.

From Power Struggles to Partnerships?

Fieldwork is inevitably caught up in the fallout from restructuring in welfare agencies and educational institutions with consequences for educators, fieldwork supervisors, students and clients. Chapter Two describes how the management of social service agencies has passed into the hands of managers appointed for their abilities to control and regulate, while at the same time, educational institutions are also being reformed and positioned as key sites for instilling the attitudes and values necessary for the new "enterprise culture" (Cannan, 1995: 8). As Dominelli (1997a: 186) points out social work is in a particularly vulnerable position because of its reliance on state sponsorship and "developments in a dependent profession are dictated by external exigencies rather than professional requirements".

In Chapter Three, it is argued that educators and practitioners have "different cognitive interests" for their involvement in fieldwork education (Kondrat, 1992). Placements tend to be viewed by managers as a service to the education and training institution, hence the demands from agencies to receive payment for taking students on placement. The funding of fieldwork is at the heart of many of the power struggles. The question of who pays for fieldwork education in social work is discussed separately in part three of this section. However in spite of the difficulties outlined above, there is also evidence from this research and other studies discussed in Chapter Two, of a mutuality of interests in fieldwork. As Nash (1997b: 14) outlines, throughout the history of social work education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, there have always been shifting alliances "formed around curriculum, resources and location in social work education". As new bodies concerned with the regulation of education and training in the social services, such as Te Kaiawhina

Ahumahi evolve, then new tensions emerge about who is to control the education and training agenda.

The findings of this research show how restructuring is impacting on the provision of fieldwork placements. Overall, restructuring is impacting on agencies' willingness to involve themselves in professional training because student placements are not part of agency outputs, nor are they part of workers' job descriptions. Because fieldwork is time consuming for agency staff and does not bring any funding into the agency, it is seen as expendable when organisations are being forced to cut costs and reduce staffing levels. The research findings in this study are similar to other studies reviewed in Chapter Two, which show that one of the problems with the current field setting model of placement provision is that agencies do not formally recognise practice teaching as an agency responsibility (Preston-Shoot, 1989; Thompson and Marsh, 1991; Bogo and Power, 1992). Participants in this research also comment on how trends towards the redesign of work practices to reduce professional autonomy, the replacement of professionally qualified social workers with less qualified workers and the opening up of many positions previously designated as social work positions to other human service workers[13] are affecting both the numbers and types of fieldwork experiences offered to social work students.

The research findings do show differences in the impact of restructuring on the provision of fieldwork placements according to practice setting (see Chapter Six). For the voluntary sector, the most significant issue impacting on the provision of placements is insecure funding. Doubts as to whether the agency will be able to continue offering a particular service or programme, make it difficult to plan for a student placement if the service is likely to disappear. In the health sector, the research shows that placement provision is affected by the fragmentation of the social work role which is changing the type of placement and the nature of the work offered to students. For the Children Young Persons and Families Service, placement provision has been influenced by the morale of staff in a service "in crisis". The rapid turnover of staff and the stress on supervisors, has meant that, as a respondent from CYPFS comments in Chapter Six, the environment in many CYPFS offices would not be conducive to providing a positive learning experience for a student. CYPFS also has a commitment to upskill existing staff, so the provision of in-post placements for current staff has also been a priority for this organisation. For Community Corrections, the provision of practical experiences for social work students is affected by a lack of resources and workload relief for fieldwork supervisors, as it is in

[13] These trends are reported in the literature by Uttley, 1994; Dominelli, 1997a and 1997b; and O'Connor, 1997.

all sectors, but also by debates within this organisation about whether or not Probation Officers need to have professional social work qualifications.

When an agency has decided to offer a placement, some of the areas of concern with regard to relationships with education and training institutions which are expressed by participants in this research are: last minute requests for placements; receiving insufficient information about the student; students whom fieldwork supervisors perceive are not adequately prepared for the placement; and minimal contact and support from some education and training institutions while the student is on placement.

The importance of establishing and maintaining good working relationships between fieldwork supervisors and staff at the education and training institutions involved with placements, is emphasised in Chapter Six. The evidence from this research is that providing opportunities for networking and reciprocity between agencies and social work programmes and providing recognition for the contribution of fieldwork supervisors to the education and training of students are two of the most significant factors influencing the willingness of supervisors to continue to offer placements even in times of change and uncertainty in their practice settings.

Another power struggle, described in Chapter Two, concerns the relative influence of the employers of social workers and social work educators over the educational curriculum necessary to educate and train a social worker. Many commentators argue that the introduction of a competency approach to social work is favouring the interests and agenda of government and employers over those of professional bodies, educators, students and consumers of social services (Timms, 1991; Dominelli, 1996, 1997a, 1997b; Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a; Nash, 1997a). There are some good things which emerge from a competency approach highlighted by participants in this research which are long overdue in fieldwork education in social work. For example, the suggestion that all parties to the fieldwork experience operate in relation to clear and specific performance standards, ought to make the placement assessment process much fairer and much less variable regardless of the agency setting or the personality of the fieldwork supervisor, which is something that participants in this study saw as desirable. Writing in the British context, Dominelli (1997a) comments that the accreditation of practice teachers and the approval of agencies in which students complete their placements introduced by CCETSW in 1991, has resulted in a variety of improvements in practice teaching:

> The learning experience has been systematised so that less depends on the 'accident' of getting a 'good' practice teacher. The accreditation process has ensured that practice teachers receive (some) recognition for their work and

> formal training. These stipulations (the CCETSW regulations) have empowered practice teachers to demand more from their agencies.
> (Dominelli, 1997a: 187).

However the selection and accreditation of practice teachers which will be discussed in the next part of this section, is only one aspect of the implications of developments towards competency based assessment, education and training. Participants in this research suggest that we need to be wary of an over-emphasis on the specification of competencies which social work students are required to demonstrate and fieldwork supervisors are required to assess, during the placement. It is suggested in Chapter five, that anxiety from the student's point of view about demonstrating the required competencies and anxiety from the supervisor's point of view about assessing them, may detract from a deep understanding of why these behaviours are important to professional practice. Supervisors in this research felt very strongly that social work students need to be exposed to a broad-based curriculum in the social sciences and humanities and to an education which encourages them to become critical, so that placements are a time for debates of a critical, ethical and philosophical nature, not just about learning the technical knowledge and skills necessary to perform in a particular agency. Here the research findings link with other studies which have shown that the emphasis on outcomes in the competency approach increases *content* at the expense of *processes of learning* and induces surface-reproductive rather than deep learning (Gardiner, 1989).

Does New Zealand need a more formal system for the accreditation of fieldwork supervisors?

One of the questions which emerges from the research findings is whether or not the introduction of a formal system of accreditation for fieldwork supervisors will solve some of the problems apparent in the current set of arrangements around fieldwork education? Participants in this research thought that formal processes of accreditation would solve some of the problems but could create others. Some of the benefits of accreditation processes were seen as the introduction of consistent expectations and standards for fieldwork across social work programmes and the introduction of better processes for "weeding out" poor quality supervisors. As one supervisor comments in Chapter Seven, accreditation by either a portfolio or training course route would encourage supervisors to really think about what they personally can offer students in terms of their own knowledge and skills and also what their organisation can offer students in terms of a positive learning experience.

Accreditation of fieldwork supervisors would address the concerns of participants in this research that some student supervisors have not had any formal supervision training. As already noted, the evidence from countries such as Britain, which have introduced regulations for the accreditation of practice teachers and the approval of agencies in which students complete their fieldwork, is that standards of fieldwork teaching have improved and that the managers of social service agencies have been forced to reassess the amount of support provided to practice teachers (Fisher, 1990; Walker et al, 1995; Rogers, 1996b; Dominelli, 1997a). The aim of developing a pool of trained and competent practice teachers is seen as beneficial by all of the participants in this study, but what kind of a system is introduced and how we resource it, are seen as more problematical.

In Britain, the hope was that the introduction of a system of accreditation of student supervisors, would mean that the education and training institutions would secure more placements because supervisors would need to take students in order to gain and maintain accreditation. Generally the evidence from the British research literature (Fisher, 1990; Jackson and Preston-Shoot, 1996) is that the introduction of formal processes of accreditation have not solved the problem of an under supply of placements as some supervisors have been put off by the process and some have not been given study leave by their agencies for any further training in this area. Participants in this research were of the opinion that there are some benefits for all of the interested parties in having a formal system of accreditation of student supervisors. However, there were also a number of issues which would require careful consideration and working through. These are:

- the need for some form of recognition of prior learning or "grandparenting" so that experienced fieldwork supervisors are not lost if accreditation requirements are introduced;

- the need to ensure that any formal system meets culturally diverse needs, as whenever formal processes are introduced, there is a tendency for these to reflect the needs of the dominant Pakeha culture;

- the implications of increasing the visibility of practice teaching in agencies. While this will have benefits in that fieldwork supervisors may be given workload relief and practice teaching may be included in their job descriptions, it could also have costs. If agencies begin costing fieldwork as an "output", this could lead to increased agency demands for payment for providing placements which will change the whole ethos of placement provision.

In summary, this research provides an overview of the benefits and the costs of introducing formal processes for the selection, accreditation and training of fieldwork supervisors from their perspectives. My own conclusion is that there is merit in having consistent and credible performance standards for fieldwork supervisors across all social work programmes, provided that recognition of prior learning is offered to experienced fieldwork supervisors, and provided that any formal system meets culturally diverse needs. The development of a pool of trained and certificated fieldwork supervisors is a desirable goal, but there is a need for an independent body to be responsible for setting accreditation standards in order to ensure consistency and credibility. The question which then arises is who could act as an independent body responsible for setting accreditation standards? My preference would be for the professional association to undertake this responsibility. However, while NZASW is an independent body, and is experienced in the development of competency based practice standards, it does not currently have either the people resources or the funding base to undertake the administration of a system of supervisor accreditation. In the meantime, it seems likely that each social work programme will continue to develop their own mechanisms for selecting and accrediting fieldwork supervisors, with the resulting variability in student supervision in the practicum.

Any changes to the current set of arrangements for fieldwork education, such as the introduction of supervisor accreditation, will require additional resources. The third theme area examines the views of the participants in this research about the options for funding fieldwork education in social work. It is argued that the question of who will benefit most from qualified social workers is central to funding issues. This theme is examined from the perspectives of fieldwork supervisors, educators and students.

Who Benefits and Who Pays?

Supervisors

A very current issue for the fieldwork supervisors who participated in this research is the issue of payment to agencies for providing student placements and suggestions for contractual arrangements between organisations and education and training institutions for the provision of placements. While this may act as an incentive to agencies to offer a placement, in the view of some participants in this research, contractual arrangements would not necessarily guarantee that the quality of the fieldwork experience improved. Under the current funding arrangements, fieldwork supervisors perceive that the education and training institution receives all of the fee for the student, but that the supervisor in the agency provides half of the teaching! This is not the case in some other

countries. In Britain, for example, CCETSW funds placements in voluntary and independent organisations at the rate of 17 pounds sterling per day. While placements in the statutory sector are not directly funded, there are other methods of providing financial support for agencies.[14] It is important to note that in Britain, under the current funding arrangements, the funding to agencies does not come from education and training institutions, but from government via CCETSW.

Educators

Educators of course have a different perspective on funding issues. The education and training institutions have argued the position that the costs and benefits to social service agencies of providing fieldwork experiences for social work students balance out and placements ought to be considered as "fiscally neutral". Therefore they have boycotted Crown Health Enterprises who are seeking to impose a fee of $1,500 per student placement, on the grounds that this is not financially viable[15]. A lack of understanding on the part of fieldwork supervisors and the managers of social service agencies, about how university papers are funded by the Ministry of Education, may fuel the perception that the education and training institutions benefit most from the current funding arrangements. While some university based courses which have a practical training requirement receive special consideration, for example, medicine, teaching, clinical psychology and nursing, social work is in the lowest classification (Funding Category A). Schools of Social Work in Aotearoa/New Zealand receive the same efts (equivalent full-time student) funding for papers which require practical experience as they receive for those papers which do not have a practical training component[16]. Thus for the Schools of Social Work, the fieldwork papers are resource intensive.

Students

As several supervisors in this research commented in Chapter Seven, it is likely that if agencies begin charging a placement fee, the costs of this will be passed on to students. If students have to pay for their practical training, then there are two likely consequences. Firstly, it may limit access to social work courses to students from a wealthy financial background. Secondly, for students who do not have financial support, the fieldwork

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[14] CCETSW allocates financial support to DipSW programmes under the category of "Practice Learning Funding Monies", which includes: contributions to infra-structure for partner agencies; block purchase placements from non-partner agencies; student travel; collaborative monies, e.g. facilitating partnership, practice teacher workshops and so on. (Borrill, W. Personal Communication 9th March 1998).

[15] See Chapter One.

[16] See the EFTS (Equivalent Full-Time Student) Funding System for Tertiary Institutions 1997, which details Ministry of Education classifications.

experience may be compromised because the student may also be trying to hold down part-time employment while on placement, in order to survive financially.

The Role of the Industry Training Organisation

As explained in Chapter One, Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, the Industry Training Organisation (ITO) for the social services gives accreditation to providers of the National Diploma and National Certificate courses and the ITO standards offer some guidelines for fieldwork. University programmes, however, stand outside the authority of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). As previously noted, at the time of writing, the ITO and the Vice Chancellors' Committee are still in negotiation about how university based social work programmes will receive professional accreditation (Shannon, P. personal communication, 8th August 1997). The outcome may be that the universities remain outside of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority framework altogether and explore other options for professional accreditation, for example by the professional association or by the establishment of registration boards and licensing options.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, participants in this research had a sketchy understanding of the brave new world of assessment, education and training. Some participants perceived that the ITO could have a regulatory role, but were unsure about whether or not the ITO could have a role in funding. The ITO does have access to funding through the Industry Training Fund which provides subsidies to ITOs for the costs of organising and monitoring industry training arrangements[17]. This applies only to employment based routes to qualifications and only to training providers accredited by the ITO. At the time of writing, the role that the ITO might play in the provision of any financial resources for fieldwork education is limited and restricted to the training providers which it accredits. While a diversity of pathways in the education and training of social service workers is a good thing, the lack of common standards for social services education and training and the potential for only some groups having access to resources needs to be addressed.

The impetus to consider alternative models of placement provision to the dominant field setting model arises partly from resource constraints but also from considerations about the best possible models of fieldwork education which will meet culturally diverse needs[18] and models which are in line with current educational theories about how to prepare students for professional practice in general and social work practice in particular.[19] The fourth theme area provides a discussion about which of the models of

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[17] See Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi newsletter, July 1997, Vol. 3, Issue 1
[18] See Chapter Five.
[19] See Chapter Three.

placement provision described in the thesis, are most viable in the current social, political, economic and cultural contexts, in addition to the current field setting model.

Additional Models of Placement Provision

Figure Four in Chapter Seven provides an overview of existing, new and developing options of placement provision taken from four different sources. All of these options for placement provision have been described elsewhere in the thesis.[20] Therefore in this final chapter only the models of fieldwork education with the highest preferences in Figure Four (not counting the current field-setting model) are revisited. These are: an Internship model; followed by Student Units; and In-post placements. As already noted the internship model and in-post placements are primarily under the control of the agency. Only the Student Unit model emphasises a more equal sharing of responsiblity between agencies and education and training institutions with the potential for joint staff appointments. The reasons why an Internship model, a Student Unit model and In-post placements are currently receiving the most attention as additions and/or alternatives to the dominant field setting model are discussed below.

The Internship Model

The research findings show that the reasons why an internship model is currently receiving attention are related to:

- four year social work programmes attempting to maintain a competitive edge in the new social service education market place by introducing specialisation in particular fields of practice for their final year students

- moves towards the registration of social workers

- compatibility with other related disciplines (counselling, psychology, nursing, and teaching) which may become increasingly significant as a consequence of the trends towards deregulating the labour market in human service occupations

- fitting with agency requirements to recruit social workers who already have a knowledge base and technical skills specific to a particular field of practice

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[20] See Chapter Two and Chapter Seven.

The disadvantages of an internship model are discussed in more depth in Chapter Seven. In summary, an internship model is very resource intensive for agencies and could only provide a limited number of practicums. While internships have a history in other disciplines and in social work education and training in some countries, this is not a model which has a history in social work education and training in Aotearoa/New Zealand and would therefore require significant developmental work. Participants in this research also expressed concerns about whether or not agencies could provide a good internship for students, when they perceive that their organisations are not doing very well in providing a good induction for new graduates.

Student Units

The research findings show that the reasons why the Student Unit model is worthy of reconsideration are:

- it has a successful history in the provision of practical training for social workers
- it provides opportunities for peer learning and peer assessment
- it ensures that the placement is a learning experience
- it is a culturally appropriate model for Maori and Pacific Island students as it provides a support system
- it offers a structural arrangement which promotes networking and collaboration between agency and educational settings, with the potential for joint staff appointments and input by fieldwork supervisors into the educational curriculum.
- it provides agencies with the opportunities to look at a range of students with a view to potential recruitment

In-Post Placements

In-post placements did not receive a lot of attention from the research participants, but is a model mentioned in the literature on fieldwork, by the ITO and by Beddoe and Worrall (1997b) in their article on paradigms for fieldwork in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This model of placement provision also received consideration at the fieldwork education conferences I attended in 1997 (described in Chapter One). The interest in in-post placements (which are not a new model in Aotearoa/New Zealand) may be reflective of a trend towards in-house technical training in the social services which is occuring in Britain with the introduction of National Vocational qualifications in the social services and with

employment based routes to obtaining the Diploma in Social Work (Dominelli, 1997a: 121-124).[21]

The reasons why this model is currently receiving attention are:

- In-post study is attractive to students already employed in a social service agency in preference to surviving on student allowances and student loans[22] and in preference to taking unpaid leave to undertake a placement.

- In-post placements are attractive to employers who have a preference for in-house technical training.

In-post placements are not without their pitfalls. Dominelli (1997a: 122) points out that such placements may compromise "a student's ability to stand back from the pressures of day-to-day responses to the job or be critical of practice". However, as noted in Chapter Two, Randal (1997) in an unpublished paper on "(Re)learning in the Workplace" offers some useful suggestions for avoiding the pitfalls of managing the dual roles of employee and student. Educators are generally not in favour of any more than one placement being completed in-post, because it is important to retain the opportunity for students to reflect critically on developments in social work practice by experiencing a range of settings and a range of theories and models of practice.

In summary, I argue that in considering models of placement provision which are viable in the current economic, political and social climate, the research findings show the need for:

- a range of models
- models which are based on collective ownership of fieldwork education by agencies and education and training providers
- models which can respond to workforce trends to structure social service organisations in different ways
- models which are flexible enough to allow for the provision of fieldwork placements in newly developing areas of practice, for example, Iwi Social Services and social work in schools
- culturally diverse models of fieldwork

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[21] Trends in Britain towards lower qualifications and in-post training are in direct contrast to developments in Europe where a three year minimum period for education and training for a professional social work qualification which takes place in a tertiary educational institution is required by European Union regulations (see Dominelli, 1997a: 124 and 192).

[22] Especially students with dependants and mortgages.

Future Directions In Policy, Practice and Research

The final part of this chapter looks at the recommendations which come from the research findings for future directions in policy, practice and research. Cooper (1995a: 7) in a keynote address to the NZCETSS Fieldwork Symposium, held in Auckland in March 1995, proposed that it is easier "to make cosmetic curriculum or organisational changes" to the arrangements for fieldwork education, but much more difficult "to make structural changes which impact on the resources of the practicum and the contextual conditions under which it exists". The changes suggested by participants in the research, outlined below, do cover both ends of the spectrum identified by Cooper (ibid). In considering future developmental tracks in fieldwork education it has been difficult to separate out policy recommendations from practice recommendations. It is therefore proposed that it is more useful to consider the levels at which decision-making can take place. Recommendations about quality assurance measures in fieldwork education are linked with wider debates about social worker registration and structural change, involving a number of interest groups. Similarly, the implementation of a contractual model of placement provision is linked to broader ethical and philosophical considerations. Discussion about these two topics are at different levels which I have referred to as "macro", in the sense that the implementation of these recommendations would require structural changes and would involve a number of groups with a stake in fieldwork education in social work in decision-making. I have referred to the remainder of the recommendations as "micro", in the sense that they could be implemented immediately by either agencies and/or education and training institutions. The first set of recommendations are related to the "contextual conditions" in which fieldwork education is situated, while the second set of recommendations are the "cosmetic curriculum or organisational changes" to which Cooper (1995a: 7) refers. This section then concludes with some recommendations for further research arising from this thesis.

Recommendations for Future Directions in Policy and Practice

Quality Assurance Measures

The report prepared for the New Zealand Children Young Persons and Families Service (CYPFS) in March 1996 by Coopers and Lybrand points out that the professional status of social workers in Aotearoa/New Zealand differs from other comparable occupational groups (for example, teachers, nurses and psychologists) because:

1). there is no independent, statutory body which is universally recognised as bestowing professional status;

2) there are no formal academic, practical or other criteria which must be satisfied by aspiring practitioners;

3) there are no statutory limitations on the right to practice as, or describe oneself as a social worker.

These are serious points. The implications for fieldwork pertain to the need for better quality assurance measures for those who are responsible for educating and training social work students in the field. As discussed earlier in this chapter, in 1993, the New Zealand Council for Education and Training in the Social Services (NZCETSS) provided some very clear guidelines for addressing the lack of quality assurance measures for social work practice placements, including standards of fieldwork teaching; cultural appropriateness; training of fieldwork teachers; mediation when placement disputes arise; the development of a curriculum for fieldwork and overall evaluation of the fieldwork component of the social work programme (NZCETSS, 1993: 15). Five years later, all of the areas raised by NZCETSS were still of concern to participants in this research.

It appears that the stumbling blocks to the implementation of the policy recommendations described above, are related to two factors. Firstly, the continuing debate over whose responsibility it is to resource fieldwork education. Secondly, the lack of an independent body to bring together all of the interested parties so that there can be collective "ownership" of the problems and collective involvement in finding solutions to some of the current difficulties around fieldwork education in social work. Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi, the Industry Training Organisation for the social services, is perceived as primarily representing the interests of employers. As previously noted, if it is considered to be important to have an independent body setting and monitoring standards of fieldwork supervision, then the New Zealand Association of Social Workers (NZASW) seems to be the one organisation that could potentially have a role in the implementation the quality assurance measures outlined above.[23]

The recommendation which emerges from this research is the need for some forum which brings together all of those groups with an interest in fieldwork education in social work. This could be a national forum or a number of meetings in different regions. It could be along the lines of particular organisations developing strategic alliances with one or more

[23] However, as discussed in Chapter Seven, NZASW is restricted by its voluntary membership and insecure financial base.

education and training providers, and this is already beginning to occur in response to a shortage of placements in particular practice settings (as discussed below). However, I would be in favour of a broader forum with representation from all sectors of the social services industry, all the social work programmes, the professional association and the student body[24]. I have no clear picture of who could bring all of these groups together in the current environment. The research findings do however provide a clear picture of some of the issues which would need to be addressed at a forum in fieldwork education, namely the funding base for fieldwork education in social work; the status of practice teaching in agencies; quality assurance measures for fieldwork; and training and support for fieldwork supervisors.

A Commercial Transaction Model of Placement Provision?

Another likely development track in fieldwork education in social work is the increased use of a commercial transaction model of placement provision whereby large social service agencies enter into contractual arrangements with education and training institutions to provide placements in return for: a greater input into the educational curriculum; a commitment by the educational setting to prepare students with the specialised knowledge and skills required to work in their particular field of practice, (for example child protection, mental health, family therapy and so on); and probably in return for some financial remuneration.

This research cautions against moves towards turning the provision of fieldwork placements into commercial transactions for several reasons. Firstly, contractual arrangements will not necessarily improve the quality of the learning experience provided for the student. As well as feeling pressured by education and training institutions to take students on placements, fieldwork supervisors may feel pressured by their agencies to take on a student because it will bring funding to the agency. Secondly, the emphasis on early specialisation and technical competencies for performance in a particular field of practice is likely to detract from a broad based humanistic and critical social work education with a range of fieldwork experiences. Related to this point is the decrease in professional social work identity which is a likely consequence of the emphasis on in-house technical training. The tension between the agency accountable employee and the autonomous professional practitioner has been evident throughout the history of social work education (Harré-Hindmarsh, 1992). A further consideration also related to the point about the emphasis on specialisation, is that as the popularity of different fields of practice varies, the likely consequences are an under supply of placements in some

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[24] The Fieldwork Symposium sponsored by NZCETSS in March 1995 comes closest to providing the kind of forum I am proposing.

practice settings and an over supply of placements which are not taken up by students, in other practice settings.

Thirdly, smaller voluntary organisations, community development programmes and newly developing areas of practice, subject to an insecure funding base, are unlikely to be able to enter into a contractual arrangement with tertiary institutions, whereby they can guarantee to take a student and this may act as a disincentive to offering a placement.[25] Fourthly, as Cooper (1995a: 15) writing from her experiences in social work education in Australia, comments, there are practical difficulties in working out "the cost in monetary terms of the work of the supervisor, the developmental benefits associated with student supervision and the student contribution to agency work". These difficulties probably explain why the New Zealand Ministry of Health which attempted a costing exercise in 1993, decided that clinical access for social work students was "fiscally neutral".

Changes in Agency Policy and Practice

Several suggestions for changes to agency policy and practice around fieldwork placements come from this thesis, both from the research findings and from the review of the literature.

The first point is that the research findings show that the commitment to becoming involved in the education and training of social work students is stronger where there is a high proportion of qualified social workers in the agency and strongest where the manager of the agency also has a social work qualification. The trend towards appointing managers of social service organisations for their management expertise rather than their affinity to the professional discipline of social work is working against agency involvement in social work education and training (Beddoe and Worrall, 1997a).

The findings of this research support a recommendation that disciplinary knowledge and management expertise are both necessary for the delivery of effective and efficient social work services. In sectors such as health social work, the maintenance of a professional social work identity is under threat, as is evident from comments by some of the research participants about the (lack of) commitment from some managers to being involved in the training of the next generation of social workers and contestation from other disciplines for roles previously undertaken by social workers. The redefinition of the social work

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[25] Although as I have already argued earlier in this chapter, there is a need for a range of models of placement provision and there is no reason why these agencies could not continue to offer placements under the Field Setting Model. The impact of specialisation may be greater with regard to the uptake of placements by students in different areas of practice, rather than on the range of placements offered.

role is not just specific to health, but is evident in other statutory settings such as welfare and justice.

The second recommendation is the inclusion of student supervision in the job descriptions of fieldwork supervisors, as this is one indicator of the importance the organisation places on the provision of practical training for students. The third recommendation is for agencies to address the issue of the provision of workload relief for fieldwork supervisors while the student is on placement. The suggestion by Preston-Shoot (1989) that as part of placement negotiations, practice teachers should also have a contractual agreement with their agency manager which specifies the workload relief and support they will receive during the placement, is an excellent one. Fouthly, student supervision was seen by respondents in this research, to be linked with the overall value placed on supervision within the organisational culture of the agency.[26] Participants at the final group meeting were of the opinion that any developments which raised the overall status of social work supervision, for example supervision training, would also improve the quality of student supervision.

A fifth recommendation is to make student placements a team responsibility. One of the major drawbacks of the current field setting model of placement provision is that all of the responsibility for the student tends to fall on one person. Unless peer support groups are established, students and fieldwork supervisors can feel isolated from other students and other supervisors. Cooper (1995) points out that the emphasis on a one to one relationship in a field setting model of placement provision is both time consuming and resource intensive. Participants in this research thought that it was a good idea for a student to be allocated to a team rather than just one person [27] because "it enables the student to benefit from the experience of many different ways of working and different perspectives" (Supervisor, Voluntary Agency). As work practices, particularly in the health sector, are reorganised into multi-disciplinary teams, other respondents pointed out that it is crucial that other disciplines are supportive of and become involved with, social work students on placement, both for the students' benefit, but also so other disciplines gain an appreciation of the contribution of social work. On the positive side, fieldwork supervisors who took part in the individual in-depth interviews, reported that making student placements a team responsibility is already occurring in a number of practice settings.

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[26] See Figure Three, pg 108 - Recommendations from Second Group Meeting.
[27] See Chapter Six.

Changes in Education and Training Institution Policy and Practice

The research findings provide recommendations for changes to policy and practice with regard to relationships between education and training institutions and social service organisations. These are discussed below.

Better Coordination of Requests for Student Placements

With regard to changes in the policy and practice of the Schools of Social Work pertaining to fieldwork, one recommendation for changes to the current set of arrangements relates to better coordination of requests for student placements, for example the suggestion the social work courses stagger placements so they are not all sending their students out on placement at the same time of the year.

Selection of Supervisors and Students

The research findings also offer some suggestions for the development of policy and practice around the selection and accreditation of fieldwork supervisors by education and training institutions which have already been addressed in an earlier section of this final chapter. The group participants at the final meeting also recommended that education and training institutions improve their selection processes for students aspiring to become social workers. They expressed concerns that the proliferation of courses and qualifications for social service workers, all requiring fieldwork experiences, could lead to a reduction in standards, for example in the length or number of placements or to an increase in in-post placements where the social worker was still treated as an employee and not as a student.

Specific Training about Assessment

The research findings show that assessment of students' performance and competence is an area in which fieldwork supervisors could benefit from more education and training. In Chapter Five, participants describe the areas of difficulty they have experienced with the assessor role, which mirror the findings of other research (Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes, 1996). Some fieldwork supervisors in this research commented on the dangers of relying solely on *self-reporting* by students about their work. This is because in wanting to present their performance in a good light, students may intentionally or unintentionally distort what actually happened. It is important to note that this is different

to the next recommendation about supervisors facilitating students to be *self-reflective* about their practice. In Britain, it is a requirement in the performance standards for practice teachers introduced by CCETSW in 1991, that a student's practice is "directly and systematically observed by a practice teacher and that the evidence from these observations must be included in the final (assessment) report" (Shardlow and Doel, 1993: 72).

Several group participants and several individual interviewees recommended that students on placement ought to be learning about self-monitoring, not just seeing assessment as something that is the responsibility of the supervisor. One supervisor from a voluntary agency, quoted in Chapter Five, made the important point that if fieldwork supervisors can role model a process of self-assessment and peer assessment then students will take that learning into their own social work practice. She pointed out that the ability to self-assess is "fundamental in terms of the safety of clients" (Supervisor, Voluntary Agency). Boud and Knights (1996: 31) stress some of the difficulties in assessing reflective learning when they ask "what kind of evidence can students be expected to provide to indicate that they have been engaged in reflection, how can this evidence be collected without inhibiting the very processes which we are seeking to encourage and how should this be assessed"? I have already argued that the development of a critical reflective model of the practicum requires researching in its own right, and I would see the question of how reflective learning can be assessed as being part of that further research. Participants in this research also recommended that assessment needs to be built in right throughout the placement, rather than trying to tie it all together at the end, which is similar to the findings of other researchers (Fisher, 1990; Shardlow and Doel, 1993; Rogers and McDonald, 1995).

The ways in which education and training institutions could assist fieldwork supervisors in the area of assessment by the provision of additional preparation and training could include:

•practical suggestions about a range of methods of assessment: student self-evaluation, learning diaries/practice journals, supervision notes, process recording, progress on learning goals, critical incident analysis, direct observation, taped interview, reports, letters and file notes, obtaining feedback from other staff and so on.

•providing some training about biases which can creep in to the assessment process.

As discussed in Chapter Five, there is a very low failure rate for social work students in their fieldwork placements (Eisenberg, Heycox and Hughes, 1996) and fieldwork

supervisors are often reluctant to fail students. It is suggested that if fieldwork supervisors receive more specific training in assessment processes, they are likely to feel more confident in making decisions about whether or not a student is ready to practice as a social worker.

If Things Go Wrong....

This section contains recommendations from fieldwork supervisors about how they could be better supported by the education and training institutions if difficulties arise on the placement. The first point to be emphasised is that supervisors felt that some of the difficulties they had experienced when placements had gone wrong could have been avoided. Firstly, they proposed that difficulties could have been avoided if pre-placement processes for matching students to supervisors and placements were improved by better student and agency profiles. Secondly, they felt that if once they had agreed to take a particular student, they had received more information prior to the placement, particularly regarding students about whom the social work programme had some concerns,[28] some problems could have been averted. Thirdly, participants suggested that if new supervisors and agencies taking a student from a social work programme for the first time, received additional support preferably by means of a visit by the Fieldwork Coordinator, not just by telephone contact,[29] then again some difficult issues could have been prevented.

Participants in this research were of the opinion that if things do go wrong on a placement, then the education and training institution has a responsibility to the fieldwork supervisor as well as to the student. In Chapter Six, supervisors reported mixed responses from education and training institutions to requests for assistance. The main recommendations for improvements to existing practice centred on a quicker response time and a personal visit from the liaision person which was focussed not just on discussion about the student's performance, but also allowed the visitor to spend time with the supervisor processing how they are feeling about the placement. I argue that this is important to fieldwork supervisors because most do not receive supervision from their agency supervisor with regard to the student placement, so unless the education and training institution picks up the issues, the fieldwork supervisor has no way of processing them. Hence the need for peer support and peer supervision and mentoring for fieldwork supervisors which is another recommendation which comes out of this research.[30]

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[28] The provisions of the Privacy Act place some limitations on the disclosure of information.
[29] This is of course easier to put into place for regional social work programmes than for national programmes which place students all over New Zealand, because of the costs involved in visiting agencies.
[30] See Chapter Six.

Recommendations for Future Directions In Research

A number of issues which suggest areas requiring further research have emerged from the research findings. The first area to be addressed in this section is the issue of responding to cultural diversity.

Responding to Cultural Diversity

The isolation of the current field setting model of placements, particularly for Maori and Pacific Island students has been noted. While the policy of most education and training institutions of attempting to place Maori and Pacific Island students in Maori or Pacific Island teams within mainstream agencies does solve some of the problems with regard to support for students and the observance of culturally appropriate processes, there is much work still to be done with regard to supervising, visiting and assessing these placements. It is likely that cultural models for fieldwork and assessment will evolve as students complete their practical training totally immersed in their own cultural setting. This is already beginning to occur as Iwi Social Services develop fieldwork opportunities for Maori students.

The issues which have been identified as requiring further study with regard to cultural appropriateness are: processes for matching students to placements and to fieldwork supervisors; processes for supporting and visiting placements in different cultural settings; negotiating supervision/mentoring arrangements; ensuring that the assessment processes which are required are culturally appropriate and ensuring that students are given the opportunity to explore and draw upon theories and models of social work practice from their own cultural base.

A "State of the Nation" Survey of Fieldwork Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand

In the current political and economic climate, it is essential to collect data about the effectiveness of the practical training component in social work education firstly, in order to argue for a more adequate funding base for fieldwork and secondly, in order to address a lack of confidence in the competence of social workers, expressed both in government reports (Mason Report, 1992) and in the media. In 1992 a national survey of field education was carried out in Australia under the auspices of the Australian Association of Social Work and Welfare Educators (Fook and Cleak, 1994). This survey yielded data about course types and numbers of students and placements; the ways in which field

education is staffed and administered by the Schools of Social Work; processes by which placements were obtained; models of fieldwork provision and payment for field supervision; collaboration and coordination amongst Schools of Social Work with regard to obtaining placements; minimum standards for field education; integration of field education with the rest of the curriculum; the costs of providing the field education component of the social work programme; and issues for field educators (Fook and Cleak, 1994).

The results of the Australian survey, suggested that so much time is spent in obtaining and supporting placements, that there is very little time or resources for the development of quality assurance measures and education and training for field educators (Fook and Cleak, 1994: 38). The findings of this research suggest that if a similar study was carried out in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the findings would be very comparable.

If a similar national survey into the state of field education in Aotearoa/New Zealand was undertaken, it could help to illuminate two key issues raised by this research, firstly, the implications for social work field education of the imposition of a managerialist framework in social service agencies and secondly, the implications of the introduction of a competency based approach to education and training.

In Chapter One I indicated that in order to obtain a complete picture of what is happening to fieldwork education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, research was needed which included the voices of all of the parties with an interest in social work education and training, namely, educators, students, fieldwork supervisors, managers of social service agencies, clients and bodies such as NZASW and the Industry Training Organisation for the Social Services. As concerns continue to be expressed about both the knowledge base and the funding base for fieldwork education in social work, it is timely to collect some comprehensive data so that we can begin to answer some basic questions about what is happening to social work education in this country. For example, information is needed about how many social workers we are producing; how many placements are being undertaken in social work training and the length and nature of these practicums; how trends towards specialisation in social work programmes are affecting fieldwork; how social work programmes prepare and train their fieldwork supervisors, how they obtain placements and how they integrate field and classroom learning.

Evaluation of Developments in the Training of Fieldwork Supervisors

If and when courses in practice teaching are developed in Aotearoa/New Zealand, it is proposed that such courses are subject to a formative evaluation study, in order to assist

education and training institutions to improve course content; to find out about the most effective methods of course delivery; and to research the impact of the additional preparation on the standards of practice teaching. In other words, we need to find out how fieldwork supervisors apply what they have learned on a practice teaching course in their supervision of students.

A personal research interest which has emerged through writing this thesis, is to undertake a study which looks in much greater depth at what is meant by a critical reflective model of the practicum in fieldwork education in social work, and particularly at how critical reflectivity might be included in the design of training for fieldwork supervisors. The study would explore if, and how, fieldwork supervisors build a critical reflective approach into their supervision of students and whether their ability to do this changes if they receive some further education and training in the whole area of reflective learning. The second part of the proposed research would be to explore students' perceptions of being supervised by a supervisor trained in a critical reflective model of the practicum[31].

Conclusion

This chapter has summarised all the previous chapters, thus drawing together the threads of the analysis. The ways in which the research findings have both provided some data about the initial research questions and raised further questions have been described. A Critical Reflective model of the practicum introduced in Chapter Three has been further evaluated. It has been argued that the ability to develop a capacity for critical reflection is crucial for social work students who will be working with a diversity of individuals and groups, many of whom are marginalised and extremely vulnerable. Social work students need to be assisted by their fieldwork supervisors to critically reflect on their practice so that their actions and those of the social service organisations in which they are employed, are directed to the goal of a just society. It is my intention to continue to develop these ideas in order to provide models of supervision and learning tools which will assist fieldwork supervisors to facilitate and promote both practical and critical reflectivity in their work with students.

Some key issues have been highlighted again in this final chapter. It is suggested that these are all significant areas which require consideration in decision-making about future

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[31] The first part of the proposed research which explores building practical and critical reflectivity into field educator training and then evaluating the outcomes, is similar to a Canadian study by Rogers and McDonald (1992). They were also concerned to conduct a follow up study about the effects on students of being on the receiving end of a critical reflective model of placement supervision.

directions pertaining to the set of arrangements around fieldwork education in social work. These key themes were:

- the impact of restructuring in both welfare agencies and educational institutions;
- the relative influence of employers/managers and educators over the educational curriculum necessary to educate and train a social worker and the effects of this on professional identity;
- the necessity for the introduction of formal processes for the selection and accreditation of fieldwork supervisors;
- the resource base for field education;
- models of placement provision currently receiving serious consideration either as an addition to, or as an alternative to, the current field setting model.

Finally all of the recommendations which arise out of the study for future directions in policy, practice and research in fieldwork education in social work were presented and briefly discussed.

A Final Note...

When Alice looked through the looking glass, she speculated that "it's very like our passage as far as you can see, only you know it may be quite different on beyond" (Carroll, 1948: 125)[32] and indeed it proved to be so. In this thesis, I have also explored something familiar and in that investigation I have also found some things which were unexpected and puzzling which it has been the purpose of the thesis to understand.

The findings of this research are not intended to represent the views of all fieldwork supervisors, but rather it is hoped that the small sample of fieldwork supervisors whose views are presented in this thesis will be the stimulus for ongoing dialogue and debate both with other fieldwork supervisors and with other stakeholders in fieldwork education. It was always the intention of the action research methodology used in this study that the research would have practical consequences in bringing about changes to the current set of arrangements pertaining to fieldwork if these were thought to be unsatisfactory in any ways. It is hoped that the summary of the key themes and recommendations emerging from the research presented in the final chapter, may serve as a stimulus for action. The researcher intends to ensure that the findings are presented to as wide an audience with an interest in fieldwork education as possible through seminars

[32] Through the Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll was originally published in 1871.

with educators and supervisors and through publication in journals and contributions to books. In my role as a Placement Coordinator, I will be part of the ongoing debates about how best to provide and resource fieldwork experiences for supervisors and social work students. I hope that both the findings of this research and the overview of policy, practice and research efforts in other countries around fieldwork education, will serve as a useful basis for informed decision making.

APPENDIX A

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORMS

Through The Looking Glass - Fieldwork Teachers' Perceptions of Their Role and Needs For Support, Education and Training

Information Sheet

The Researcher

My name is Gwen Ellis, and I am completing this research for my Master in Social Work degree. Currently I am employed at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at Massey University as a lecturer and placement coordinator. Prior to working at Massey, I have worked in hospitals and voluntary agencies as a social worker and as a manager. I supervised six social work students on placement over this period. I have been a member of an Advisory Group on Fieldwork for Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi Social Services Industry Training Organisation. This research will also be relevant to my involvement with a curriculum development group for a course in social work supervision, of which a specialist module could be on practice teaching for fieldwork supervisors.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time about any aspects of the research. I can be contacted at:-

Department of Social Policy and Social Work
Massey University
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North.

Phone: *(06) 350-4301 (direct line)*
(06) 350-5222 (to leave a message)
Fax: *(06) 350-5681*
Home: *(06) 356-4542*

My supervisors are Mary Nash and Rachael Selby who may also be contacted at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, at Massey University.

Phone: *Mary Nash* *(06) 350-5225*
Rachael Selby *(06) 350-4105*

What is the study about?

The study is concerned with social workers' experiences of the role of fieldwork supervisor/teacher and with their expectations of support, education and training to fulfil this role. I will consult with participants about the focus of the research, so that their issues and concerns in relation to fieldwork education in social work, are explored in the study. It is also intended that the study serve as a basis for introducing possible changes in existing arrangements and practices, if these are found to be unsatisfactory in any way.

What will participants have to do?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in group meetings in March or April 1996 and in November 1996. The meetings will be held in a convenient location in your region. Participants will be sent details of the date and venue for the first group meeting in their region. The meeting will last no more than two and a half hours and will be facilitated by the researcher.

Participants in the first group meeting will also be asked if they would be willing to take part in an in-depth interview about their experiences as a fieldwork supervisor/teacher. It is the intention of the researcher to carry out no more than eight individual interviews, which will be taped and transcribed. The person who transcribes the tapes will sign a confidentiality form as a condition of employment. Those who volunteer to take part in this intensive study will receive a further information sheet and sign an additional consent form.

In the second round of group meetings to be held in November 1996, a preliminary analysis of the findings will be given to participants for a critical discussion. At this time, any recommendations for changes to existing arrangements and practices will also be considered.

The opportunities for dialogue and reflection provided by the group meetings are an important part of the research process.

How much time will be involved?

For those who participate only in the group meetings, the time commitment will be approximately six hours. For those who participate in both the group meetings and also complete an individual interview, the time commitment will be approximately ten hours (two hours for the actual interview and two hours to check through the edited transcription).

What can participants expect from the researcher?

All participants will be treated with respect, have the right to contact me at any time for clarification about any aspects of the research, and will be provided with opportunities to have input so that the final research report is created and constructed by the participants and the researcher. The information collected will only be used for the purposes of the research, the research report and for publication of academic work.

Participants are assured that their participation will remain confidential at all times. All participants will receive a summary of the final research report.

Rights

If you decide to take part in the study, you will have the right to:-

- *refuse to answer any particular question and to withdraw from the study at any time*
- *ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during your participation*
- *provide information on the understanding that it is completely confidential to the researcher. It will not be possible to identify you in any of the reports that are prepared from the study.*
- *be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded*

MASSEY UNIVERSITY
HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Through the Looking Glass- Fieldwork Teachers' Perceptions of Their Role and Needs For Support, Education and Training

Consent Form For Group Meetings

I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, and to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that it is completely confidential and that it will not be possible to identify any person in any publications arising out of the research

I wish to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

*Signed:*_____

*Name:*_____

*Date:*_____

Additional Information Sheet for Individual Interviews

Your Participation

If you take part in the in-depth individual interviews, I will meet with you for a private interview. The interview will be arranged in August or September of 1996. I will travel to your region to carry out the interview. The interview will last no more than two hours, and with your permission, will be tape-recorded.

As soon as possible after the interview, I will send you a full transcription of the interview which I will ask you to check and to correct or change in any way that you think is necessary.

Rights

If you decide to take part in the study, you will have the right to:-

- *refuse to answer any particular question and to withdraw from the study at any time*
- *turn off the tape recorder at any time during the interview*
- *ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during your participation*
- *provide information on the understanding that it is completely confidential to the researcher. It will not be possible to identify you in any of the reports that are prepared from the study.*
- *be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded*

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I wish to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

*Signed:*_____

*Name:*_____

*Date:*_____

APPENDIX B

STIMULUS QUESTIONS AND DATA FROM FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS IN PALMERSTON NORTH AND NEW PLYMOUTH

CARD ONE: MOTIVATION FOR TAKING A STUDENT ON PLACEMENT

QUESTION: What motivates you to take a student on placement?

RESPONSES:

1A

- the challenge of taking on new ideas and people
- the need to stop and think about things again
- the desire to achieve a piece of work

1B

- a very interesting experience
- a means of revision, reflection, support, reassessment of self
- an understanding of student needs and we all have to start and train somewhere, somehow

1C

- an interest in being part of the learning process
- a learning experience in itself
- I like the teaching component

1D

- moments of insanity
- personal commitment to the continued development of social work as a profession
- spin-off to team as extra worker to do some tasks
- contribute to self and team of 'academic/fresh look at systems/new developments/reminders'
- link with Training Institute can be a source of stretching my day to day supervision /practice

1E

- I have a passion to share my knowledge and experiences
- it is also refreshing to gain others perspectives, especially students from other cultures

1F

- by my commitment to the social work profession
- out of an appreciation of what my 4 different fieldwork placements meant to me (as a student)
- by my vague hope that placements will ease recruitment problems

1G

- commitment to social work training and practice, especially raising status of geriatric social work
- enjoy the challenge
- a new fresh face to brighten up the agency
- great opportunity to reflect on one's own practice
- exchange of ideas, opportunities for one's own learning

1H

- good experience
- giving something back for what I got out of placements
- enjoy the energy and enthusiasm of students
- learning I get from the student

1I

- another pair of hands
- to give students a taste of the 'real world'
- a student who is motivated and keen
- if it is felt that they can 'give back' something to the agency
- students can bring a breath of fresh air to the agency with new ideas, eagerness etc.

1J

- exchange of ideas and information - inter-generational approach
- sense of obligation to the profession
- 'guilty' if I am not doing my share!
- may be helpful with 'boring' tasks!
- interest in new ideas

1K

- it's fun, challenging and keeps me young
- in an area of high stress and burn out, it's good to have an injection of enthusiasm
- students have access to resources and knowledge that I can tap into and vice versa
- it's always good to expand network
- enjoy encouraging and reinforcing the learning process

1L

- a desire to share skills and competencies from an experienced practitioner perspective
- the interest which new, young social workers bring to a job where many tasks and ideas may have become routinized. The challenge of new input from them and the institutions they come from is creative and energy producing.
- the increased learning about a job when one teaches it as well.

1M

- students motivation to learn
- helps to keep in contact with current models of practice

1N

- students bring energy and enthusiasm to the agency. It is a privilege to be part of their learning process.

1O

- putting something back into the system (having been a student)
- challenge/chance to review own practice
- share experience now that I am feeling more like an 'old hand'.

1P

- improve the quality of practice in social work and development of professionalism in social work
- enable a supportive environment for student learning that would encourage students to consider positively joining my agency and in unpopular areas of work
- refresh the local office with new ideas and ways of practising social work. Particularly useful for 'long in the tooth' social workers engrained in the agency and set ways of doing things.

1Q

- commitment to making available training opportunities for students
- commitment to the BSW programme
- an interest in social work education
- means to maintaining links with education and training institution.
- commitment to keeping in touch with current theories within social work education/practice
- benefit for the agency
- I like having a student around- they bring a 'different' perspective to the routine day to day activity of the organisation.

1R

- I find that having a student makes me think in more clear terms about how I practise and why I do what I do in my job.
- enjoy the stimulation and exchange of ideas
- helps me to stay fresh in my practice
- adds to the range of social work experience that I have - probably looks good on my CV

CARD TWO - JOB TITLE

QUESTIONS:

Here are some of the ways that the role of taking a social work student on placement are described in the literature:-

fieldwork supervisor - student supervisor - practice teacher -fieldwork instructor

Would you use one of the above to describe your role?
If yes, which one?
If no, what job title would you use?

RESPONSES:

2A
Practice Teacher

2B
The nearest way I would use to describe my role would be 'Student Supervisor' though I see myself at times functioning as Practice Tutor.

N.B. I also look to students to stimulate me professionally.

2C
I like Student Supervisor and Practice Teacher. Student Supervisor clarifies the role and relationship for others - important in a large multi-disciplinary organisation.

2D
Student Supervisor

2E
We are such a small agency that everyone knows who is supervising the student. Students as much as possible are absorbed into the everyday work of the agency. They receive their supervision time like everyone else - the difference is their supervision is weekly, others fortnightly.

No formal title.

2F
Student Supervisor

2G
Student Supervisor

2H
Student Supervisor or Practice Teacher

2I
Student Supervisor

2J
1) Student Supervisor
2) Fieldwork Supervisor (in that order)

2K
Student Supervisor

Because it most accurately reflects the task that I undertake when I have a student on placement. 'Supervision' adequately encompasses the variety of tasks involved in student placements - (teaching, challenging....)

2L
As a single supervisor, the title I use is Fieldwork Supervisor. Where the supervision is split there were two titles Fieldwork and Professional Development Supervisors.

2M
Student Supervisor

2N
Student Supervisor
All aspects of student work supervised - casework, admin supervision, report writing

2O
Student Supervisor

2P
Consultant Fieldwork Supervisor

First preferences:- Student Supervisor = 12; Practice Teacher = 1; Fieldwork Supervisor =2

CARD THREE - ROLES

QUESTIONS:

Here are some of the roles social workers take on when they have a student on placement:-

enabler * supporter * challenger * teacher * manager * evaluator/assessor * role model

1. **Write down any other roles that you think are important**
2. **Put these roles in order of importance to you**
3. **Which roles do you feel most prepared to take on?**

RESPONSES:

3A

Qu. 2

1 enabler
2 supporter
3 challenger
4 role model
5 evaluator
6 manager
7 teacher

3B
The roles are as follows in order of importance

1 enabler*
2 role model*
3 supporter
4 challenger
5 manager
6 teacher

I feel most prepared to take on roles marked * (i.e. enabler and role model)

3C

1 Role model
2 enabler
3 supporter
4 teacher
5 manager
6 evaluator
7 assessor

Qu 1
Advocate (within organisation) - another important role

Qu 3
I feel prepared to take on all of the roles, but each student presents a new challenge and different roles require different emphasis

3D

1 Role model
2 Supporter
3 Teacher
4 Challenger
5 Enabler
6 Manager
7 Evaluator

Qu 3
Role model

3E

I always have difficulty rating things in order of importance.
They are all important and a lot depends on the individual student
I would have a try at all of them.

3F

Qu. 1
Advocate with team

Qu. 2
1 teacher
2 enabler
3 supporter
4 challenger
5 role model
6 manager and advocate
7 evaluator

3G
1 enabler
2 teacher
3 supporter
4 role model
5 evaluator
6 manager
7 challenger

Qu. 3
enable
teacher
supporter

3H

1 Role model
2 Enabler
3 Supporter
4 Challenger
5 Teacher
6 Evaluator
7 Manager

Qu. 3
Most prepared to take on -
role model
enabler
supporter

3I

1 Supporter
2 Enabler
3 Teacher
4 Role Model
5 Manager
6 Challenger
7 Evaluator

Qu. 3
role of teacher is easiest for me!

3J

Qu 1
other important roles
colleague - as I believe in a two way learning model

Qu. 2
1 colleague
2 challenger
3 role model
4 enabler
5 teacher
6 evaluator
7 manager

Qu. 3
most prepared for:
colleague
challenger
enabler
evaluator

3K

Qu.1
co-worker

Qu.2

1 enabler
2 supporter
3 challenger
4 evaluator and assessor
5 role model
6 teacher
7 manager

Qu.3
1 to 5 (i.e. enabler, supporter, challenger, evaluator, role model)

3L

Qu. 1
Information source

Qu. 2
1 Teacher
2 Challenger
3 Enable/supporter
4 Evaluator/Assessor
5 Manager

Qu. 3
Enable/supporter

3M

1 Teacher
2 Evaluator
3 Challenger
4 Supporter
5 Enabler
6 Role model

Qu. 3
teacher, role model, enabler, evaluator/assessor

3N

1 Role model
2 Teacher
3 Supporter
4 Enabler
5 Evaluator/Assessor
6 Challenger
7 Manager

Qu. 3

Teacher
Supporter
Enabler
Assessor

3O

Qu. 1
Resource person
Advocate

Qu. 2
Order of importance - this is difficult - all are important!

1 Supporter/teacher
2 Assessor
3 Role model
4 Challenger
5 Enabler
6 Manager

Qu. 3
Teacher/supporter

3P

Qu.1
coach

Qu.2
1 teacher
2 coach
3 enabler
4 challenger
5 evaluator
6 role model
7 manager

3Q

Qu.1
Director of staff around the student
Advocate for student within the agency

Qu.2
1 enabler
2 supporter
3 manager/directing of staff/student can be a separate person within the agency
4 teacher/challenger
5 evaluator/assessor
6 role model

Qu. 3
enabler, supporter, teacher, role model

3R

Qu. 1
Advocate

Qu. 2
1 enabler*
2 teacher*
3 role model*
4 challenger*
5 supporter*
6 advocate*
7 evaluator
8 manager

Qu. 3
These are marked with a * (i.e. enabler, teacher, role model, challenger, supporter, advocate)

CARD FOUR - IMPORTANCE THE AGENCY GIVES TO STUDENT PLACEMENTS

QUESTION:

In your agency is student supervision seen as:-

a) an activity largely external to the main work of the agency
or
b) as a core agency function?

RESPONSES:

4A Student supervision in our agency is seen as a core agency function, I would like to see it largely external to the main work of the agency

4B In my agency, student supervision is seen as largely external to the main work of the agency (though we have a number of former social workers who are now service managers, all of whom are generally sympathetic and supportive).

The agency is still uncommitted about contributing financially towards the costs of social workers professional accreditation.

Also, as restructuring continues, generic health social work as a discipline appears to be less valued, hence leading to a reduction of emphasis on comprehensive training.

4C Historically our agency has a long association with the university and student placements, previously the student units assured that there were regular placements. Currently there is a mixed commitment and supervision of students and training is seen as an individual responsibility and choice of the individual social worker. Generally there is peer support for social workers supervisingstudents, but I don't believe it is now seen as a core agency function.

4D a) No. The supervision of the student is seen as vital to their learning.
b) Yes.(i.e. as core agency function).

4E Somewhere between the two but closer to (a) (i.e.external rather than core) e.g. there is some incentive but no real resources given to implement, e.g. time availability of supervisor. Student supervision is an add on to already very occupied supervisors.

4F Core agency function

4G a) external to main work of the agency

4H a) i.e. external to main work of the agency

4I At the hospital it is seen as **a** (i.e. external to the main work of the agency).

4J Sometimes it seems almost unofficial, i.e."if you think you have the time and energy to do it - go for it, but don't complain to me".

It doesn't seem like a high profile, endorsed agency function. There is no avenue to acquire the necessary resources e.g. accommodation. We supervisors feel guilty about the extra demand on clerical workers, cars etc. without really getting much in return.

4K In my agency we have all sorts of students e.g. nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists, doctors as well as social workers.

I don't think it would be considered a core function, however it is an agency process which is accepted by everyone as a way of life. In social work in my agency, you are expected to maintain the same workload, plus coordinate and maintain student placement.

4L Yes, supervision is seen as an activity largely external to the main work of the agency.

4M a) activity largely external to main work of the agency
b) **not (b)** as I have had a student approach us for 50hrs community work. Neither Site, Area or National office could provide service rules or expectations for students.

4N a) External Agency not supportive of social work issues and certainly not where students were concerned

b) Social workers saw it as an important function, not agency

4O Training students is totally external to my agency's function

4P Neither a) or b)

Very much in middle of continuum. Nationally general importance of 'professional development' - focused on time allowed for internal ongoing development, i.e. study leave and competency.

Fieldwork/students external to agency not really seen as CYPS problem.

Commitment to taking students depends on manager/local culture if this is important. Most strong when high proportion of 'grads/qualified staff' and more so if manager has qualifications. Time to do squashed into other duties however.

4Q Since social workers included 'student placement' in their job description (some years ago) this activity remains in the Senior Social Worker job description. However, in my agency it is seen as external to the main work of the agency.

4R Not applicable as I am a Consultant Supervisor.

External to main work of agency =13
In-between = 1
Core agency function = 3 (however one person may have misunderstood the question)

CARD FIVE - PARTNERSHIPS WITH EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

QUESTION:

How could cooperation between agencies and training institutions in fieldwork education for social work students be improved?

RESPONSES:

5A Cooperation between agencies is having a good networking skills/relationship - this is only done by networking & by sharing resources and not viewing training and education in a competitive manner, by allowing each other support through processes together rather than individual.

5B Greater sharing of resources
Greater awareness of curriculum
More communication about changes in each organisation

5C Partnership and cooperation between my agency and the university could be enhanced by way of opportunity to dialogue with lecturers and students fairly early in the year, on what a placement in my agency would offer to an interested student and what expectations of the student might be. Mid-placement staff visits are appreciated and should be continued with.

A further suggestion concerns the possibility of supervisors being polled for their ideas for inclusion in the agenda for study days for fieldwork supervisors - i.e. to ensure that our issues are adequately reflected in the business of these potentially important gatherings.

5D Support meetings for supervisors throughout the placement i.e. once a month, with a tutor facilitating.

5E I was quite happy with the cooperation that occurred between my agency and x university last year. I thought the Supervisor's Day was most helpful. I suppose acknowledgement from x university re the heavy demands already placed on supervisors in our organisation is really important.

5F More visits with objectives clearly outlined
More facilitated meetings between peer supervisors

5G Regular contact
Keep informed

5H Payment to agencies on contract basis to the training institutions for time given in preparing for placements and time spent on the placement of students, i.e. it is a 'user pays' world now - not ideal but realistic!

5I It feels a very one way process at present. The training institutions could be more available to the community. It is o.k. if the placements are going well. Staff visits I'm unsure of their benefit, it seems like something to get over with.

5J

- get rid of the fiscally driven social work manager
- maybe x university could employ student unit supervisors in agencies
- more literature to be sent to supervisors on curriculum
- clearer indication on assessment/evaluation standards as I expect these are very much individually driven

5K More formal recognition of supervision demands by agency i.e. in career path structure as it is such a commitment in terms of time

Training institutions are always grateful and supportive, but there is always some conflict about the time away from normal tasks for supervisors

Accreditation and formal training would address this

5L Education

The agency could be encouraged to understand the eventual value of a trained student, familiar with their agency. Could lead to possible employment in the future. The agency could be encouraged to recognise the value of a student in terms of interaction & input into the agency.

The training institution could possibly improve liaison with agency - 'public relations' role.

5M More direct liaison between an agency rep and x university rep to plan and coordinate placements.

More involvement of the placement supervisor with the course i.e. availability of course content info would be beneficial

More availability of the placement coordinators with agencies who offer placements (I appreciate there are only 2 people involved as coordinators from x university).

5N X university's very clear manual is extremely good compared with the other school of social work practice manual.

With the other school good guidelines and expectations are necessary. Access with Student Placement supervisor essential for a good placement.

Agency rules and expectations would assist both the student supervisor and student as they are aware of the Social Work Schools' expectations but the agency expectations are unclear.

Proposal - a national NZQA student placement manual and training for student supervisors would be helpful.

5O

By setting standards for contracts, evaluation and expected outcomes of all parties to the placement. Preferably national standards.

5P

- more cooperation between fieldwork placements/training institution, i.e. staggering so they don't all want placements at same time.
- agreement between training institutions about 'territories' i.e. some other way of managing so agencies don't have the pressure put on by several institutions and several students.
- National presentation and ongoing P/R from institution about importance of role rather than personal/local commitment
- Newsletter for all players in game or some form of communication rather than disjointed process as now. Perhaps under NZASW or NZQA umbrella
- Training for student supervisors offered regionally by joint efforts of Training Institutes.

5Q Some agencies have little knowledge or understanding of social work and it is a constant process of education. As agencies move more and more towards 'dollar driven' services (e.g. healthcare agencies), I think the difficulties will increase.

Perhaps we shall need to present student placements emphasising the 'cost-effectiveness', 'efficiency', 'quality assurance' aspects! Sorry - I'm quite cynical.

5R As a consultant supervisor it would have been helpful if my role with the school's supervisor had been explained to him in more depth. He was quite unclear as why I had been employed & what we were both supposed to be doing.

It would have been helpful with one of my students I had concerns about if I could have had more information about her before I supervised her. Once I contacted x university, it seemed they had similar concerns, this would have been good to know prior to the placement.

CARD SIX - SUPPORT AND TRAINING FOR STUDENT SUPERVISORS FROM AGENCIES AND FROM EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTION

QUESTIONS:

a) **What support and training have you received in your agency that has helped you in your role as student supervisor?**

b) **What support and training have you received from the social work course when you have taken a student on placement?**

c) **What additional support and training would be important to you?**

RESPONSES:

6A

a) I have not had any support or training in the agency in my role as a student supervisor.

b) I have not had any training while I attended a social work course, except when I attended x university. I felt this was worthwhile

c) Whilst some training through the main, may be helpful, it has not met my needs specifically. Additional support and training comes from my own people, such as Te Wananga.

6B

a) Clinical Supervision course paid for by my present agency (before last restructuring)

Encouragement by my Service Manager

b) Fieldwork Placement manual was a very useful document

Mid-placement tutor visits have been appreciated

Supervisor's Day a 'mixed package' - such days sometimes seem lacking in direct application to placement issues

c) I would appreciate brief postings from x university of literature/current issues/curriculum emphasis etc. - also access to the university library

6C

a)
- The agency supports taking students, i.e. if you want to have a student you can.
- Practice Consultant is available for further support if needed
- Training - any training in supervision is helpful for supervising a student

b)
- Training Day at x university
- Visit from tutor half way through placement

c)
- Formal training in supervision, i.e. a diploma or certificate
- The training day x university provides is great & would be better if this was extended i.e. 2 or 3 days training going over in depth:

- contracts
- relating theory to practice
- how to deal with placements that are not going well etc.

- University visitor spending time with supervisor as to how it has been for them -
- not discussing just the student's placement!

6D

a) Have attended courses for supervisors (i.e. general not for supervisors of students).

b) Attendance at 1 day at x university
The Manual!

c) Perhaps more training on evaluation and assessment.
Certainly more understanding as to what the 'current' theory is that the student has had inputted especially in the last year or so prior to placement.

6E

a) Weekly case discussions
Training sessions in different aspects of the work
Supervisors training days

b) Visits from university trainers

c) additional?
more short seminars (which are prepared for) to link in with peer supervisors with a topic addressed by the lecturer and some theory (articles?) to back up topic.

6F

a) very little training from the agency

b) one day training

c) ongoing support -
training at the beginning
also while student is still on placement

6G

a) the availability of (limited) resources.
Supervision for the student supervisor
Lots of support from the agency but not any specific 'student supervision' training

b) the opportunity to attend the training days provided by x university prior to the beginning of student placements

c) Support- payment to the agency for taking a student. A well organised placement takes time and resources

The university coming <u>out</u> and doing training in the community, not the agencies always going to the university.

6H

a) Peer support from other staff. Little training but some understanding because of our process in supervision. Most training self motivated.

b) Attended Supervisor's day last year. Really appreciate the user friendly handbook. Apart from student/supervisor visit mid-placement, little face to face support. Feel able to contact university if problems arise.

c) Some evaluation of present performance as a supervisor. Regular meetings with other supervisors useful. Would like more training on supervision styles.

6I

a) support from peers - taking students on visits etc.

b) supervisor's day seminar - feel that fieldwork organisers accessible

c) I would be interested in supervision course/certificate - would give confidence

6J

a) not much support or training from my agency!

b) I am not sure that I have had a course previously?

c) Time to attend a course - even out of working hours - possibly at a weekend would be helpful as far as training goes.

Support from agency would be really helpful. If it was actually fed into formalised job descriptions and contracts - this should be an issue taken up with Managers and education and training institutions. Again this is linked to cost. If it was seen as revenue generating for the agency it would be more proactively received!

6K

a) sent by agency to an accredited Clinical supervision course as I also supervise other staff members

b) x university staff easily accessible by phone or fax - in my experience they always reply to any queries

c) more knowledge on changes in degree programme

6L

a) agency not very aware of student role. In terms of training - agency too involved with health needs and changes to focus on student needs
Individually staff (nurses, clinicians etc) supportive of student.

b) I received all the support, interaction etc I asked for and needed

c) I intend doing the supervision course to be offered at x university & to develop 'contacts' for the future

6M

1 **Support** my supervisor (the Manager) provides support and encouragement to have a student on placement. Without that it would be difficult to a) offer a placement and b) run a successful placement.

2 **Training** Nil other than attendance at a 'clinical supervision' training course run by Institute of Technology - my attendance was due to the fact that I was supervising other social workers. I received support and permission to attend x university's Student Supervisors 1 day course.

3 The student supervision/placement handbook
Availability of a contact/liaison person when there have been problems/ issues/queries that needed to be dealt with/resolved.

4 More regular contact with education and training institution i.e. regular training days - once a year maybe.

6 N

a) None specific to student supervision.
Funded on a training course in clinical supervision.

b) A lot of support from university when requested. No training.

c) For supervisors who have never themselves been on placements before and therefore do not have their own experiences to draw on, some initial training would be very useful.

6O

a) none specifically related to student supervision

b) I have received one full days training & a number of visits and phone support calls from x university.

c) Prior to first placement a day outlining the expectations of all parties concerned.

6P

a) permission to attend x university's Supervisors Training day - during work time and paid for
- support by management to complete the task
- resources - car, desk etc etc.

b) varies depending on Training Institute
x university excellent - Handbook, support when phoned
y polytechnic - little input before, during or after

c) Training within agency - to support expected role/task. Co-ordinated training from Training Institutes.

6Q

a) As I was a consultant supervisor I worked on my own. I found the issue of getting supervision for myself a difficult one. In the end I didn't have any other than ringing x university to discuss particular problems. My supervisor for my job at the time, also kindly provided some supervision but this wasn't part of her job description. The supervisors in the student's agency also provided a sounding board and we provided support to one another. I would have had to travel long distances & pay someone to supervise me.

b) The training day x university was excellent. Lecturers also were supportive when I called on them. An earlier placement visit from a lecturer would have been helpful with one student I had concerns about.

c) I would call on the staff visitor for assistance earlier in the piece if I had any concerns about a student I had.

6R

a) Time for being a student supervisor
No training provided although in house Human Resource training could be useful

b) With x university student - very little support and no training. Used own placement material as a guide

c) Contact with Student Placement Coordinator
Training from School on process & timeframes being spelt out.

CARD SEVEN - QUALITY OF PLACEMENTS

QUESTIONS:

What constitutes good practice teaching and how can this be promoted?

If there were no resource constraints, what would be the ideal model for fieldwork education in social work?

RESPONSES:

7A

a) Open, honest communication
Opportunities for growth - professionally, personally
Well resourced agencies - time, space, cars etc.

b) Paid fieldwork educators in some of the agencies - like the old student units.

7B

a)

- Involvement with the student - i.e. accompanying them to interviews and activities they are coordinating with clients
- Having time to discuss issues, themes, theories, models, practice etc in a manner which enhances the students competence and results in them learning
- Matching up academic strengths and weaknesses with placement goals and tasks while on placement.
- Matching up learning goals with what the placement can offer.

b)

- One that matches up the strengths and weaknesses of both social worker and supervisor with what an agency can offer and the student's placement learning goals.

7C

a) the ability of the supervisor to be able to provide a level of support which changes with the changing needs of the students as the placement progresses.

b) the provision of full-time trained fieldwork supervisors in all aspects of social work.

7D

a) combination of academic, agency working and professional interaction all coming together on placement.
Use of field experience and teaching of agency processes & concept of social work. Linking the professional expectations with day to day activities by supervision that allows the student to reflect on practice with the issues that have been raised.

b) No resource constraints

Linking student with placement at the education and training institution before placement and student aware of agency expectations.
Computer link with School to provide student access to academic/professional support
Groups of like students and student supervisors to contact each other for support

7E

a) Good practice teaching - supervisors need to be very competent in recognising deficiencies, needs and good basic social work practice.
b) Fieldwork (ideal) - students to have closer individual attention from supervisor. Much more case discussion, including social work principles relating theory to practice.

7F

a) Membership of team/co-working/sufficient time for quality induction
Regular (weekly) supervision and coaching needed
Updating/educative of student supervisor

b) Student Units
More placements esp at Bachelor level x4
Diploma level x2
Variety (Statutory/non-statutory agencies) in placements undertaken by each student

7G

a) Good Practice teaching is being very clear about expectations, boundaries, processes and being able to go out with the student during the course of working with families.

7H

a) Good practice teaching would (ideally) see agency supervisor supplied with appropriate synopses of teaching material - even a detailed book list might be a start - ahead of the actual placement. Supervisors also accorded 'honorary staff member' status with free access to university library.

b) In an ideal world, the agency would make a financial investment in the placement - e.g. freeing up some staff hours specifically for fieldwork supervision. An occasional exchange of fieldwork teacher and agency supervisor roles (with approval of our respective employers) might also be a help. In larger agencies, the need could be assessed for a re-introduction of student units. In reality, the

present market-driven economy and agency restructuring makes most of these ideas seem out of reach.

7I

a) good teaching
depends on social work task in agency

b) in the field I was in -
apprentice model (theory-practice - feedback- do (with the use of one way screen)
+seminars
+exposure to team work

7J

a) Ongoing contact with the University by way of visits

b) Student Units

7K

a) knowledge of own area & strengths and weaknesses of own practice. Knowledge also of current social work theories and models & of student curriculum. Working where student is at and gauging confidence and knowledge. I find using and sticking to a clear process helpful. Tandem cases.

b) observation/participation/evaluation. More time to spend planning/giving more opportunities to be creative and explore resources.

7L

a) clear direction
fairness
supportive

b) ideal model would contain time and space for supervisor to do more observing of the student 'in action' so to speak rather than having to rely mainly on feedback from colleagues & student themselves as to how they are going.

7M

a) Good Practice Teaching

- understanding of social work
- able to teach well i.e. listen, pass on information, keep student motivated
- able to challenge appropriately
- link theory to practice
- has the time available!
- good induction into the agency.

b) Student Units

I had experience of being placed in a student unit & having a student unit supervisor who had the time, energy & commitment to put into students.

Practice teachers who are paid to supervise students i.e.1/2 the normal tasks are removed while a person supervises a student.

7 N

a) Good Practice Teaching

- Knowledge of models of practice
- Empathy with the student
- Choice of student in terms of their genuine interest in a particular agency & most importantly with a client group that they need to work with.
- Close collaboration between agency supervisor and academic supervisor.

7O

a) Good Practice teaching

- supportive learning environment
- good liaison between university & agency
- up to date knowledge of current theories & practice models
- constructive feedback which is neither warm fuzzy platitudes nor
- tyrannical.

b) Ideal model for fieldwork education

The facility to enable students to pick up a case load (supervised of course) in their first placement which they could carry through until the end of their degree. Kind of like a student clinic. Population base of Palmerston North would of course have to be bigger - failing this, how about bringing in outside experts to run practical based training courses in family therapy, counselling and group work so that students also have the skills as well as the theory base.

7P

Each student brings different challenges

a) Good practice teaching - experienced in the work, open to new ideas, a calm, confident role model with a clear understanding of ethical issues.
b) Don't know

7Q

a) Gradual process of orientation, observing and taking on casework with constant supervision and time to reflect.

b) We always feel that it is ideal to have more than one student at a time in our agency as this is supportive for them.

I think that there should be some benefits for the supervisor e.g. some relief from ongoing caseload or commitment from co-worker to oversee some pieces of work in their area of interest.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Basic aim is 'to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms' (Patton 1990: 290). I included this quotation at the beginning of the Interview Guide as a reminder for myself about my basic aim which was to build a conversation with each participant and to ensure that certain content areas were covered.

Introduction

This introduction was not read out to participants word for word, but rather served as a check for me that I had explained the purpose and process of the individual interviews to each participant.

In this interview we will have a conversation about your experiences as a supervisor of social work students on placement. I have some general areas I would like to explore with you over the course of the interview and these same areas will be explored with each person I interview. The areas to be explored come from a review of other research into fieldwork education in social work and from issues and concerns raised at the group meetings held in Palmerston North and New Plymouth earlier this year.

Please ask if you want clarification of any of the questions I ask. If you would like the tape recorder turned off at any time during the interview, please tell me. As you know I am collecting information about fieldwork supervisors perceptions of their role and their expectations for support, education and training to fulfil this role. I hope that the data which I collect will be useful for generating recommendations for changes to fieldwork education practices if these prove to be unsatisfactory in any way.

Research questions:-

These were not discussed with participants but were included here to remind me of the three research questions which I had identified in my Research Proposal, to help me to keep these questions in mind throughout the interview.

Do fieldwork supervisors need to receive some preparation for taking on the tasks of student supervision?

Where does the responsibility for supporting and training fieldwork teachers lie?

What are the most appropriate locations and methods of education and training for fieldwork teaching?

Profile*

Name: **Male/Female**

Agency:

Agency address:

Ethnicity and Iwi (if applicable)

Where did you complete your social work training?

When did you complete your social work training?

Do you belong to a professional association e.g. NZASW, NZAC?

How many times have you supervised a social work student placement?

For which training institutions have you been a fieldwork supervisor?

Do you currently have a student on placement? Yes/No

If yes:

Which training course is your student from?

In what capacity are you supervising the student (i.e. as Agency supervisor or as Consultant supervisor)?

Are there any other areas of social work practice you have worked in other than your present area?

***Note: this profile was usually completed at the end of the interview**

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Area One - Experiences of Student Supervision

How did you become involved in supervising students?

Tell me about your experiences of supervising students?

Prompts*: What have you enjoyed?
What have you not enjoyed?
If positive - what made for a positive experience?
If negative - what made it a negative experience?

*Note: the prompts were only used if necessary and at times we departed from the Interview questions in order to discuss an interesting issue raised by a participant, returning to the guide only after that particular issue had been followed up.

Area Two - How have you learned about being a supervisor?

How would you describe your own experiences of receiving supervision?

Prompt: positive experience??

Do you supervise other workers in your agency or in the community?

Follow up for a yes response - how is the experience of supervising other workers the same as or different from supervising a student?

How have you learned about being a supervisor?

What makes a good supervisor?

Area Three - Motivation for taking a student on placement

What makes you interested in supervising a student placement?

OR

What makes you want to offer to supervise a student?

What are some of the difficulties that get in the way of you offering to supervise a student placement?

Area Four - Roles

What job title do you use when you supervise a student?

Prompts: fieldwork supervisor, practice teacher, student supervisor or something else?

Here are some of the roles that social workers take on when they supervise a student on placement (on card)

enabler
supporter
challenger
teacher
manager (of the placement)
assessor (of the student's performance
role model
advocate (for the student)

Can you think of any other roles that are important which are not mentioned on the card?

Which of these roles do you feel most prepared to take on?

Prompt: explore why more prepared to take on some roles

Area Five - Agency Attitudes towards placements

Would you say that your agency is supportive of student placements?

In what ways are they supportive?

Would you say that your agency is supportive of you when you take a student on placement?

What support have you most appreciated?
If your agency has not been supportive, what were the issues for you?

Prompts:- Resources
Workload relief
Time off to attend training
Financial support to attend training

If any difficult issues arose during a student placement, who would you expect to support you in working through these issues?

Prompts:- Your own supervisor
Your manager
The training course
A combination

Have you had any experience of difficult issues arising on a placement? Who did assist you in working these through?* (may already have discussed)

Can you think of any support that is not currently provided in your agency that would make it easier for you to take a student on placement?

Area Six - Relationships With Training Institutions

What support and training have you received from the training institution when you have taken a student on placement?

Can you think of any additional support and training that would be helpful for you as a fieldwork supervisor?

In what ways do you think, cooperation between agencies and social work training courses could be improved?

Area Seven- Selection of Student Supervisors

How do you think student supervisors ought to be selected?

Prompts:- self-selection
minimum level of qualifications and social work experience
portfolios
formal system of accreditation (monitored by course? agency? I.T.O.?).
introduction of a formal qualification in practice teaching

Should selection be administered by courses, by agencies or both?

If a formal system of accreditation of fieldwork supervisors was introduced, what kind of model for accreditation would work in New Zealand?

Prompts:

prepare a portfolio
a training course in practice teaching
something else?

Follow up training course - What length of course? Full time/Part time?
What would you like to see included in the content of a training course?

If formal accreditation of fieldwork supervisors was introduced, how motivated would you be to become accredited?

Explore what this would depend on.

If accreditation was introduced, who should meet the costs of this?

Prompts:- the supervisor
the training course
the agency
the I.T.O.?
other?

Area Eight- Quality of Fieldwork Education in Social Work

Are fieldwork placements necessary to train a social worker?

Looking back, how significant were the placements you undertook as part of your social work training?

How many placements did you undertake?

In light of your own experience, how many placements should be undertaken in training a social worker?

If there were no resource constraints, what would be the best possible model for fieldwork education in social work?

Prompts: what kinds of placement experiences?
Concurrent or Block placements?
statutory/voluntary?
direct practice/research?
Student units?
Internship year on completion of academic course?
Generic/specialist?

Who should fund fieldwork education in social work?

Prompts: the training institutions?
agencies?
students?
a shared responsibility?
another body e.g. I.T.O.?
government?

Are there any other comments you would like to make?

Field Notes:

Place where interview took place:

Present:

Physical setting:

Date and Time of interview:

Immediate reflections after the interview:

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