

**AN INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL WORK THEORY
INTEGRATED WITH PRACTICE**

BY

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M.M. MOTSHEDI

MMABATHO

DECLARATION

I Mosimanegape Mercutio Motshedi herewith declare that the dissertation for the fulfilment of the degree of Master of Arts in Social Work submitted to the Department of Social Work at the North West University, has not been submitted by me for this degree at this university or any other academic institutions. I also declare that the dissertation is my own work and that all materials contained or utilized are fully acknowledged by means of a complete bibliography.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mosimanegape Mercutio Motshedi', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Date : January 2004

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my late uncle Johannes Tshabedi Kadi, who passed away unexpectedly when I needed him most, I am truly indebted to him.

May his soul rest in peace.

ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to investigate the ability of students to integrate social work theory with practice during their internships placements. It also looked into how the supervision of students was conducted so as to develop professional service providers and also improve the quality of the practical training.

In the execution of the research the researcher made use of the descriptive design in which questionnaires were completed by 36 social work students after their completion of the internship in 2003; heads of social work departments of universities; and 20 field supervisors/social workers attached to different welfare agencies where students were placed for their internship.

Although a non-probability sampling method was used, and representativeness cannot be claimed, it was clearly indicated by the responses of the selected universities that the information derived from the research to a great extent corresponded with the findings.

The findings of the study revealed that:-

- the respondents/students were mainly placed with agencies that practice only one method of social work. This arrangement denies them the opportunity to practice the integrated approach as well as integrating theory into practice.
- there is a lack of co-ordination between the university lecturing staff and field supervisors during the internship of students. This hampers sufficient and effective supervision offered to students.

- the agencies do not have a time schedule for student's supervision. Because of the workloads of supervisors, supervision is offered on an ad hoc basis whenever it suits the field supervisors which is not acceptable.
- that : because of the workload of agencies supervisors are not always in a position to update them with recent developments in social work and approaches which in the supervision may hamper the effective integration of theory with practice.
- students are not well prepared before they go for the practical training and as a result they experience difficulties in integrating theory with practice.
- agencies are not given proper direction by means of a proper guide for the practical training of students.
- agencies are not subsidized by the authorities to undertake the practical training of students. This may be one of the reasons why supervision is undertaken on an ad hoc basis.
- Based on the main findings, the following recommendations were made:
 - the universities should only place students with accredited agencies in order to give them the opportunity to practice all social work methods.
 - co-ordination between the lecturing staff and field supervisors with regard to training of students during their internships should be greatly improved.
 - universities in collaboration with agencies should draw up a time schedule for student supervision.

- training institutions to offer refresher courses to supervisors of co-operating agencies to keep them abreast of new social work developments and to ensure quality training of students.
- social work students should receive sufficient experiential training in class to prepare them for the realities of social practice and to make it possible for them to integrate theory into practice.
- the subsidization of welfare agencies by the authorities should be changed to also accommodate subsidization for the practical training of students.

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES		PAGES
Table 1	Type of the agency where the students (respondents) were placed for their internship	103
Table 2	Main methods performed on a regular basis by the agencies	104
Table 3	Reasons why all the methods were not performed/practised	105
Table 4.1	Regularity of student supervision	106
Table 4.2	Respondent's experience of supervision	106
Table 5	Involvement of lecturers in supervision of students	108
Table 6	Applicability of theory to practice	109
Table 7	Number of cases the respondents handled during the internship	110
Table 8	Nature of social problems the respondents dealt with	111
Table 9	Approaches mainly used	112
Table 10	Problems experienced when integrating theory with practice	113
Table 11	Respondents level of training	114
Table 12	How the respondents started their groups	115
Table 13	The applicability of group work theory to practice	116
Table 14	Purpose of the respondents groups	117
Table 15	The nature of the groups	118
Table 16	Main approach utilized in doing group work	119
Table 17	How the respondents community work projects were initiated	120
Table 18	Project phases/stages	121

Table 19	Applicability of community work theory to practice	120
Table 20	Main community work approaches used in community work	122
Table 21	Type of the agency where students were placed for the internship and where professional social workers, who serve as field supervisors were employed	122
Table 22	Years of experience as a social worker	126
Table 23	Number of students supervised by the respondent	126
Table 24	Year group of student that the respondents mainly prefer to supervise	127
Table 25	Problems experienced with student supervision	128
Table 26	Difficulties regarding proper/extensive supervision of students	129
Table 27	Period of student internship	130
Table 28	Involvement of lecturers	131
Table 29	Main methods performed on a regular basis by the agencies	132
Table 30	Reasons why all the methods are not performed by some agencies	133
Table 31	Theoretical knowledge of students	134
Table 32	Student use of supervision	135
Table 33	Supervisors preparedness to supervise students	136
Table 34	Students knowledge and integration of theory and practice	137
Table 35	Problems experienced by the respondents regarding the internship of their final year students	138
Table 36	Duration of student placement	141
Table 37	Involvement of lecturers in student supervision	142

Table 38	Remuneration of students	144
Table 39	Minimum amount remuneration	144

TABLE OF CONTENTS

No	Topics	Page
	Preliminaries	
i	Acknowledgement	i
ii	Declaration	ii
iii	Dedication	iii
iv	Abstract	iv
v	List of tables	v
v	Table of contents	vi
	CHAPTER ONE : OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT	
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Statement of the Research Problem	2-3
1.3	Objectives of the Study	3-4
1.4	Significance of the Study	4
1.5	Hypothesis/Assumptions of the Study	4-5
1.6	Limitations	5-6
1.7	Definition of Central Concepts	6
1.7.1	Social Work	6
1.7.2	Theory	6
1.7.3	Integrated Approach	7
1.7.4	Supervision	7-8
1.7.5	Field Training	8
1.7.6	Practice	9
1.7.7	Integrate	9
1.7.8	Field Education	9

1.7.9	Internship	10
1.8	Research Methodology	10
1.8.1	Research Design	10-11
1.9	Methods of Data Collection	11
1.9.1	Literature Studies	11-12
1.9.2	Personally Administered Questionnaires	12-13
1.9.3	Experience Surveys	13
1.10	Sampling	13-14
1.11	Division of the Report	14-15
	CHAPTER TWO THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF SOCIAL WORK THEORY INTEGRATED WITH PRACTICE	16
2.1	Introduction	16-18
2.2	Social Work Methods	18
2.2.1	Social Casework	18-19
2.2.1.1	Integrated Approach	19-20
2.2.1.2	A framework to Integrated Practice	21
2.2.1.3	General Systems Theory	21-24
2.2.1.4	Ecological Approach	24-25
2.2.1.5	Person in environment : A Tri-level practice model	25-27
2.2.1.6	Client/person-centred Approach	27
2.2.1.7	Philosophy and Basic Assumptions	27-30
2.2.1.8	Behaviour Modification	30-31
2.2.2	Social Group-work	31-32
2.2.2.1	Client-centered Therapy in Group Work	32-34
2.2.2.2	Behaviour Therapy in Groups	34-35
2.2.3	Community Work	35-37

2.2.3.1	Community Development	37-38
2.2.3.2	Social Development Approach	38-40
2.2.3.3	Empowerment Models	40-41
2.2.4	Administration	41-42
2.2.5	Research	43-45
2.3	Theoretical Perspectives	45
2.3.1	Experiential learning Theory	45-48
2.3.2	Social Learning Theory	48-50
2.4	Summary	50
	CHAPTER THREE	
	STUDENT SUPERVISION DURING INTERNSHIP	51
3.1	Introduction	51-53
3.2	Management and planning of student supervision	53
3.2.1	Supervision: as a two way process	53-54
3.2.2	Management of internship by training institutions	54
3.2.2.1	Pre-placement planning by students	54-55
3.2.2.2	Preparation by the field-work Co-ordinator	55-57
3.2.2.3	Preparation by the students for placement	57-58
3.2.2.4	Management of the Internship by the Agency	58
3.2.2.4.1	Preparation by the agency Manager/Director	58
3.2.2.4.2	Preparation by the selected supervisor	58-59
3.3	Logistics of Supervision	59
3.3.1	Place	59
3.3.2	Time	60
3.3.3	Written materials	60
3.4	Functions of supervision	60-61
3.4.1	Administrative supervision	61-62

3.4.2	Educational supervision	62-64
3.4.3	Supportive supervision	64
3.4.4	Relationship of educational supervision to administrative supervision	64-65
3.5	Purpose of supervision	65-66
3.6	Methods of supervision	66
3.6.1	Individual supervision or conference	66-67
3.6.2	Group supervision/conference	67-68
3.6.3	Advantages of group supervision	68
3.7	Characteristics of an effective supervisor	69-70
3.7.1	Evaluation of the supervisory process	71-72
3.7.2	Values of evaluation	72-73
3.7.3	Improving supervision/Recommendations	71-72
3.8	Summary	73
	CHAPTER FOUR: PROFESSIONALISM	74
4.1	Introduction	74-75
4.2	Functions of Social Work Theory	75
4.3	The concept Social Work	75-76
4.4	A professional knowledge base	76-77
4.4.1	Knowledge base of Social Workers	77
4.4.1.1	Human Development	77
4.4.1.2	Social processes and institutions	77-78
4.4.1.3	Interpersonal, group and Organisational Dynamics	78-79
4.5	The Social Work Process	79
4.5.1	Assessment	80
4.5.2	Intervention	80

4.5.3	Review	81
4.5.4	Termination	81
4.5.5	Evaluation	81-82
4.6	Theoretical paradigms	82
4.6.1	Psycho dynamic	82-83
4.6.2	Psycho-social casework	83
4.6.3	Humanistic psychology	83
4.6.4	Behavioural social work	83-84
4.6.5	Systems theory	84-85
4.7	Methods of Intervention	85
4.7.1	Individual casework	85
4.7.2	Group work	85
4.7.3	Community Development work	85-86
4.8	Using knowledge in Professional Practice	86
4.8.1	Select	86
4.8.2	Integrate	86
4.8.3	Reflect	87
4.9	Reflective practice	87-89
4.10	Ethics and values underlying social work as a profession	89-90
4.10.1	Ethical issues in social work	90
4.10.1.1	General approach	91
4.10.1.2	Conduct that concerns the profession	91-92
4.10.1.3	Conduct that concerns a client	92
4.10.1.4	Conduct that concerns a colleague or another professional person	92-93
4.10.1.5	Conduct that concerns an employer	93
4.10.1.6	Conduct that concerns a social work institution	93

4.10.1.7	Conduct that concerns the community	93-94
4.11	The value base of social work as a profession	94-95
4.11.1	Individualization	95-96
4.11.2	Purposeful expression of feelings	96
4.11.3	Acceptance	96-97
4.11.4	Non-judgemental attitude	97-98
4.11.5	Client-self-determination	98
4.11.6	Confidentiality	98-99
4.11.7	Empathy	99
4.11.8	Unconditional positive regard	99-100
4.11.9	Congruence	100
4.12	Summary	100-101
	CHAPTER 5	
	EMPIRICAL STUDIES	
	SECTION A: QUESTIONNAIRES DIRECTED TO STUDENTS	102
5.1	Names of the agencies where the respondents were placed for their internships	102
5.2	Data collected from the respondents concerning their internship	103
5.2.1	Type of the agency where students were placed for their internship	103
5.2.2	Main methods performed on regular basis by the agencies	103-104
5.2.3	Reasons why all the methods were not practised	104-105
5.2.4	Regularity of student supervision	105-107
5.2.5	Involvement of lecturers in supervision of students	107-108
5.2.6	Applicability of theory to practice	109
5.2.7	Number of cases that the respondents handled during the internship	110

5.2.8	Nature of social problems that the respondents dealt with	110
5.2.9	Approaches mainly used by the respondents	111-112
5.2.10	Problems experienced by the respondents when integrating theory with practice	112
5.2.11	Respondents level of training	113-115
5.2.12	How the respondents started their groups	115-116
5.2.13	The applicability of group work theory to practice	116-117
5.2.14	Purpose of the respondents groups	117-118
5.2.15	The nature of the groups that the respondents initiated	118-119
5.2.16	Main approach utilized by the respondents in doing group work	119
5.2.17	The way in which the respondents initiated community-work projects	119-120
5.2.18	Project stages/phases	120-121
5.2.19	Applicability of community work theory to practice	121-122
5.2.20	Main community-work approaches used in community work by the respondents	122-123
5.2.21	Research undertaking as part of the internship	123
	Summary	124
	CHAPTER 6	
	QUESTIONNAIRES DIRECTED TO FIELD SUPERVISORS	125
6.1	The names of different welfare organisations where the respondents (students) were placed for their internship and where professional social workers are employed and who served as field supervisors for the student during the practical placement	125
6.2	Demographic Information	125
6.2.1	Types of agency	126
6.2.2	Years of experience as a social worker	126-127
6.2.3	Number of students supervised	127-128

6.2.4	Year group of student mainly preferred to supervise by the respondents	128-129
6.2.5	Problems experienced with student supervision	129-130
6.2.6	Difficulties regarding proper/extensive supervision of students	130-131
6.2.7	Period of student internship	131-132
6.2.8	Lecturers involvement in student supervision	132-133
6.2.9	Main methods performed on a regular basis by the agencies	133-134
6.2.10	Reasons why all the methods are not performed by some agencies	134-135
6.2.11	Theoretical knowledge of students	135-136
6.2.12	Student use of supervision	136-137
6.2.13	Students knowledge and integration of theory and practice	138-139
6.3	Summary	139
	CHAPTER 7 QUESTIONNAIRES DIRECTED TO HEADS OF SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENTS AT DIFFERENT TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS	140
7.1	The names of various tertiary institutions offering social work programmes	138
7.2	Information concerning training of social work students	140
7.2.1	Problems experienced by different social work departments	140-142
7.2.2	Duration of student placement	142
7.2.3	Whether students are remunerated for their internship	143-146
7.3	Suggestions to improve internship	146-147
7.4	Conclusion	147
	CHAPTER 8 MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	148
8.1	Introduction	145

8.2	Conclusions/Main findings	148
8.2.1	To determine the nature and extent of integrating social work theory with practice during field training of students in social work	148-149
8.2.2	To examine the level of understanding of students with regard to social work theory integrated with practice	149-150
8.2.3	To determine supervision mechanisms of students during internships	150-151
8.2.4	To determine strategies and develop effective supervision mechanisms that will facilitate students understanding of social work theory integrated with practice during the internship	151-152
8.3	Recommendations by the student respondents	152-153
8.4	Respondents by heads of department and field supervisors	153-154
8.5	Recommendations	154
8.5.1	Accreditation of agencies	154-155
8.5.2	Joint supervision	155-156
8.5.3	Remuneration of agencies	156
8.5.4	Time schedule	156
8.5.5	Proper guide	156-157
8.5.6	Preparation of agency supervisors	157-158
8.5.7	Preparation of students	158
8.3	Conclusion	158
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	159-163

	ADDENDUM 1	164-185
	3 Questionnaires directed to : – Final year social work students – Field supervisors – Heads of social work departments of different universities	
	ADDENDUM 2	186-194
	Social work practical training (work experience) guide	

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

1.1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of social work is built on the assumption that social workers will use theory to guide their practice. A well-known hallmark of being recognised as a profession is that there is a body of knowledge that is organised into a consistent framework of theory. Thus an important professional skill is the application of theory to practice. Theory provides a lens through which a practitioner can obtain a better perspective and understanding of a practice situation. If we can understand a situation better, we are more likely to find the best solution to that situation. In fact, practice theory should suggest the effects of a social worker's intervention (Craig Lecroy, 1999:29).

According to Parsons (1994:20) integrated practice builds on the premise that practitioners must have a breadth of social work skills within their repertoire and must go where the problem takes them. Integrated practice goes beyond perceptions of generalist practice as merely a multi-method approach, it is both a perspective of and an approach to practice. As such it incorporates how social workers actually practice. Social work has historically had the dual mission of helping people and changing society. The tendency to polarise these two perspectives has inhibited the development of an integrated practice format incorporating all social work methods.

It is against this background that the researcher seeks to undertake a research on the integration of social work theory with practice. The main areas of focus of this study is to look how theory learned at the university by

the students is applicable to practice and how supervision of students is processed during field training to ensure effective practice.

1.2

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

The purpose of training students in social work is to develop professional people who individually will, after their training period, possess the necessary knowledge, abilities and skills to assist people with social problems. To efficiently achieve professionalism, students need purposeful and synchronized theoretical and practical training. Unfortunately this is not always possible for the following reasons :

Students are at times placed with some agencies which do not practice all social work methods and therefore the students find it difficult to utilize the integrated approach as well as integrating social work theory with practice. This became evident through the students practical experience and the expression they made that the integrated approach is not utilized to its fullest extent by various welfare organisations. Due to lack of student placement resources or facilities, universities are in many instances compelled to place students with agencies which are not accredited, which means that these agencies may not have qualified social workers in their employment or having social workers who are not properly prepared for supervision of students during the internships. Students are most probably not properly prepared for the internships by the university and therefore do not sufficiently benefit from practical experience. There is also insufficient co-ordination between the agencies where students are placed and the university staff with regard to the training of the students during the internships. The agencies are also not always fully informed of what is expected from them to sufficiently guide/train

students. There is also no evaluation of social work services to ensure effective and efficient practice. In conclusion it would seem that all students may not properly be equipped for the profession of social work to integrate theory with practice.

To ensure a proper professional training of social workers, the above-mentioned problem areas need to be addressed.

1.3 **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The researcher believes that well-formulated objectives play a decisive role in the achievement of the successful implementation of a research project. As a result, the sensible measurement of successful implementation can only take place in terms of clearly defined objectives. According to Uys and Basson (1991:28) objectives are more specific measurable expectations of the aims.

The prime objectives of this research project are as follows :-

- 1.3.1 To determine the nature and extent of integrating social work theory with practice during field training of students in social work.
- 1.3.2 To examine the level of understanding of students with regard to social work theory integrated with practice.
- 1.3.3 To determine supervision mechanisms of students during internships.

- 1.3.4 To determine strategies and develop effective supervision mechanisms that will facilitate students understanding of social work theory integrated with practice during internship.

1.4 **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

- * The research project is aimed at benefiting the students in that students will be able to identify their problem areas with regard to the integration of theory with practice and be in a better position to undergo a more effective internship.
- * The study is aimed at sensitising social work lecturers in tertiary institutions to realize the areas which need improvement with regard to their teaching.
- * The study also aimed at benefiting the social workers or field supervisors, in that they will be able to identify effective ways of utilizing the integrated practice and improve their supervisory skills and become more competent tutors.
- * The research will also benefit the community at large because this will result in rendering of better welfare services by the service providers after training.

1.5 **HYPOTHESIS/ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY**

According to Louw (1995:45) hypothesis is defined as a tentative acceptance of a relationship between two or more variables. Due to the descriptive nature of the study, the researcher used assumptions rather than a hypothesis.

According to Bailey (1987:128) an assumption refers to something that is taken as a fact or believed to be true without proof.

The assumptions are contextualised as follows :

- * The students find it difficult to integrate social work theory with practice which result in insufficient practice.
- * There is a need for more effective supervision during field training in assisting students to effectively integrate social work theory with practice.
- * There is lack of co-ordination between the lecturing staff and field supervisors with regard to training of students during internship which result in the insufficient training of students.
- * Some agencies where students are placed for the internships are not accredited and do not practice all social work methods therefore students lack the utilization of the integrated approach as well as integrating social work theory with practice.
- * Some social workers supervising students, especially the final year students, are not theoretically equipped or experienced for this task.

1.6

LIMITATIONS

According to Wood and Haber (1986:316) limitations are the weaknesses of the study. Limitations of this study are as follows :

- * Although there are number of books on social work, there is insufficient literature available about the topic under research, especially readings of the research already undertaken about the integration of social work theory with practice.
- * The study was mainly undertaken at the University of North West and may therefore not be representative of all universities in the country who offer social work training.

1.7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.7.1 SOCIAL WORK

Morales and Sheaffer (1986:19) defines social work as the professional activity of helping individuals, groups or communities to enhance or restore their capacity for social functioning and to create societal conditions favourable to that goal.

According to New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:60) social work is a professional service by a social worker aimed at the promotion of the social functioning of people.

1.7.2 THEORY

Theory serves as an orientation for the gathering of facts since it specifies the type of facts to be systematically observed. It allows for a classification and conceptualization of facts. It summarizes and provide explanations as to how facts relate to each other (Claire Bless and Craig Higson-Smith, 2000:19).

1.7.3 **INTEGRATED APPROACH**

Welch as cited in McKendrick (1990:155) state that integrated approach does not refer to one model of practice. Thus various models are subsumed under the concept of an integrated approach. It is the ability to utilize different models and skills, to more effectively serve the clients. It implies the workers ability to work with individuals, families and communities at large to help themselves.

1.7.4 **SUPERVISION**

Pettes (1979:3) define supervision as a process by which one social work practitioner enables another social work practitioner who is accountable to him to practice to the best of his ability.

From the literature (Botha 1976; Doel and Shardlow 1996; Hoffman 1990; Kadushin 1992; Munson 1993) it would seem that defining the supervision provided to students can be problematic, because definitions of supervision for qualified social workers cannot simply be used as is for social work students, due to the fact that the context within which practice education to students occurs lends unique dimensions to supervision (Weyers, 2002:109).

Therefore supervision for social work students is a process of education, support and management to develop students' competencies according to the outcomes of the training institution's practice education programme, in order to integrate the theory and practice. Supervision also involves interactive guidance, based on educational needs, academic development and empowerment of students (Weyers op cit: 169).

According to Lowly (1985:56), supervision is a learning and teaching process designed to incorporate and integrate the various dimensions of the professional role of social workers such as values, ethics, purpose, knowledge, method and skills in working with individuals, families, groups and organisations.

Hallowits (1962:257) defines supervision as an important means of helping social workers to attain a better understanding of themselves and to resolve personal as well as emotional problems that interfere with their ability to learn and to provide effective services.

In the New Dictionary of Social Work in South Africa (1995:64), supervision is defined as a process whereby the supervisor performs educational, supportive and administrative functions in order to promote efficient and professional rendering of services.

1.7.5

FIELD TRAINING

According to Loyd cited in McKendrick (1990:196) field training takes place concurrently with intellectual and theory learned in the classrooms and library. Unlike some other professions, such as medicine and psychology for example, social work students commence field instruction early in their course of study. Under the supervision of an experienced social worker, individual students work directly with people, either promotively, presentively or therapeutically, applying their theory knowledge and developing their helping skills. The notion of concurrent theory and field instruction in social work education and training is based upon a sound educational concept.

1.7.6 **PRACTICE**

Thompson (1994:747) define practice as a performance or application of knowledge as distinguished from mere possession of knowledge. It is designed to supplement theoretical knowledge by experience.

Argyris and Schon (1980:6) as cited in Munson (1983:143) further define practice as a sequence of actions undertaken by a person to serve others, who are considered to be clients.

1.7.7 **INTEGRATE**

The concept "integrate" means to make complete or round off. A free transformation (Eksteen cited in McKendrick, (1990:20) when taking this concept into the realms of the integrated application of social work methods, it implies more effective and at the same time more responsible services.

According to Merriam Webster (1993:1174) integrate means composition of separate parts united together to form a more complete, harmonious, or co-ordinated entity. Furthermore it means combining elements usually taught in separate academic courses.

1.7.8 **FIELD EDUCATION**

Is an essential component of social work education. It is the medium through which students integrate knowledge and values with practice in an agency setting, and as Kadushin states, is the most significant and most memorable component of social work education.

1.7.9 **INTERNSHIP**

According to Kolb (1984:05) internship means that the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It involves direct encounter with the phenomenon being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter or only considering the possibility of doing something with it.

1.8 **METHODOLOGY**

Mouton and Marais (1988:16-17) states that methodology addresses the how of social science research, that is, how research should be planned, structured and exempted. Basically, methodology refers to the various techniques or tools the researcher uses to manipulate data to obtain knowledge.

1.8.1 **Research design**

Thyer (1993:94) cited in De Vos (2001:125) views a research design as a blue print or detailed plan on how a research study is to be conducted. Kerlinger (1973) in Grinnel (1985:231) further states that a research design includes “plans, structures and strategies of investigations which seek to obtain various research questions. Thus it is an overall scheme of the research process from problem identification, definition and the specification to the evaluation and dissemination of findings”.

The research design applied in this research project is the descriptive design. The design will not only “emphasise the in-depth description of a specific situation, interaction or social objects, but also the causality between variables and events”.

Reaves (1992:2) cites that “the purpose of a descriptive research is to describe a particular phenomenon, situation or event”. Behr (1990:90) also cited that the descriptive design is concerned with the conditions that exist, beliefs and attitudes that are held, and processes that are ongoing, and trends that are developing. Therefore the study aims at describing characteristics, estimate predictions, discovering associations of variables and establish a specific sequence of cause and effect.

1.9 **METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

Data is defined by Monette (1990:11) as an important part of any research because it does not only give the description of how data will be collected, but also constitutes the basic information from which conclusions will be drawn.

Data collection methods are those specific procedures utilized by the researcher to obtain information about the topic at hand from the subsets. In choosing the appropriate data collection methods, it is imperative that the researcher consults the research problem and objectives, as these are important in choosing the measuring instrument. The following methods of data collection was used in this study.

1.9.1 **Literature studies**

Literature review is a process in which the researcher read whatever that has been published that appears relevant to the research topic. The purpose of the review is to sharpen and deepen the theoretical framework of the research. That is, to study the different theories related to the topic and

taking an interdisciplinary perspective. Grinnel (1998:434) further argues that literature review supports and interacts with the framework by introducing and conceptually defining the key variables that are the subject of the study.

Literature studies are a unique research step in that they encompass two partially overlapping purposes; firstly they serve to support the conduct of empirical studies and secondly as a type of non-empirical research (Wilkinson and McNeil, 1996:47).

Literature studies facilitate the researcher in developing knowledge and understanding of the previous work, thus literature studies are essential in familiarising the researcher with the basic concepts of the study to be undertaken, trends, main findings and areas of debate including those that have been overlooked.

1.9.2

Personally administered questionnaires

The new Dictionary of social work (1995:151) as cited in Devos (2000:152) defines a questionnaire as "a set of questions on a form which is completed by the respondents in respect of a research project". Questionnaires are probably the most used instrument of all. The target group to whom the questionnaires were distributed were the final year social work students at the North West University. Self administered structured questionnaires presents the respondent with fixed response alternatives, that is, the questions are worded in such a way as to induce the respondents to answer only in terms of one or more alternatives.

A total of 35 respondents completed the questionnaire. Apart from questionnaires directed to students, mailed questionnaires were also sent or mailed to the heads of social work departments of all universities in the country and to the field supervisors/social workers at different welfare organisations where students were placed for their internships.

A mailed questionnaire is a questionnaire which is sent off by mail in the hope that the respondents will complete and return it. The advantages of the mailed questionnaire are that the cost are relatively low and that extension of the geographical area covered by the researcher does not increase the costs level.

1.9.3 **Experience surveys**

Since the field of social work is already so broad, people automatically specialise. Thus we find an increasing number of persons who have trained in a specialised area, who have undertaken research or who have been active for many years in that specific area. It is against this background that the researcher contacted experts on this subject who are heads of social work departments at different universities and social workers at different agencies where students are placed.

1.10 **SAMPLING**

According to Nachmias (1992:185) "a sample is any subset of sampling units from a population. A subset is any combination of sampling units that does not include the entire set of sampling units that has been defined as the population". Therefore a sample has to be a reciprocal identity of the population under study. It is important for a sample to be an image of the

population in order to make generalisations in the analysis phase of the study. The general purpose of sampling is to obtain information on a small number of individuals or entities which can be generalised to a larger aggregate from which the sample came.

Due to the nature of the topic under study, non-probability sampling was used. According to Seaman (1987:235) non-probability sampling is a process of selecting samples without using probability sampling. The major advantages of non-probability sampling are convenience, economy and time, although there must be balance against the risks involved in not using probability sampling. The reason for opting for this sampling technique was that the respondents were familiar to the researcher. The non-probability sampling techniques which was employed was the quota/judgemental techniques. Quota/judgemental sampling technique was employed based upon the researchers familiarity with the population under study. A total of 71 respondents were chosen, that is 36 final year social work students, 15 heads of social work departments at different universities and 20 field supervisors/social workers from different agencies where students are placed for their internships.

1.11

DIVISION OF THE REPORT

Chapter 1 : The main focus of chapter 1 is on the introduction, statement of the research problem, definition of concepts and the methodology employed for the research project.

Chapter 2 : The main emphasis of this chapter is on literature review and the theoretical perspectives. Areas of focus are the nature and extent of social

work theory integrated with practice, which is mainly based on the social work methods, namely casework, group work, community-work, administration and research; and also different approaches in social work and the theoretical frameworks, namely learning and experiential learning theories.

Chapter 3 :

The essence of chapter 3 is based on the effective students supervision during the internships. Supervision, will therefore be looked at from the pre-placement planning phase up to the evaluation phase of the supervisory process.

Chapter 4 :

In order to establish a better understanding of social work theory integrated with practice, the issue of professionalism was looked at.

Chapter 5 :

In this chapter empirical data collected has been quantified and reflected in the form of univariate distributions which is properly accompanied by appropriate explanations.

Chapter 6 :

The main findings and recommendations of the research project undertaken are discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF SOCIAL WORK THEORY INTEGRATED WITH PRACTICE

2.1

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between theory and practice in social work is described by Sheldon cited in Mckendrick (1990:127) as the ability to integrate theory and practice which is a powerfully sanctioned but yet a vaguely defined expectation of social workers and their students. There is little that is new that much of a direct relationship between theory and practice may manifest itself in relationships between social workers. This perceived gap between theory and practice, may even manifest itself in relationships between social workers. Practitioners frequently regard social work academics as being out of touch with practice, while the academics regard practitioners who have a scanty regard for theory as unprofessional.

This issue has its roots in the training of social workers. According to Barbour in Mckendrick(opcit:127) students view social work as an essentially practical subject with theory having little relevance. He states that the theoretical obstruction may be viewed with suspicion as they obscure the true nature of the social work tasks as an essentially practical one.

The profession of social work is built on the assumption that social workers will use theory to guide their practice. A well known hallmark of being recognized as a profession is that there is a body of knowledge that is organized into a consistent framework of practice. Thus an important professional skill is the application of theory to practice. According to

Parsons (1994:20) integrated practice builds on the premise that practitioners must have a breadth of social work skills within their repertoire and must go where the problem takes them. Integrated practice goes beyond perceptions of generalistic practice as merely a multi method approach, it is both a perspective of and an approach to practice. As such it incorporates how practitioners view practice and how they actually practice.

Before one can evaluate the effectiveness of his practice, he must firstly evaluate his understanding of the theoretical knowledge. Therefore it is important that one should know and understand the theoretical knowledge of different social work methods, namely social casework, group-work, community-work ,administration and research before practice. Furthermore before one can evaluate the success and the outcomes of the practical work(internship) it is necessary to determine the theoretical requirements which needs to be converted into a practical guide. It is for this reason that it becomes necessary to discuss the basic theoretical requirements which is the knowledge base that the practical work can be measured against. This involves the discussion on the way social workers use such knowledge as knowledge for organizing the practice, knowledge for communicating and building relationships, knowledge for analyzing and understanding problems, knowledge for deciding what actions to take and evaluating what has been accomplished, and knowledge for implementing the actions and ending the work. (Parsons, 1994:2).

It is important to look into the theoretical knowledge of different social work methods, knowledge base that the practical work can be measured against therefore the purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of the theoretical

requirements which social work students need as a basis for effective practice (internship). Obviously for the purpose of this study, a detailed discussion is not possible, therefore social work methods are discussed.

2.2 SOCIAL WORK METHODS.

2.2.1 SOCIAL CASEWORK

Social casework is a method of social work employed by tens of thousands of social workers in a wide variety of social services and other institutions. Irrespective of its limitations, work with individuals and families is widely used in social work practice. In a sense, it is the mother of all methods. The term social casework is used because of the excellent definitions developed over the years and because the term is indigenous to the practice of social work. Knowledge and skills derived from social casework have wide application in the several methods of social work. Skidmore et.al(1994:49) explained that in a society of rapid change and shock, casework is viewed as a mitigating influence for individuals who experience anomie and isolation.

As the pioneer of scientific casework, Richmond cited in Skidmore et.al. (opcit:49) states that social casework consists of those processes which develop personality through adjustments consciously effected, individual by individual, between men and their social environment. Over an interval of time since the days of Richmond's pioneering work several elements have emerged from various definitions of social casework by different authors. These elements are as indicated; Social casework is a method of helping people based on the knowledge, understanding, and the use of techniques skillfully applied to helping people to solve problems and for development. It is a method of helping through a relationship that taps personal and other

resources for coping with problems. It helps individuals with personal as well as external environmental matters (Skidmore et al; 1994:49-50).

Having looked into what casework is, for the purpose of this study focus will be on the following theories or approaches which constitute casework and as a result has to be theoretically understood and be practiced by the students. These approaches are the integrated approach, general systems theory, ecological perspective, client centered approach and behavior modification.

2.2.1.1 INTEGRATED APPROACH

According to Welch as cited in Mckendrick(opcit:152) an integrated approach to practice does not necessarily refer to one model of practice. It is instead an attempt to bring together diverse factors such as: generic practice base, selected theories which influence practice, methods of problem specification and problem solving and the incorporation of research with practice. In other words various models are subsumed under the concept of an integrated approach.

Social work has historically had the dual mission of people-helping and society-changing. The tendency to polarize these two perspectives inhibited the development of an integrated practice format incorporating all social work methods such as casework, group work, community work and community organization. Several social work theorists have advocated an ending of the artificial dichotomy of casework and group work vs community work and community organization, calling instead for the use of theories that focuses on person-environmental transactions incorporating an integrated approach to practice. There have been several attempts at developing integrated

models of practice. Baker, 1980 as cited in Mckendrick(opcit:152) suggests the following six advantages will accrue from the development of an integrated practice base. He suggested that an integrated base can :

- provide a set of practice principles (ethical and process) which can guide the social worker in a disciplined manner in novel situations;
- help to make the values, knowledge bases, processes, roles and necessary skills explicit, which help to explain what social workers actually do;
- can serve as an organizing device providing continuity in a constantly changing world;
- allow for evaluation of the impact of various core components on one another, as they individually and in combination affect outcome, and how process and outcome are affected by context variables;
- provide a common occupational identity and language base which can allow social workers to communicate; and
- Allow social workers to move from the general questions of who am I and what do I do? To the development of more specific guidelines for training and practice.

2.2.1.2**A FRAMEWORK TO INTEGRATED PRACTICE**

According to Welch in Mckendrick (opcit:155) there are four components to the model of integrated practice proposed for the South African context. The term 'model', at times, leads to confusion as it is often differently interpreted. As a theoretical model, which in science is useful for its predictive value. It can also be used to indicate a practice model, which sets forth the dimension of a coherent, consistent approach to social work intervention but has no predictive value. It is in the second sense that the term is employed here.

The four components include:

- (1) A generic base compromised of human theory as a metatheory, a value/purpose configuration, and an outcome orientation;
- (2) A problem conceptualization/problem-solving format;
- (3) A method for selectively applying theories which inform practice; and
- (4) A commitment to integrate research with practice.

2.2.1.3**GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY**

According to Chess, & Norlin, (1991:37) general systems theory is a theory of organisation, it has been blend to a science of wholeness. This is asserted by those who use the systems concept that "whole is more than the sum of its parts". So this theory proposes to explain why this is like this. The founder of this theory (Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, 1901-1972) became dissatisfied with the ability of linear-based, cause and effect theories to explain the growth and change he saw in living organisms. It occurred to him that an explanation of this growth and change might lie in the relationships and interactions between those parts comprising the organism rather than in the parts on their own. In

other words, the search for understanding should focus on the order among the parts, not on the parts themselves.

Human need cannot be considered apart from the larger systems of which people are a part. General systems theory provides a means of understanding these systems and identifying their needs. It is against this background that this theory is discussed in this study.

- General systems theory has become more than a theory and rely not on the parts themselves.
- General systems theory has become more than a theory, it has become a way of thinking a very broad perspective of the world in which we live.
- The aim of general systems theory is the formulation of the principles of organisation.

According to Johnson, (1983:15) human needs cannot be considered apart from the larger systems of which persons are a part. These larger systems include the family, the small group, the community and various societal institutions such as the school, the church and the social agency. Hartman as cited in Johnson (op cit : 15) describes this approach as “means of ordering the world in terms of relatedness. A system would be a whole composed of interrelated and interdependent parts. It has boundaries”. The system of focus also has a relationship to persons and systems outside its boundaries. The relationships across the boundary are however not as

intense as those within it, they do not have the strength of influence that the parts (subsystems) have on one another. However the environment (outside boundaries) does affect the social system.

According to Johnson (op cit: 15) this approach calls for a kind of thinking that considers parts, wholes and environments and the relationships that exist among them. It considers the relationship of the various parts (organisation) and the means the system uses to accomplish its assigned functions (energy). Each system has essential needs:-

To fulfil its function these needs are fulfilled by means of communication among the parts or across the system's boundary by means of a decision-making process and by use of resources both within and without the system to carry out the tasks necessary to accomplish its functions. It means of task distribution (specialization) often develops. According to Johnson (op cit: 15) for each system to be functional it develops these processes over time not only as a way of accomplishing the necessary tasks but also as a means of maintaining itself. This is a process of development that is continuous, which implies that systems are in a constant process of change. During the process of development goals and norms as well as roles and relationships are established, and the system develops its unique way of functioning.

According to Johnson (op cit: 15) for a social system to be able to maintain itself and fulfil its function, the subsystems or parts must make adjustments in their own functioning to meet the needs of a larger system. The task of the social worker is to focus on both the individual need and the larger system's need. The response identifies the needs of all persons and systems involved

and seeks to enable each to function in such a manner that need fulfilment is complementary and the needs of all are fulfilled. This response calls for identification of all the component parts of a situation in which needs exists. It then calls for consideration about the need of each system in relation to the situation under consideration. (Johnson, (1983:15).

According to De Hoyos (1989:132) the general systems theory fits the demands of metatheory, that is it explains human phenomena at different levels of complexity. However, when it is applied, the theory introduces a major problem, because it is primarily useful for understanding the process of change and it provides little help for understanding the more static reality that is functioning structures of a system. Since system can refer to the personality system and the small group system as well as societal system, the general systems theory was proclaimed a metatheory capable of explaining the process of change.

2.2.1.4 ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

Gray (1998:17) views this approach as a holistic , conceptual umbrella which offers a way of organising social work theory . According to this perspective, people and the environment can be viewed as interacting systems which reciprocally influence each other. According to Meyer in Gray (1998:17) once a problem is assessed and understood from the perspective of this system's analysis, the social worker must select the most appropriate theory and model to resolve the problem. The ecosystem perspective thus provides a cognitive or analytic framework in terms of which social work phenomena can be understood. It does not provide the prescriptions for intervention. The ecosystems perspective draws on ecology and social science to focus

attention on the relationship and interaction between phenomena and on the transactional nature of causality. Ecology is used as a metaphor to illuminate the way in which all variables are adaptively or maladaptively related to one another. The ecosystems perspective emphasises these adaptive transactions in value free a way as possible.

Capra in Gray (opcit:17) mentions that the ecological model has three central tenants which are: that all phenomena are interconnected; that all living systems are self-organizing; and that they all follow patterns of growth and change. Ecosystems/theorists recognised its capacity to provide a holistic framework for social work theory and practice. Through the idea of levels of intervention or analysis, the diverse strands of social work theory and its varied practice contexts could be seen as one. There was no longer a need to polarise the individual therefore social workers refocused attention on the transactional relationship between people and their environment as encapsulated in the person-in-situation configuration.

2.2.1.5

PERSON-IN-ENVIRONMENT: A TRI-LEVEL PRACTICE MODEL

Most social workers use an eclectic practice approach. Generally speaking, they identify and work simultaneously with client's individual problems, their problems within primary groups and their problems within society.

The tri-level practice model was developed in an effort to clarify the level and types of intervention available to social workers today (De Hoyos, 1989:134). The major function of the tri-level model is to help social workers organise their thinking by indicating important analytical differences among therapists. In so doing the model helps workers (1) to identify relevant factors originating

in the personality system, the interactional system and the socio-cultural system and (2) to become aware of alternative therapeutic approaches as they deal with various problems at various levels. The levels can be explained as follows :

* The first level

It focuses on the personality system and therefore depends on the knowledge of psychologists. Clients are referred to psychologists when problems appears to be related to personality maladjustments, that is to client's mood disturbances. At this point problems are viewed primarily as originating within the client.

* The second level

This focuses primarily is on the interactional system. The therapist depend on the field of psychology when the client's problems appear to emerge form their face to face interaction with significant others in primary group settings such as their family, work group, church group etc. The problem may involve clients inability to reach out, communicate and accommodate role and structural expectations. The problem is viewed as originating from the client's environment.

* The third level

This level focuses on the problems clients deal with within their socio-cultural system, that is the four societal institutions of economy, government, education and religion. At this level the social worker depends on sociology for their knowledge base. They need to view their role as one of analysing the relationship between humans and

their institutions. In all societies roles determine what societal rewards are distributed knowners between professionals as conditionally rewarding roles (DeHoyos 1989:137).

The tri-level model provides a structure to the eclectic approach and reminds practitioners of person-in-environment. De Hoyos (1989:138) acknowledges the attempts of the model to synthesise the many diverse therapeutic approaches used in social work. Moreover, the tri-level model helps workers maintain a dialogue with diverse practice theories while continuing to search for a framework that is unique to social work practice.

2.2.1.6 CLIENT/PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH

This approach was originally developed in the late (1940s) as a reaction against psychoanalytical therapy. It was founded by Carl Rogers. Based on a subjective view of human experience, it emphasizes the client's resources for becoming aware and for resolving blocks to personal growth. It puts the client, not the therapist, at the center of the therapy process.

2.2.1.7 PHILOSOPHY AND BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

According to Rogers (1984:87) this approach is grounded on a positive view of humanity that sees the person as innately striving towards becoming fully functioning. The basic assumption is that in the context of a personal relationship with a caring therapist, the client experiences previously denied or distorted feelings and increases self-awareness. Clients are empowered by their participation in a therapeutic relationship. They actualize their potential for growth, wholeness, spontaneity, and inner directedness.

According to Davies, (2002:177) person-centered counsellors also assume that both them and their clients are essentially trustworthy. This trust springs from a belief that human beings, along with all other created organisms, have an underlying and instinctive movement towards the constructive accomplishment of their inherent potential. Carl Rogers in Davies, (op cit:177) called this movement the actualizing tendency and saw it as the sole motive for human development.

According to Rogers, (1984:87) one can direct one's own life. The client has the capacity for resolving life problems effectively without interpretation and direction from an expert therapist. This approach focuses on fully experiencing the present moment, learning to accept oneself, and deciding on ways to change. It views mental health as a congruence between what one wants to become and what one actually is.

* Therapeutic goal

According to Rogers (op cit: 87) a major goal of this approach is to provide a climate of safety and trust in the therapeutic setting so that the client, by using the therapeutic relationship for self-exploration, can become aware of blocks to growth. The client tends to move towards more openness, greater self-trust, more willingness to evolve as apposed to being a fixed product, and more living by internal standards as opposed to taking external cues for what he/she should or ought to become.

* Therapeutic relationship

Rogers emphasises the attitudes and personal characteristics of the therapist and the quality of the client/therapist relationship as the prime determinants of the outcomes of therapy. The qualities of the therapist that determine the relationship include genuineness, non-possessive warmth, accurate empathy, unconditional acceptance of and respect for the client, permissiveness, caring, and the communication of these attitudes to the client. The client is able to translate his/her learning in therapy to outside relationships with others. Rogers in Davies (op cit: 179) also emphasised/concluded that the truly facilitative relationship is characterized by the counsellor's ability to be accepting, empathetic and congruent, and by the client's perception, to become minimal to the degree of these qualities in the counsellor

* Techniques and procedures

Since this approach stresses the client/worker relationship, it specifies few techniques. Techniques are secondary to the worker's attitudes. Therefore the approach minimizes directive techniques, interpretation, questioning, probing, diagnosis, and collecting history. It instead maximises active listening and hearing, reflection of feelings, and clarification. The full participation of the therapist as a person in the therapeutic relationship is currently being emphasised.

* Applications

This approach has a wider applicability to many person-to-person situations, in both therapy and learning. It is a useful model for

individual therapy, group counselling, student-centered teaching and learning, parent/child relations, and human-relation training. It is especially well suited for the initial phases of intervention. Its principles have been applied to administration and management and to working with systems and institutions.

2.2.1.8 BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION

Learning theories assume that all human behaviour is learned and reactive, meaning that specific acts have specific antecedents. Human behaviour, according to learning theorists, involves constant transactions between individuals and their environment. All behavior is controlled by the consequences it engenders. According to Pietrofesa et al. (1983:14) behavioral counseling involves the application of experimentally derived and established principles of learning to weaken or eliminate maladaptive behavior and to build or strengthen replacement behaviors that are adaptive.

In general, very little attention has been given to a theory of personality in the behavioral therapy. Attention has focused mainly on how people learn and can change maladaptive learning. Behaviorists believe that behaviors are learned through three paradigms: classical conditioning, operant conditioning and imitative learning. There are a few innate influences on our feelings and behavior, and they are not subjected to change. The counselor who conducts behavioral counselling will be a warm, empathic person and will establish a strong working relationship with the client and take a detailed behavioral history. The therapist and the client together will identify problem areas,

specify specific behavioral goals to be achieved, select appropriate techniques to achieve those goals, and finally, evaluate progress during and at the termination of a therapy.

2.2.2 SOCIAL GROUP-WORK

Human beings are strongly dependent on interactions with other humans. Almost everything that is done in life is done in a group context and group interaction. Social work practice with groups builds on the important impact of groups and on individuals and utilizes group processes to accomplish individual and group goals, (Toseland and Rivas, 1984:243). They further stated that as we prepare to become effective social work practitioners, it is important for us to realize the impact that groups have on our lives.

Groups provide the structure on which communities and larger society are built. Almost all social service agencies use group work. Zastrow (1992:04) also states that every social service agency uses groups, and every practicing social worker is involved in a variety of groups .

According to Skidmore et al (opcit:73) group-work is a method of working with two or more people in groups for the enhancement of social functioning and for the achievement of socially desirable goals. Group work is based on the knowledge of people's needs for each other and their interdependence. Toseland and Rivas (opcit:106) define group-work as goal-directed activity with small groups of people aimed at meeting socio-emotional needs and accomplishing tasks. This activity is directed to individual members of a group and to the group as a whole within a system of service delivery. To effectively serve the clients in human service systems today, social workers

in generalist practice positions must be trained in the group work method. Group-work is a method and a process developed to assist people to improve the quality of their lives and to maximise their potentials. With regard to group work emphasis will be more on the following approaches: Client-centred therapy in group work and Behavior therapy in group work.

2.2.2.1 CLIENT-CENTRED THERAPY IN GROUP WORK.

According to Zastrow (2001:307) client centred therapy has excellent suggestions for building rapport between the therapist and other group members. This therapy approach relies on clients to find solutions to their problems. The focus of client-centred therapy is to help clients become aware of incongruence between their self-concept and their experiences. Once this insight is achieved, the self-actualising motive fosters a reorganisation of the self concept to be more congruent with experiences. Because of this self-actualising motive, client-centred therapists are non-directive. They do not even suggest possible resolution approaches to clients. Client centred therapy asserts that the following three therapeutic attitudes are necessary and good conditions to effect positive change in the client: empathy, positive regard, and genuineness or congruence. It is theorized that whenever a therapist displays these three attitudes toward a client, the actualising potential of the client will begin to change and grow. Empathy is the capacity of the therapist to "put himself or herself in the shoes" of the client so that the therapist is able to understand what the client is thinking and feeling. Empathy also involves communicating this understanding to the client. Unconditional positive regard means that the therapist fully accepts the client and conveys a genuine caring for the client. Positive regard requires a non judgmental attitude. Genuineness or

congruence is the capacity of the therapist to trust his or her own gut reactions, and then to convey those feelings or reactions that the therapist believes have relevance in the relationship. This willingness of the therapist, to express thoughts and feelings, provides the client with a reality base that the client can trust. It also takes away some of the risks of sharing hidden secrets with another. Rogers in Zastrow (2001:p308) sees the nature of the relationship between the client and the therapist as the key variable in producing positive changes. Rogers states that "the more the therapist is perceived by the client as being genuine, as having an empathetic understanding, and an unconditional regard for him, the greater will be the degree of constructive personality change in the client.

Rogers in Zastrow (2001:308-309) conceptualized the role of the therapist or facilitator in a group as having the same characteristics as the role of the therapist in one-to-one therapy. These attitudes are empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence. In addition, the group therapist should be non-directive, and use the following techniques: clarification or reflection of feelings, restatement of content, and simple acceptance. Rogers further asserted that it is important for the facilitator to accept and to respect the group as a whole, as well as the individual members. The central hypothesis of group therapy using a client-centered approach is that group members have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their behaviors, attitudes, and self concepts. These resources become operative in a facilitative psychological climate. Such a climate is apt to be created by a group therapist who is empathetic, caring, and genuine. Rogers can be praised for the outstanding contributions he made in articulating the components of a therapeutic relationship. Rogers emphasised the

importance of the following concept in building a helping relationship: non threatening atmosphere, nonjudgmental attitude, empathy, genuineness, and client as problem solver. The relationship between the social worker and the client , partly due to Rogers' emphasis has become recognised as the key cornerstone of social work practice.

2.2.2.2 BEHAVIOR THERAPY IN GROUPS

According to Zastrow (2001:346) behavior therapy approaches are based on learning theories. No one person is accredited with the development of behavioral approaches to psychotherapy. Behavior therapists vary considerably in both theory and techniques. The main assumption of this therapy system is that maladaptive behaviors are primarily acquired through learning and can be modified through additional learning. Historically, learning theory has been the philosophical foundation for behavior therapy, even though there has never been agreement as to which learning theory is the core of behavior therapy. In spite of the wide variation in behavioral therapy approaches and techniques, there is common emphasis. That is the maladaptive behavior such as for instance bed-wetting is the problem and needs to be changed. According to learning theory, human behavior is determined by positive and negative reinforcers. A positive reinforcer is any stimulus that, when applied following a behavior, increases or strengthens that behavior. Praise, for example is a positive reinforcer when , and only when, it maintains or increases the behavior with which it is associated (for example praise to a child who is not bed wetting for a change). A negative reinforcer or aversive stimulus is any stimulus that a person will terminate or avoid if given the opportunity. Common examples of negative reinforcers are

frowns and criticism. According to Zatrov(2001:p347) there are four basic learning principles involving positive reinforcers and aversive stimuli:

- * if a positive reinforcer(for example, praise) is presented to a person following a response, the result is positive reinforcement. With positive reinforcement that occurrence of a given behavior is strengthened or increased.
- * If a positive reinforcer is withdrawn following a person's response , the result is punishment.
- * If an aversive stimulus is (for example criticism) is presented to a person following a response, the result is punishment.
- * If an aversive stimulus is withdrawn following a person's response the result is negative reinforcement.

In sum, both positive and negative reinforcement increase behavior , and punishment decreases behavior.

2.2.3

COMMUNITY WORK

To an increasing extent community work is receiving the attention of the social work profession in South Africa .This development has been due largely to the realization in both the public and private sectors that community work has a potential to more effectively deal with social problems facing the country than methods which focus on individual change. In working with people social workers are concerned with both the individual and his social

environment. In some cases the problems of individuals may be rooted in his own behaviour. Focussing on his behaviour may help him overcome his problems. In such cases the skilled application of interpersonal helping methods such as social casework and group-work are appropriate. In other cases client's problems may not be overcome through direct intervention since they may be due to his circumstances, for example due to the widespread of unemployment and unavailable jobs. In such circumstances the client's problem(s) may lie outside of himself. Changes in his environment may be necessary in order to meet his needs. Community work focus on the environment and the bringing about of change in this sphere. The essence of the community work approach is brought out by the sociologist Etzioni who states "to solve social problems by changing people is more expensive and usually less productive than approaches that accept people as they are and seek to mend not them but the circumstances around them" (Etzioni in Lombard, 1991:108)

According to Lombard (1991:108) community work is an umbrella term used to refer to various intervention approaches by a professional practitioner to help a community engage in conscious collective action in order to respond to social problems. Irrespective of the approach used, it is concerned with bringing about changes in the environment and in social institutions.. Involved in the process are task goals which aim at the accomplishment of specific steps or stages, process goals which aim at working with the members of the community to build and maintain the organisation or association representing the community, and relationship goals which have as their objective developing organisational and interpersonal relationships among members to facilitate change efforts.

According to McKendrick (1990:p72) community work is a method of social work which is derived towards achieving one or more of the following objectives:

- to satisfy the broad needs of the community and to create and maintain a balance between the needs and the resources in the community.
- to provide the community with the opportunity to exploit its strengths and potentials and develop knowledge and skills in order to deal with social problems and prevent them.
- Lastly to effect change in the community , in group relations and the distribution of decision making powers.

2.2.3.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

According to Gray (2001:58) community development is a method of intervention, which emphasises the involvement of people within localised communities in proposing, planning and promoting development priorities for their own communities. The method refers to a participatory problem solving process which empowers the participants. Social work has tended to emphasise non-material community resources such as the power and combined strength of collective action. However, it is necessary to link social and political empowerment to economic development. New community development models stress the importance of economic growth linked to income generating programmes and small business development in local communities (Special Issue: International Social Work, 1996). Entrepreneurial community development aims to keep resources within

communities, where the community itself generates the products its consumers needs. 'Community' bakeries, especially in rural areas for example, can supply bread to residents at a much lower price than bread produced by large urban-based bakeries with high overheads and heavy transport costs. Locally grown produce, such as fruit, vegetables and nuts, can be processed and bottled within communities at an affordable price. Block-making and home building projects not only provide houses, but also generate jobs. Hence community development harness the collective, cooperative capacity of communities to empower people socially, politically and economically. True empowerment comes with the economic independence (Gray, 2001:15).

2.2.3.2 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Social development has been defined by Midgley (1995:25) as a process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the population as a whole in conjunction with the dynamic process of economic development.

The social development model offers an approach to welfare and poverty which extends beyond social work and beyond social welfare. Midgley (1995:23) explains that social development cannot take place without economic development and economic development is meaningless unless it is accompanied by improvements in social welfare for the population as a whole. Social development provides an alternative to residual and institutional models of welfare in that it does not separate social welfare from the economy. It attempts to integrate economic and social policies and

favours social policies that contribute positively to economic development (op cit:26).

This approach does not focus primarily on needy individuals. Instead, the proponents of social development advocate for the adoption of a macro-focus approach which directs attention to communities, regions and societies'. Selectively targeted are the city poor, impoverished rural dwellers, ethnic minorities and women (Midgley, 1995:27). The approach creates a type of social work which diversifies from the residual, service-oriented approach directed at special categories of people in need to holistic, planned, development strategies which place people and human rights at the centre of social planning (Gray, 1996:27). The programmes identified in the White Paper for Social Welfare(1997) are planned largely with these social development principles in mind. The continued need for remedial services is acknowledged, but there is no clarification as to how they fit with the social development model (Midgley, 1996; White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997).

Elliot in Gray (opcit:29) suggest that a social development approach should address problems at various levels e.g at individual therapy so that immediate and short-term considerations are not ignored; economic restructuring-focusing on urban and rural poverty; preventive educational campaigns and empowerment. Expressed in theoretical terms, this would mean that a combination of social development and systems theory brings back the social perspective into social work, while still allowing for individual therapy approaches. It obviates the need for simple unicausal explanations at either micro- or macro-level and enables multilevel and multi system intervention.

A culture of human rights needs to inform the whole social work process within the development model (Gray, 1998:29). This has implications for social workers, particularly when they fulfil roles of social control. For example, the question of the client's access to social work records, the role of the social worker in the case of conflicting rights of family members, and the accountability of the social worker to the community are only a few of the new issues that will need to be debated. The responsibility of the social worker in informing clients of their individual rights, for example, is unclear.

A dominant feature of the social development model is the link between social and economic development. Translated into practice this could be operationalised as choosing empowering, participatory approaches, where clients and families are encouraged to take control of their own development. Goldstein in Gray (1998:30) reaffirms that the social worker would have to focus on strengths rather than pathologies and work to build naturally existing community support systems, rather than encouraging dependency on professional services. This would require a client-centred approach and close cooperation with other community structures. Clients and families would be empowered to solve their own problems and to become financially self-sufficient.

2.2.3.3 EMPOWERMENT MODELS

Empowerment models developed out of radical social work theory recognise that power imbalances are inherent in modern society; that conflict exists between people or groups around issues of power; and that contradictions in society create problems for people, for instance, when a family is both nurturant and oppressive. Hence clients are helped to see the way in which

structural factors impinge on their personal problems. Instead of blaming themselves for their situation, clients are educated about the way in which the environment, or the context in which they live, contribute to social problems. Gray (1992 :16) as cited in Gray(2001:p) describe empowerment as 'a process which begins with conscientising people about their own subjective experience in relation to the experience of others and to the context within which their experiences occurs. Empowerment models are aimed at creating independence. This aim can only truly be realised through making clients aware of their rights, raising consciousness and education. These models advocate maximum client involvement in problem resolution, whether at the individual, group or community level. They recognise the client's right to self-determination which, they believe, can only be achieved through their own participation and involvement. The models lead to capacity building and community-organising as people are enabled to take control of their lives and to make decisions for themselves.

Before presenting certain bases for social work practice and certain principles which characterize all of its methods, it is necessary to place the secondary or facilitating processes of social work that is supervising , administration, research ,and teaching of social work ,within the same general context which has been developed.

2.2.4

ADMINISTRATION

Administration in social work with its responsibility for the total operation of a service or agency, in common with its sister processes, has produced its own literature and generated its own differences in points of view. Some social workers educators advocate that the administrative process is the very

heart of social work education and practice. Administration is one of the major aspects of social work practice. Certainly every agency program requires an able administrator to be effective. The demands for trained workers for administrative positions is definitely on the increase. Kidneigh cited in Skidmore et al. (1994:107) states that social work administration is "the process of transforming social policy into social services ". It is a two way process, transforming policy into concrete social services, and the use of experience in recommending modification of policy. This definition , of course encompasses the idea that administration is the process of implementation , of translating policies into action programs.

One of the basic principles in administration is that all levels of staff participate in the administrative process. This includes executives, sub executives, supervisors, consultants, caseworkers, group workers, community organizers, secretaries, attendants, and others. Under this study the researcher looked into administration with focus on how students are able to utilize and abide with the policies of the agencies and how they professionally present themselves in a work setting during their practical training, for instance use of telephones for personal reasons. Focus is also based on how students interact with their supervisors, colleagues, and other professionals. Attention is also given to the organizational ability of the students and their ability to record, write reports and open files. How work attended to is submitted for supervision including feedback on performance is addressed in the study.

2.2.5

RESEARCH

Research is an enabling process in social work, one that is being stressed more in practice. Social workers are recognising the need for scientific answers to numerous questions. They need to know why people behave as they do, particularly in their social functioning, and also what happens when various skills and techniques of the social worker are applied in helping disadvantaged people. Social workers recognise that they can ask many more questions than they can answer, thus research is needed as never before.

The encyclopedia of the social sciences as cited in Skidmore et al(1994:117) stated briefly, that social research is systematic inquiry regarding social situations and problems, the process of obtaining social facts, or methodical inquiry into social phenomena. Much social research is focused on social problems of people who live together. There is a difference between pure research and applied research. Social workers are particularly interested in applied research which is for utilitarian purposes contrasted with pure research, which is conducted for its own sake. Nevertheless, more social workers today are developing an interest in and practise especially action or implementation research research. Research is being recognised as a critical element in the preparation of the social work practitioners. The future of the profession is dependent upon scientifically based research that adds to the social work knowledge base and answers practice questions. Many social workers still believe that "common sense is enough in working with people". This is not so. Facts are needed if social workers are to accomplish effective and professional social work practice.

According to Welch in Mckendrick(1990:167) to practice social work in South Africa without evaluating the outcome of actions taken is socially irresponsible. The extent to which social worker's practice is guided by research makes the difference between professional and semi professional practice. Knowledge of the process of research, even without necessarily achieving research skills allows social workers to conceptualise more clearly; implement practice methods more effectively , and to evaluate practice methods and outcomes goals(Welch,1987:167). Social workers in South Africa must be trained in an integrated approach which includes skills in evaluating the results of their efforts to develop an interest and background in both specific aspects of practice and research. Duehn in Welch(1987:168) argues that a basic four part problem solving approach underlies the work of both researchers and practitioners. Thus social workers need to integrate research/practice approaches which are responsive to the problem solving alternatives. The four part problem solving approach consist of :-

- Problem identification, definition and specification.
- Generating alternatives and selection of strategies for problem solution.
- Implementation and
- evaluation and dissemination of results.

According to Grinell (1988:38) there are two reasons why social workers emphasise research:

Ethical Concern: To integrate research and evaluation within practice in order to offer the most effective service.

Professional Concern: In other words "accountability" especially to safeguard sponsorship in order to enrich the social work profession.

2.3. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Since the practical placement is about the integration of theory with practice and theory learned in class by the students is applicable to practice during the internship, the researcher deem it necessary to employ experiential learning and social theories. These theories help the researcher to better understand the theoretical knowledge of learning and integration of theory with practice.

2.3.1 EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THEORY

According to Kolb (1984:21) experiential learning theory offers a fundamentally different view of the learning process from that of the behavioural theories of learning based on an empirical epistemology or the more implicit theories of learning that underlie traditional educational methods, than for the most part are based on a rational, idealist epistemology. From this perspective emerge some different prescriptions for the conduct of education, the proper relationships among learning, work and other life activities, and the creation of knowledge itself. This perspective on learning is called 'experiential' for two reasons : Firstly it is to tie it clearly to its intellectual origins in the works of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget. The second reason is to emphasize the central role that experience plays in the learning process. The aim of this work is to suggest through experiential learning theory a holistic integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition and behaviour. According to Kolb (1984:38) learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the

transformation of experience. Furthermore according to Norman (1982:03) learning refers to the act of deliberate study of a specific body of material, so that the material can be retrieved at will and used with skill. Learning involves purposeful remembering and skillful performance.

People do learn from their experience, and the results of that learning can be reliably assessed and certified for college credits. At the same time, programs of sponsored experiential learning are on the increase in higher education. Internships, field placements, work study assignments, structured exercises and role plays, gaming simulations and other forms of experience-based education are playing a larger role in the curricula of undergraduate and professional programs. For many so-called non-traditional students minorities, the poor, and mature adults experiential learning has become the method of choice for learning and personal development. Experienced-based education has become widely accepted as a method of instruction in colleges and universities across the nation. Experiential learning theory offers something more substantial and enduring. It offers the foundation for an approach to education and learning as a lifelong process that is soundly based in intellectual traditions of social psychology, philosophy and cognitive psychology. The experiential learning model pursues a framework for examining and strengthening the critical linkages among education, work and personal development. It offers a system of competencies for describing job demands and corresponding educational objectives and emphasizes the critical linkages that can be developed between the classroom and the "real world" with the experiential learning methods. It pictures the work-place as a learning environment that can enhance and supplement formal education

and can foster personal development through meaningful work and career-development opportunities (Kolb, 1984:22).

In the last 40 years, many of Dewey's ideas have found their way into "traditional" educational programs, but the challenges his approaches were developed to meet, those of coping with change and lifelong learning, have increased even more dramatically. It is in meeting these challenges that experiential educators in higher education have addressed themselves not in a polarized spirit of what Arthur Chickering (1977) calls "either/orneriness" but in spirit of co-operative innovation that are as old as or in some cases older than, the formal education system itself. These methods include apprenticeships, internships, work study programs, co-operative education studies and field projects. In all these methods, learning is experiential in the sense that "the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It involves direct encounter with the phenomenon being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter or only considering the possibility of doing something with it" (Keeton and Tate 1978:02 as cited in Kolb, 1984:5).

In higher education today, these "traditional" experiential learning methods are receiving interest renewed interest and attention, owing in large measure to the changing educational environment in this country. As universities have moved through open enrolment programs and so on, to expand educational opportunities for the poor and minority groups, there has been a corresponding need for educational methods that can translate the abstract ideas of academia into the concrete practical realities of these people's lives. Many of these new students have not been rigorously socialized into a classroom/textbook way of learning but have developed their own distinctive

approach to learning, sometimes characterized as “survival skills” or “street wisdom”. For these, the field placement or work study program is an empowering experience that allows them to capitalize on their practical strengths while testing the application of ideas discussed in the classroom. Learning methods that combine theory and practice provide more productive arena for learning. Finally, there is a marked trend toward vocationalism in higher education, spurred on by a group of often angry and hostile critic students who feel cheated because the career expectations created in college have not been met, and employers who feel that the graduates they recruit into their organizations are woefully unprepared. Something has clearly gone awry in the supposed link between education and work, resulting in strong demands that higher education “shape up” and make itself relevant to. The consistent theme in all Lewin’s work was his concern for the integration of theory and practice. His best-known quotation “there is nothing so practical as a good theory”, symbolises his commitment to the integration of scientific inquiry and social problem solving (Kolb, 1984:25).

2.3.2 SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

According to Sullivan (1988:224) social learning theory recognizes that although education is one way in which human beings learn what to do in a various situations, most of what people learn through life does not come from formal classroom training or even on the job coaching. Indeed, the average child of two or three has learned an incredible array of behaviour, most of it without the aid of formal parental training. Rather, the child’s behaviours are learned vicariously by observing models (eg. parents, siblings, television) and then rehearsing these behaviours either covertly or overtly until they are well practiced. The point is that social learning processes begin at a very early

age and continue throughout our entire lives. Although such behaviours are learned they cannot be effectively performed without some kind of practice. For example reading the book on how to be a nurse manager or more specifically using leadership skills, will not make you an effective nurse manager. You may know what to do and even to some extent how to do it, but without practice and experience, your learning will be minimal. You can however learn a great deal about being a nurse manager (both effective and ineffective) by observing nurse managers in other units. In short while the book provide you with considerable information about being a nurse manager, none of it will truly be yours until you actually put it into practice and make it part of your personal experience.

So what does social learning theory have to offer you as a nurse manager in managing and supervising your nursing staff? Simply this : as a nurse manager you are a very visible and very important role model for staff members whom you lead. If you feel it is important for them to accomplish some particular task, then use your expertise as a knowledgeable model. Demonstrate the appropriate behaviours, the right way to do the task, pointing out the pitfalls and potential problem areas along the way. Once you have demonstrated the correct procedure several times, ask the staff nurse to perform the task, giving appropriate feedback and guidance as she or he does so. To the extent that you can involve other staff nurses in such training (especially in the feedback and social support for task accomplishment), the more effective training becomes. Your behaviour as a role model always serves as a guide for the behaviour of others. Becoming more consciously aware of what you do, how do you do it, and when you do it, you can more easily diagnose the successes and failures of your staff. When your nurses

do not accomplish the job according to your expectations, first ask yourself whether you have provided the appropriate behaviours as a role model. This example can be applied to social workers in supervising students.

2.4

SUMMARY

In the context of this chapter theoretical knowledge of different social work methods and the knowledge base of social work were discussed, that social work students need as a basis for effective practical work and develop a sense of professionalism.

CHAPTER 3

STUDENT SUPERVISION DURING INTERNSHIP

3.1

INTRODUCTION

According to Pettes (1979:03) supervision is a process by which one social work practitioner is accountable to a supervisee to practice to the best of his/her abilities although there are distinctions between supervising students in field instruction and supervising workers, there is also a considerable overlap in the two processes. In the education of students for social work practice, the supervision received in field work placements is seen as a crucial task between academic work and practice experience. Field instructors who supervise are usually agency employees but are considered to be the teaching arm of the academic institution as well (Rosenblatt, 1980:325).

According to Ford and Jones (1987:63) during practice placements, the social work student is subjected to continuous processes of informal learning by participating in office discussions, by observing colleagues attitudes and by overhearing their telephone conversations. Supervision sessions provide a formal context for teaching and learning and demand more of the supervisor than simply being available to discuss the next step or a piece of work. There are various ways of planning and structuring supervision sessions, introducing a range of ideas about principles and process skills that the supervisor needs.

The primary task for supervisors is to maximise the opportunities for students to learn for themselves within the context of the particular agency setting.

The supervisor therefore has two roles to perform, that of a supervisor and that of a practice teacher. A supervisor is accountable to both the agency and the client. The practice teacher has a responsibility to the educational establishment and the student. According to Ford and Jones (op cit : 63) the supervisor has first to ensure that a good standard of service is offered to the agencies' clients and secondly, to develop skills in teaching so as to maximise the learning of the student.

Young as cited in Ford and Jones (op cit : 64) sees a supervisor as part of a teaching team, as an educator, whose duties include :

- the planning and producing programmes of learning opportunities which is a recognisable entity, not a series of disconnected experiences.
- provide help in learning of students, through enabling them to understand the meaning of their experience of helping clients, as well as through direct giving of information.
- Create a climate for learning, which includes as its main focus their relationship, through which the student will get encouragement and feedback and help in integrating theoretical knowledge with practical experience.
- helping the student with personal feelings of a more stressful kind, which may be aroused through the process of involvement in work.

According to Rosenblatt et al, (op cit : 325) there are at least three distinctive requirements of student supervision. They are : a need for sharing the supervisory process with an outside institution and person; the increased responsibility for containing anxiety and the central role of socializing the student into the profession. These requirements occur on both organisational and relationship levels.

3.2

MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING OF STUDENT SUPERVISION

3.2.1

Supervision : As a two way process

Since formal social work education began at the turn of the 19th century, supervision has been a basic component of both the educational process and social work practice. It has been recognised as one of the unique characteristics of social work which is generally regarded as being positive. It is also an integral part of most social work agencies in the delivery of social services. It is a meaningful administrative process of social work. Robinson as cited in Skidmore (1995:246) a pioneer of supervision explained that supervisors in a social agency are responsible for overseeing the job in the generally understood meaning of the word. They also have, in addition, a second function of teaching or training workers under their supervision. This teaching function is developing in importance as schools of social work become more certain in defining the place of supervised field work in the whole professional training. According to Skidmore (op cit 246) evidence of the interest in supervision in social work was reflected in the publication of social work supervision in (1979) a book that attempted to provide an overview of relevant literature and systematically interrelating representative articles that had appeared in recent years. In the last several years, some differences of opinion regarding supervision in social work have developed.

Most practitioners, however, reaffirm that adequate supervision is an essential part of sound administration and social work practice.

3.2.2 Management of internship by training institutions

3..2.2.1 Pre-placement planning by students

It is useful for the student to have a brief picture of the supervisor's experience, including particular skills and knowledge about certain problems, for example welfare rights, marital counselling or family therapy and homelessness. According to Ford and Jones (op cit :23) the less experienced supervisor would also like to know the experience of the student and possibly the ideological view point held by the students. It is usually better for a less experienced need supervisor to work with a student of middle range abilities rather than to start with a student who has no clear difficulties. Supervisors should honestly assess whether they can really competently supervise students in relation to all methods which they have set down.

According to the Journal of Social Work (1995) during supervision, planning & setting of objectives is an important factor to consider. Clearly set objectives will help the supervisor to determine whether the student is achieving something tangible or not from the practical experience. On the other hand, it will help the students gain an appreciation of problems and pressures faced in real life situations. This will also give the student an opportunity to plan and budget their time with a view to move at a reasonable pace towards realization of set goals. Hall as cited in Social Work Journal (1995) has identified three general objectives of practical field work as follows:

- to help students to learn to adapt to new situations and to develop good working relationships within the new setting.
- to give students useful and meaningful tasks to be performed with a view to testing the student's capacity to work reliably and responsibly as a member of a team.
- to give students practical learning experience for the type of work they might undertake once having qualified.

3.2.2.2 Preparation by the field work co-ordinator

The field work co-ordinator contact different welfare agencies or state departments for the requisition/application of student placements, for doing their internship. This preparation also helps the field work co-ordinator to know who is responsible for the student's placement and also for continual contact. Since the field work co-ordinator had the contacts of different agencies, it is not that difficult to place students for the internship, except in some agencies which are not prepared to take the students for the practicals. Usually this exercise is carried out towards the end of each and every year. The main objectives of practical training are :

- to enable students to integrate theory with practice under the careful guidance/supervision of field-supervisors attached to welfare bodies
- to help the students to internalise the principles, procedures and skills with regard to all the methods of treatment in social work by emphasizing those in practice and in supervisory discussions.

- to broaden and deepen the students' knowledge and practice insight with regard to social and individual problems by means of actual examples taken from practice.

Furthermore, in preparing for the student placement, the field work co-ordinator also consider factors such as the level of the student and the duration of placement. According to Social Work Journal (1995) these factors also influence the internship objectives, which agency supervisors ought to be aware of. These factors should also help supervisors in giving direction and guidance to students during the stage of setting objectives.

Firstly, the objectives of student's placement should reflect their level of maturity and sophistication. It is important to match objectives with the level of each particular student, for example with fourth year students, expectations are more on the integrated approach, policy formulation and analysis, implementation, management aspects and research. In the third year group and 2nd year groups, it will be more directed at the basic understanding of applying the methods of social work during practice.

Secondly, the duration of placement is also an important factor in the setting of objectives for a field work placement. Students at different levels of study at university undertake placements on varying periods of duration. For instance third year students may be expected to undertake five weeks of placement while fourth year students do three months of internship. Objectives set to be accomplished in a five weeks period placement would obviously differ substantially from those of a three months placement. According Social

Work Journal (1995) while the general thrust might be the same, there are bound to be differences in scope, emphasis etc.

3.2.2.3 Preparation by the students for placement

According to Ford and Jones (1987:25) students in planning for their placement, should have some idea of their development in relation to the curriculum, and can, therefore, be expected to be able to state their broad aims for any placement. Students should know what it is they are required to achieve by the end of their field practice. Social work is a complex activity requiring a large range of knowledge, which must be applied in a discriminating fashion to unique personal situations in an individualised way by the practitioner. Lewis in Ford and Jones (1987:24) stated that there are three main kinds of knowledge which the social worker uses, and these are values, theory and practice. These are all utilized in relation to the important practical concerns of the social worker, namely the agency function, the problem to be tackled and the process of intervention. Students have to learn the limitations and boundaries of the profession and how to relate to clients, colleagues and other professionals in a professional way. Students need to develop their own way of offering their social work skills in the context of a recognisable job, so that they can be used with discrimination in relation to a variety of problem situations with which they will be faced with. Students need to develop self awareness, recognition of their own values, attitudes, knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses, and how to apply personal experience to work. Ford and Jones (1987:25) further observed that students often have clear ideas on the type of placement they prefer and will specify a particular agency or even a particular supervisor. It is unacceptable for students to begin negotiating for placements without much thought about

where they are in terms of their professional development. If insufficient preparation has been done by the field work co-ordinator and the students, a supervisor is justified in suggesting that more thought should be given to the placement before their next meeting.

3.2.2.4 MANAGEMENT OF THE INTERNSHIP BY THE AGENCY

3.2.2.4.1 Preparation by the agency manager/director

After the field work co-ordinator have consulted with the manager/directors of different agencies where students are placed, it is then the responsibility of directors to see how supervision of the students is going to be conducted. According to Pritchard (2000:194), supervision is usually discussed at the pre-placement meeting when discussing the practice teaching sessions and the pre-placement agreement is formulated. On the placement agreement form there should be a section about practice teaching sessions, but it needs to be developed further and a firm contract agreed upon once the placement has started. On the placement agreement form it is usually agreed that the supervisor and student will meet on a weekly basis for between one and one and a half hours, for instance, and venue is agreed. Basically in this regard, the manager/director assigned the supervisor to supervisee.

3.2.2.4.2 Preparation by selected supervisor

Once a student has been accepted for doing his/her internship with a particular agency, the supervisor to whom the new applicant is assigned has the function of placement and orientation. Students need to find their place in the organisational framework. Knowing clearly to whom they report, and who reports to them, enables students to find their "particular location in the invisible geography" of the agency's human-relations network. According to

Pettes as cited in Kadushin (1992:106) the initial period, of the beginning of placement at any agency, is a vital one for both the student and the supervisor. It may be defined as the orientation period, usually the first week, during which the student is learning about the agency and gaining some idea of what he/she may expect and what may be expected from him/her. The period of orientation begins with the meeting between the student and the supervisor, which normally occurs at the agency where the student is placed and where the supervisor's office is. According to Ford and Jones (1987:26) during this meeting the supervisor receives many clues as to how the student relates to people, to what degree he/she is articulative, aggressive, responsive or interested. On the other hand, the student is reviewing similar clues about the supervisor as a teacher, a helping person and a professional. According to Pritchard (op cit : 197) the student and practice teacher/supervisor should spend a considerable amount of time together during the induction period and will begin to know each other, but the first formal supervision session should address specific issues, such as the format of future sessions and how the student can best learn. They also look into the logistics of supervision such as place, time and written material.

3.3

LOGISTICS OF SUPERVISION

3.3.1

Place

Ordinarily, conferences and other meetings between a supervisor and supervisee are held in the supervisor's office. Sometimes the supervisor goes to the supervisee. In some agencies, separate offices are reserved for supervisory conferences. Privacy is required so that whatever the two talk about will be kept confidential. Sometimes negative feelings arise, and privacy is essential for discussions about them.

3.3.2 Time

The length of supervisory conferences varies. Although some supervisors prefer one hour, others feel they need more time. Both supervisor and supervisee should feel comfortable with the time schedule.

3.3.3 Written materials

Most supervisors ask for written documentation for eg. reports, that can be used as a basis for discussion in supervisory conferences. In some instances supervisees are asked to record some cases which can then be studied and evaluated together by the supervisor and the supervisee. Also written self-evaluations, what is normally termed experience with self, that consider the supervisee's work over a given period of time, can be helpful.

3.4 FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION

According to Kadushin (1992:19) supervision has been defined primarily in terms of administrative and educational functions, emphasis varying with the author. Robinson (1986) as cited in Kadushin (1992:19) define supervision as "an educational process in which a person with a certain equipment of knowledge and skill takes responsibility for training a person with less equipment (1965) also cited in Kadushin (1992:19) defines supervision as an educational knowledge of social work skills in practice from the trained to the untrained, from the experienced to the inexperienced student and worker. According to Kadushin (1992:19) the second and final option of the Encyclopedia emphasises the administrative function. It defines supervision as "an administrative function, a process for getting the work done and maintaining organisational control and accountability". On occasion both functions are included in the definition. Administration and education have

long been identified as the two primary functions of supervision. The social work supervisor has a responsibility for implementing both functions in contact with supervisees.

According to Kadushin (1992:19) there is, however, an additional and distinctively different responsibility that needs to be included in the definition. This is the expressive-supportive leadership function of supervision. The supervisor has the responsibility of sustaining worker/student morale, helping with job-related discouragements and discontents, and giving supervisees a sense of worth as professionals, a sense of belonging in the agency, and a sense of security in their performance. These three major functions of supervision are complementary. All are necessary if the ultimate objective of supervision is to be achieved. Admittedly there is an overlap between the administrative, educational and supportive functions of supervision. However, each function is different from the others in terms of problems and goals.

3.4.1 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION

The primary problem in administrative supervision is concerned with the correct, effective and appropriate implementation of agency policies and procedures whereas the primary goal is to ensure adherence to policy and procedure.

Supervision is a special aspect of organizational administration. Kadushin (1992:44) states that when a number of people are brought together and are then provided with the necessary equipment and facilities to get a particular job done, there needs to be systematic co-ordination of efforts if the objectives of the group are to be efficiently accomplished. The systematic co-

operative, co-ordinated effort of a group of people in getting a desired job efficiently accomplished, or sustained for any period of time, leads inevitably to the development of some kind of formal organisation of the work. Schein (1970:19) as cited in Kadushin (1992:44) defines organisation as the "rational co-ordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common explicit purpose or goal through division of labor and function and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility. Any organisation, and in particular a bureaucratic organisation, needs administration. It refers to the process which brings the structural arrangements to life. It is a process which implements organisational objectives. Sein (1965) as cited in Kadushin (1985:41) describes administration as a process of defining and attaining the objectives of an organisation through a system of co-ordinated and co-operative effort. The supervisor is the link in the chain of administration. The supervisor has the responsibility for agency management, and specific, clearly defined, administrative managerial functions are assigned to her.

3.4.2 EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

The primary problem in educational supervision is worker ignorance and/or inaptitude regarding the knowledge, attitude and skills required to do the job. The primary goal is to dispel ignorance and upgrade skill.

Educational supervision is the second principal responsibility of the supervisor. Educational supervision is concerned with teaching the worker what he needs to know in order to do his job and helping him to learn it. Every job description of the supervisors position includes a listing of the following functions :-

- instruct the workers in acceptable social work techniques
- to develop staff competence through individual and group conferences
- to train and instruct staff in job performance

Educational supervision is a more specific kind of staff development. In this regard training is directed to the needs of a particular worker/student carrying a particular case load, encountering particular problems and needing some individualized program of education. According to Kadushin (1985:126) the supervisor is discharging the responsibilities of educational supervision helping the worker/student to implement and apply the more general learning provided through the in-service training program. The supervisor teaches the supervisees what he needs to know to give specific services to clients and helps the supervisee to know what he/she is doing. In-service training and educational supervision complement each other. The supervisor reinforces, individualize, and demonstrate the applicability of the general content taught in a planned, formal training session. Educational supervision is a line, rather than a staff function.

Kadushin (1985:126) stated that educational supervision, as a staff development function, is one of a number of different responsibilities. Furthermore, the supervisor have an administrative responsibility for the supervisees to whom she is offering training. Educational supervision is a significant part of the supervisor's activities and responsibilities. Two of the strongest sources of satisfaction for supervisors are satisfaction in helping the supervisee grow and develop as a professional and satisfaction in sharing social work knowledge and skills with supervisees. The main sources

of supervisees satisfaction with supervision are related to educational supervision. In addition both supervisors and supervisees agree on ensuring the professional development of the supervisee, as one of the most important objectives of supervision.

3.4.3

SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION

The primary problem in supportive supervision is worker morale and job satisfaction. The primary goal is therefore, to improve morale and job satisfaction.

Supervisors and supervisees also are subjected to a variety of job-related stresses. Unless some resources are available to help them deal with these stresses, their work may be seriously impaired to the extent that the agency may not function effectively. The supervisor is responsible for helping the supervisees to adjust to job-related stress. The ultimate objective of this component of supervision is the same as the objective of administrative and educational supervision that is, to enable the workers and the agency through the workers, to offer the client the most effective and efficient service.

3.4.4

RELATIONSHIP OF EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION TO ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION

- They share the same ultimate objective, that is, to provide the best possible service to the clients. Administrative supervision provides the structure directed towards this goal. Educational supervision provides the training which enables the supervisors to achieve it. It provides the knowledge and skills for effective practice.

- Educational and administrative supervision also reinforce each other. Educational supervision is designed to increase the effectiveness of administrative supervision. As a result of educational supervision the tasks of administrative supervision are alternatively implemented.
- They provide alternative procedures for control of supervisee's performance, more of one requires less of the other.
- Development of knowledge and skills, as a result of educational supervision, permits relaxation of administrative controls. The worker will not only feel a personal obligation to do a good job, he will have the necessary competence and capability to do so.
- Educational supervision permits smoother administrative co-ordination and more effective communication.

3.5

PURPOSE OF SUPERVISION

According to Skidmore (1995:245) supervision in social work is concerned with helping staff members and students to use their knowledge and skills to do their job efficiently and effectively. In the etiological sense, the word supervision means oversight, control and surveillance. In social work it is used ordinarily to describe the function that one individual, the supervisor, assumes in relation to a worker, a supervisee. Interaction between supervisor and supervisee aims to improve worker's competence. It is a teaching-learning process, educational as well as administrative and enabling. It may be accomplished in a group as well as one-one basis. The supervisor's role is to support, encourage, impart information, and listen to

workers, particularly to new and inexperienced ones. Capable supervisors point out knowledge gaps and deficiencies in skill and help workers/students control their biases. They are professional models for new worker/students and a bridge to the agency for experienced workers who have come from other agencies.

3.6 METHODS OF SUPERVISION

According to Rossenblatt et al. (1983:330) supervision can be conducted in a number of different modalities. Each format has certain advantages and disadvantages and each is appropriate or desirable depending on the circumstances the people are involved in and the goals to be attained. Teaching in supervision is from the specific to the general. This provides a helpful complement to formal academic work based on general principles that must be applied to different situations.

3.6.1 Individual supervision or conference

According to Kadushin (1976:334) the more common format of supervision is that of a weekly conference between the supervisor and supervisee. The individual conference can carry from having a tightly planned agenda, with written or other material prepared by the supervisee and given to the supervisor before the conference. The structural conference with prepared material is generally required for student supervision. Rosenblatt (1983:330) states that while informality and private nature of individual supervision can foster a free exchange and a comfortable learning in lieu, it can also lend itself to tangible discussions, a personal rather than professional emphasis, or a lack of focussed teaching.

One to one supervision has long been the preferred method in social work and is assumed to be models on the casework method and research in which it has proved to be the most fully developed of all the methodologies in social work. Individual supervision is also based on a tutorial method of teaching and has many educational advantages.

3.6.2 Group supervision/conference

Although the individual conference is the most frequent context for supervision, it is not the only one. In some agencies the group conference is the principal form of supervision. In many more agencies the group conference is used in addition to the individual conference. Group supervision may be the preferred modality for the supervision of social workers involved in group work as interactions in group supervision can be used for illustration and discussion of problems and approaches that might be employed in working with groups of clients. What happens in group supervision can be used to foster understanding of the interactions in client groups.

According to Kadushin (1992:404) group supervision is distinguishable from other procedures which employ a group setting to achieve agency administrative purposes. Group supervision usually consists of three to six supervisees with one supervisor. The supervisor has the responsibility for exercising leadership in the group and for the evaluation of each group member. The group usually meets once a week, but individual, or "spot" conferences may also occur as may be needed with the supervisor and a group member. The use of group supervision seems to be increasing in

social work though not at the rate one would have expected considering the many advantages that it offers.

3.6.3 Advantages of group supervision

The advantages of group supervision stems from reducing the power disparity and require a new assessment of the role of the supervisor. This basically implies that group members have the potentials to help themselves without the direction/instruction from the supervisor. According to Kadushin (1992:335) the group provides support to its members which lessens feelings of loneliness and low self-esteem which can be part of learning. Thus members of the group act as a source of emotional support. Through group conferences the individual supervisee develops a sense of belonging to a unit in the agency, a sense of group and professional identity and of group cohesion. The group conference also provides the supervisor with the opportunity of observing the supervisee in a different kind of relationship.

It also provides a gradual step toward independence from supervision. According to Kadushin (1976:335) raising questions and challenges with peer support is less threatening than in one to one situations. He further acknowledges that individual and group supervision each provide specific advantages and disadvantages, because both are more or less appropriate in response to different conditions and different needs. It is desirable to employ them as planned complementary procedures. The decision as to what should be taught on an individual basis and what should be taught through the group must be diagnostically based on the educational needs of the supervisee or the learner. The group meeting, like the individual conference needs to have clearly defined purposes.

3.7**CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SUPERVISOR**

The following is a brief consideration of several characteristics of a successful supervisor as outlined or highlighted by Skidmore (1995:250):

- Knowledgeability › is an essential characteristic of an effective supervisor. This means the supervisor should have professional knowledge as well as knowledge about the agency in which practice is taking place. Supervisors need comprehensive knowledge, professional attitudes, and practice skills and should be able to use them in the organisation and services of their agency. Supervisors should also be acquainted with the current professional developments in order to refer their supervisees to further study. Having knowledge as a supervisor enables them to effectively help students to integrate theory with practice.
- Practice skills › are essential for competent supervisors. This may mean professional competency in a particular social work method or methods, with general abilities in all basic social work methods. Such abilities would depend on what the supervisors are doing, in which area they are working and on the needs of students or workers.
- Open-door policy › having an open-door policy is highly desirable. This means the supervisor can be reached in emergencies and that the door is usually open for the supervisee to come in, ask questions, and be given guidance when necessary. Usually a weekly interview between supervisor and supervisee takes care of most questions and problems.

- Openness › effective supervisors are open-minded. This means that although they ordinarily have answers to the questions that may be asked, they will admit it when they do not know the answer to a problem or question and they will acknowledge their mistakes when they make them. Supervisors who recognise that they are human are the one's most likely to reach their supervisees showing appreciation and giving commendation.
- Commendation › students or new workers in particular are in hunger for commendation and appreciation. Such positive reinforcement by the supervisor can increase motivation and professional development of students or new workers. Thomas, a social psychologist, as cited in Skidmore (1995:252) suggests that recognition is one of the more fundamental wishes of people. Throughout the world supervisors who fail to show appreciation, cut their effectiveness, slow down professional development, and decrease the competency of supervisors.

3.7.1

EVALUATION OF THE SUPERVISORY PROCESS

Hoffman in McKendrick (1990:217) suggests that the success of educational supervision needs to be determined through evaluation as both are ongoing processes and the end product is determined through periodic formal assessments. Schmidt and Perry (1990) as cited in Kadushin (1992:341) define evaluation in supervision as the objective appraisal of the worker's total functioning on the job over a specified period of time. It is a process of applying systematic procedures to determine with reliability and validity the extend to which the worker/student is achieving the requirements of his/her

position in the agency. An evaluation should be a judgement based on clearly specified, realistic, and achievable criteria reflecting agency standards. It is job related and time limited. Evaluation is concerned with both the quality of performance and quantity of accomplishment. Evaluation is an administrative procedure that should, and can contribute to professional development. It is therefore a component of both administrative and educational supervision. Explicit feedback helps the worker to get a sense of meaningful achievement, reduces tension associated with role ambiguity, and provides the positive reinforcement for good work well done.

3.7.2 VALUES OF EVALUATION

Evaluation has value to the client, the agency, the supervisor, and most importantly to the supervisee.

Evaluation relieves supervisee's anxiety since it helps them to know where they stand. Supervisees are also in doubt about how adequately are they meeting agency expectations and how they are when compared with other workers of similar education and experience. A period set aside for formal evaluation gives supervisees a perspective on change and achievement. The supervisees evaluation is an opportunity to obtain explicit approval of his work from somebody who is thought to have the information, ability and experience to make such a judgement. Evaluations help motivate, direct, and integrate learning.

According to Rosenblatt (1983:336) student evaluations constitute the written records send to their academic institutions and help in determining grades in field work. Student evaluations are considered to be primarily an educational

tool, though their general content or conclusions may be used as part of the university record. During the beginning of the placement for students, the university field work co-ordinator send the evaluation forms to different agencies. These evaluation forms encompasses the scope of training, which include amongst others the following :-

(Social work as a professional and as an academic discipline)

- Social case work
- Social group work
- Community work and social development
- Social policy and administration
- Supervision in social work
- Specialised fields in social work
- Integrated approach
- Organising and making seminar presentations

After the field supervisors evaluation, thus after the internship, the lecturers also have a way of evaluating the students to see whether the students had sufficiently/satisfactorily integrated theory with practice. This is conducted in a way of oral assessment where the students present their practical experience.

3.7.3

IMPROVING SUPERVISION/RECOMMENDATIONS

One problem in social work supervision is that few supervisors have received specific or adequate training for supervising. Patti and Austin cited in Skidmore (1995:262) state that a serious challenge “facing schools and agencies is the anticipatory preparation of the thousands of direct service practitioners both students and graduates who will, in short order, become

first and second-line supervisors, project managers and co-ordinators, residential supervisors and the like". They suggest the following guidelines to strengthen educational planning:

- * Develop an opportunity for students to experience an in-depth, intensive exposure to supervisory roles.
- * Develop opportunities and requirements for students to assess their own potential for supervisory management by standardised tests.
- * Intensive re-examination of the instruction and supervisory processes is required of instructors and administrators to maximise learning.
- * Specific classes on supervision are offered in schools of social work, helping students to gain knowledge and develop skills that will be of value if and when they become supervisors in agencies. These classes also benefit all students, making them knowledgeable about supervision so that they will be effective participants in this two-way process.

3.8

SUMMARY

In the context of this chapter supervision was discussed. In order for the social work students to practice effectively during the internships they need to be fully guided and work under a careful supervision. The following were discussed: management and planning of student internship, supervision as a two way process; management of the internships by training institutions, functions of supervision, purpose of supervision.

CHAPTER 4

PROFESSIONALISM

4.1

INTRODUCTION

According to Fink (1989:15) social work is a profession committed to helping people. It has a uniqueness about the way it helps people, and because social work is a special way of helping people to achieve many and varied personal and social goals, social work appears far-reaching in its professional commitment. The fact that is frequently asked about social work is, what pulls everything together so that social work can be defined as a profession? Fink (op cit : 15) said the values, the helping skills, and the knowledge base of social work provide the professional foundation for social work. Fink further stated that social work is a recognised profession because all social workers have common values, a common helping commitment, and a common base of knowledge.

Kiester and Pfouts cited in Fink (op cit : 16) assert that the social work code of ethics, a philosophical commitment to idealism, and core values of respect for the individual, establish the professional definition of social work. There is however, more than ethics, values, and ideology, to define the profession of social work. As a way of helping people, social work is also an art that requires the application of recognised skills. These helping skills are at the very core of the profession of social work. Finally, but no less important, social work is a definable profession because it has a base in knowledge that is both the same and different than the knowledge that supports other professional disciplines. Polansky cited in Fink (op cit 16) draws particular attention to the importance of social theory as a foundation for social work

knowledge. He said that it is social theory that gives guidance to the art of helping. It is the theory that helps social workers order what seems to be chaos in most practice situations. Social work theory is dynamic, both shaping practice and being shaped by it, but social work depends upon this theory to reaffirm its professional stature. Thus from the beginning social work student must be prepared to explore and integrate the various services of social work knowledge into the art of social work helping. Social work practice is therefore, a blend of art and science. It is a helping relationship requiring effective skills, it is a problem-solving process requiring cognitive skills and mastery of a knowledge base.

4.2

THE FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL WORK THEORY

A good theory performs several functions. First, it helps reduce the chaos of raw experience. A good theory helps one to organise one's perceptions in terms of concepts and to see priorities among them. Theory makes it possible to take intelligent action on behalf of the client. This is especially so when the theory is dynamic which means that one is concerned with change, or tendencies to change.

4.3

THE CONCEPT SOCIAL WORK

According to Thompson (2000:12) there is no single, simple answer to this concept. Social work is a political entity and so, of course, how it is defined conceptualized and implemented is therefore a contested matter. For example, Payne cited in Thompson, (op cit) describes three different approaches to social work. These are :

- Individualism-reformism which refers to a view of social work as an activity geared towards meeting social welfare needs on an individual basis.
- Socialist-collectivity, for Payne, this approach “is part of a system which seeks to promote co-operation in society so that the most oppressed and disadvantaged people can gain power over their own lives”.
- Reflective-therapeutic this approach is geared towards promoting and facilitating personal growth in order to enable people to deal with the suffering and disadvantage they experience.

4.4

A PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE BASE

According to Thompson (op cit : 51) social workers need to draw on an extensive knowledge base in order to be equipped to meet the challenges of their work. The knowledge base represents, to a large extent, the consolidated knowledge of practitioners, theorists and researchers who have covered similar ground in the past and have left its legacy of their experiences and learning at face value and accept them in totality, but it does mean that we would be very foolish to ignore this knowledge base and start from scratch each day, failing to learn from other people's mistakes and successes.

This knowledge base is a very large and a complex one, and one that is developing all the time as a result of developments in practice, theory, policy

and research, and of course changes in the social, economic and political circumstances in which social problems occur (Thompson, op cit : 51).

4.4.1 Knowledge base of social workers

In trying to answer the required knowledge base of social workers Thompson (op cit: 52) break down the knowledge base into a number of sub-sections as follows:

4.4.1.1 Human development

According to Thompson (op cit : 52) how to intervene in a particular situation will depend on a number of factors; but one set of issues that is often to the fore is that of human development. This involves, matters relating to human life, for example, the response to a child will be different from that to a middle aged adult, or to an older adult. This is because we recognise the significance of the life course as an influence in peoples lives and acknowledge that people will face different challenges and issues, depending on where they are on that life course.

4.4.1.2 Social processes and institutions

It is no coincidence that the term "social worker" begins with the word social. The social context is a vitally important part of the situations social workers encounter and are expected to respond to. This applies in a number of ways including the following :

- Many of the problems encountered are social in origin, for example as a result of poverty and deprivation or racial harassment.

- Social problems are socially constructed. That is, they are defined by society for example, prostitution is defined as illegal in some countries but not others.
- Potential solutions are often at a social or community level.
- Responding to social work problems often involves drawing on wider social resources for example local government services.
- Personal or psychological factors do not exist in a vacuum they are strongly influenced and constrained by social issues.

It is therefore important for social workers to have an understanding of the social context of their work. To ignore the social dimension is to ignore a major feature of the social work world and of the reality of the circumstances of clients.

4.4.1.3 Interpersonal, group and organizational dynamics

According to Thompson (op cit : 56) many of the problems social workers are concerned with are the interactions of people, whether at an interpersonal, group or organisational level. It is important, then, for practitioners to have an understanding of what is involved in such interactions. At an interpersonal level, interactions between people are, in many ways, the crux of social work, and indeed of the human services more broadly. He further stated that to fully understand interpersonal interactions the following should be considered:

- **Communication** › Communication styles and patterns of communication can be very significant. Of course, we need not to consider the verbal communication but also non-verbal communication (the body language).
- **Power** › Power features as an aspect of social work. Power relations are generally reflected in interpersonal interactions and can be reinforced/challenged by such interactions.
- **Context** › The context in which interactions take place is also important, as the setting can have a significant bearing on the process and outcome of the interaction, for example, a conversation that takes place in a formal setting (a case conference, for example) is likely to be heavily influenced by the context.

4.5

THE SOCIAL WORK PROCESS

According to Thompson (op cit : 59) one of the common, criticisms of social work is that of vagueness and drift. According to this view, social work is characterised by a lack of precision about what is to be achieved or how it can or should be achieved. Objectives are seen as vague or non-existent and progress towards them tends to be at best slow and, at worst confused and misguided. In order for social workers to avoid this vagueness and drift, what is required is what Thompson (1996) as cited in Thompson (op cit : 60) referred to as "systematic practice". This involves being clear about the objectives of the particular work, the strategy for achieving them and how termination of the work will be determined. Such systematic practice can be achieved with a five-stage process, as follows:

4.5.1 Assessment

This involves gathering information and forming a picture of what the problems are, what strengths can be drawn upon and what needs to be done. It is the beginning stage because it is on the basis of this assessment that future work will be undertaken. Assessment is an holistic process that involves gaining an overview of the situation - what is sometimes referred to as "helicopter vision". It is important to note that assessment is not simply about gathering information, nor is it simply about identifying needs or what services should be provided.

4.5.2 Intervention

According to Thompson (op cit : 61) once problems and other relevant factors have been identified, the next step is to make the necessary arrangements to solve those problems and meet the needs. There are a number of ways in which intervention can be handled, but the overall process is the one of trying to respond to the identified problems in a positive and constructive way. There is no definitive "right answer" as to how to proceed, although some ways are clearly more appropriate and helpful than others. He further stated that it is important that practice should be based on partnership. That is, it should seek to involve clients as fully as possible, so that social work becomes a process of doing things with people, rather than to them, hence the principle of self-determination.

4.5.3 Review

Situations change over time, and so assessments need to change too. It is therefore important that practice is reviewed periodically so that the necessary adjustments can be made to the social work plan. In some cases,

it may be necessary to abandon the plan altogether. However, if work is not reviewed, then it is possible for a great deal of time, effort and energy to be wasted.

4.5.4 Termination

According to Thompson (op cit : 61) social workers should, at all times be geared towards bringing their intervention to a close. An open-ended approach with little or no appreciation of time scales, progress and priorities can be a major factor in allowing vagueness and drift to creep in. It is therefore important to seriously take the skills involved in bringing intervention to a close, as it is an aspect of practice that can easily be mishandled, thus undoing a lot of good work that has gone before.

4.5.5 Evaluation

Once the work is completed, we then have the opportunity to learn from it by considering what went well (how can we build on our strengths?), what could have gone better (how can we learn from our mistakes?) and generally what lessons there are to be learned from the experience. Thus evaluation is fundamental to continue to improve. No matter how skilled, experienced or effective social workers are, there are always lessons to be learned, improvements to be made and benefits to be gained from evaluating their practice (Thompson, op cit : 62).

Finally, it should be noted that the aim of the social work process and systematic practice is not to turn social workers into robots who slavishly follow a rigid sequence of stages, but rather into thinking practitioners who have a framework on which to base their work and the confidence, insight

and sensitivity to adapt that framework as and when this becomes necessary. That is, systematic practice is presented as a basis for flexible and reflective professional practice, rather than as an alternative to it.

4.6 THEORETICAL PARADIGMS

The knowledge base of social work is vast and constantly growing. Many people have attempted to make sense of this through developing theoretical approaches, and such work continues to be a feature of the social work academic world. It would, of course, be unrealistic to expect one theoretical approach to provide all the answers we need. We therefore need a grasp of a range of theoretical perspectives and the ability to draw on these as and when required (Thompson, op cit : 62).

Focus in this regard is based on the provision of an overview of the theoretical trends that have influenced social work over the years and continue to strive for dominance in explaining some of the complexities of identifying the social work task and the consequent attempts to achieve it as effectively and appropriately as possible. The main approaches to social work theory and practice are primarily the following:

4.6.1 Psycho dynamic

According to Thompson (op cit : 63) this theory derives largely but not exclusively from the work of Sigmund Freud. It relates to the internal psychological conflicts between the irrational pleasure drives of the id and the social conscience of the superego, mediated by the ego or psychological regulator. That is, their approach to social work sees social work problems as owing much to a conflict between wishes and needs of the individual and

the constraints and requirements of society. Practice is therefore mainly a matter of strengthening the ego in order to control the demands of the id which may be leading the individual concerned into trouble and conflict. Although no longer a dominant approach, it still has some adherents and a degree of influence.

4.6.2 Psycho social casework

This is, in many ways, a development from psycho-dynamic theory of writers such as Erikson. The difference between this approach and psycho dynamic theory is the greater emphasis on the social dimension and the range of social factors that play a part in the social work situation. This means that practice should be geared not only towards psychological adjustments but also towards attempts to alter the social environment or circumstances of the individual or family concerned.

4.6.3 Humanistic psychology

The focus of humanistic psychology is human potential and the social and psychological barriers that stand in its way. The social casework, then as far as humanistic psychology is concerned, is to liberate people from these barriers so that their natural goodness can flow through. According to Thompson (op cit : 64) this approach has never achieved the status of a dominant approach but its influence nonetheless continues to be felt in some areas of theory and practice.

4.6.4 Behavioural social work

The basic idea behind behavioural social work is that as behaviour is deemed to be learned through a small number of psychological processes such as

reinforcement, for eg. behaviour related problems can be solved through interventions that alter the learning process so that problematic behaviours are eradicated/reduced while positive behaviour is encouraged. According to Thompson this has been a popular approach in some aspects of practice, although it is no longer as popular as it was in the past.

4.6.5 Systems theory

This is a more explicitly sociological approach in which social work situations are understood as a series of interacting social systems (the family system, the neighbourhood system and so on). The task of the social worker, then, is to understand the interactions of such systems and the problems that arise, so that the pattern of systems can be altered and the problems resolved. Family therapy according to Thompson owes much to this approach. The emphasis is on changing the family system as a whole, rather than working with individual factors.

4.6.6 Radical-social work

This approach grew out of a dissatisfaction with approaches that took little or no account of wider social factors, particularly class, poverty and deprivation. The focus of radical social work was politicization, helping clients to develop an awareness of how their problems were linked to social and political factors so that, ultimately they could contribute to a process of radical social change.

Of course, it is not expected that social workers will have a grasp of all these theoretical perspectives. Some practitioners are well-versed in one or more of these theories but have little knowledge of or interest in the others. This is not necessarily a problem. The aim is one of developing well-informed

practice, rather than persuading practitioners to adopt one or other theoretical perspective (Thompson, op cit: 65).

4.7 **METHODS OF INTERVENTION**

In order to meet the expectations of professionalism the social workers according to scientific methods of intervention. According to Thompson (op cit: 65) the methods of intervention that can be brought to bear in achieving professionalism, social work aims can be closely linked to the theoretical perspectives. However, there are also other ways of looking at methods of intervention for example, in terms of whether they are targeted at individuals, families, groups or communities.

- 4.7.1 **Individual casework** › This is a common form of practice and involves working on a one-one basis with clients in order to help resolve their difficulties.
- 4.7.2 **Group work** › This can be an effective way of working with people who have common problems of concerns. The social worker acts as a facilitator in encouraging the group to support each other in resolving their difficulties.
- 4.7.3 **Community development work** › Far less popular than it was previously the case, but still alive and well in some areas. The social worker seeks to act as a catalyst in helping community groups to address problems and marshal their resources.

These different levels of intervention are, of course, not mutually exclusive, as they can overlap to a considerable extent, for example, group work may

be used as part of community work, or individual case work may be undertaken in tandem with family work.

4.8 USING KNOWLEDGE IN A PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Having knowledge is one thing, but being able to use it in actual practice is another. According to Thompson (2000:69) we strongly underestimate the skills involved in using knowledge in practice and of integrating theory and practice. In order to use such knowledge we need to be able to :

- 4.8.1 Select** › In this regard Thompson emphasises that we cannot use all of our knowledge all of the time. Although we will tend to use much of our knowledge without even realizing that we are doing so, we have to be able to decide which aspects of the knowledge base need to be to the fore in any given situation. In order to do this, we need to be clear about what we are trying to achieve so that we can determine which elements of knowledge are relevant, hence the importance of the social work process and systematic practice.

- 4.8.2 Integrate** › This applies at two levels. Firstly, there are different strands of knowledge that need to be integrated for eg. psychological, sociological and philosophical knowledge, so that they interweave and support each other. Secondly, there is need to integrate theory and practice, to ensure that formal knowledge is adapted to suit the particular situation being tackled. According to Thompson theory needs to be “tailored” or made to measure, rather than “off the peg”.

4.8.3 **Reflect** › It is not simply enough to utilize knowledge and have it at that. Thompson (2000:70) emphasises that we then need to reflect on our actions and their consequences, so that we can learn from them and adapt our plan of action accordingly. Indeed, the notion of reflective practice is an important one when it comes to using knowledge in practice.

4.9 **REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

According to Thompson (op cit : 70) the term “reflective practice” is one closely associated with the educational theorist Donald Selson. Reflective practice involves going beyond the idea of fitting the square peg of theory into the round hole of practice (op cit : 70).

According to Thompson (op cit : 87) theory cannot be seen as an entity that can simply be taken “off the shelf” and applied to practice in a mechanistic way. It is better conceived of as an interactive process through which concepts and frameworks are “made to measure” by the skilful work of the reflective practitioner. In other words, human services practice, although based on science, is also to a great extent.

According to Thompson (op cit :71) reflective practice involves the following:

- Literally “reflecting” on our practice, before, during and after.
- Avoiding routine or blanket approaches that do not consider the specific circumstances in hand.
- Avoiding mechanistic, unthinking responses to problems.
- Not looking for the “right answer”, as if there is only one possible solution to each problem.

- Recognising that practice situations are generally “messy”, and have to be wrestled with to make sense to them.
- Being active and imaginative, exploring the possible range of solutions.
- Problem-setting which implies being clear about what the problem is and how best to respond to it.
- Continuous professional development thus continuing to learn from practice, constantly improving our knowledge and skills.
- Being open to new ideas and other people’s perspectives, even if they challenge our own.

The notion of reflecting on practice before, during, and after is a factor worthy of further consideration. Reflection before practice is planning. It would be unwise to enter into a practice situation without giving at least some thought to the situation that lies ahead. This does not mean that it can be decided in advance how a situation can/should be dealt with - that will be against the principles of openness and flexibility associated with reflective practice. However, some degree of fore thought can pay dividends - forewarned is, after all, forearmed.

Reflection during practice is what Sebon (1983) as cited in Thompson (op cit: 71) refers to as “a reflective conversation with the situation”. That is, there is, or should be, a constant interplay between what is happening and the worker’s thoughts and actions. Rather than simply attempting to “apply” a theory or method mechanically or impose a particular solution to the solution, the reflective practitioner should keep the situation constant reviewing, revising elements of it and adjusting plans and responses accordingly.

Reflection, after the vents allow us to learn from the experience and to note key aspects of the situation and the part we played in dealing with it, so that we can benefit from the experience in terms of using the insights gained, to inform future practice.

According to Thompson (op cit : 72) the comment “I prefer to stick to practice” is one of the comments he has come across a number of times in talking to practitioners about theory-practice issues. The problem with statements like this is that they paint a picture in which theory and practice are entirely separate entities, existing in separate worlds. The reality, of course, is much more complex. Practice cannot be disconnected from ideas such as assumptions and frameworks of understanding. Theory and practice are therefore necessarily linked, even if practitioners do not draw on theory openly and explicitly. In effect, according to Thompson (2000:72), the comment ‘I prefer to stick to practice’ could be interpreted as “I am not willing to expose my practice to critical scrutiny or to reflect on it”. The point that Thompson is trying to make here is that it is dangerous to ignore, neglect or play down the role of knowledge and theory in underpinning practice. A failure to take seriously the knowledge base can result in a number of problems.

4.10 ETHICS AND VALUES UNDERLYING SOCIAL WORK AS A PROFESSION

In working with other people the social worker enters a complex world of interactions and structures. This can lead to a positive outcome for all concerned or it can lead to a serious exacerbation of the situation. Consequently, they have to recognise the potential for social work to do harm

as well as good. This introduces a need for an ethical approach, one in which the question of morality and values are taken into consideration. This does not mean that social workers have to be experts in moral philosophy, but it does mean that they need to be clear about it.

In order to meet the expectation of professionalism the social workers need to adhere to ethics and values underlying social work. In this regard attention need to be given to the following :

- Our own values and the ways in which they influence our practice.
- The professional values of social work and how they shape what they can/cannot do.
- The danger of not taking account of values and the ethical dimension of practice.

This is a very complex territory, and so social workers have to be realistic and accept that the ethical dimension of work is one that they are likely to continue to wrestle with, rather than one that can be resolved once and for all (Thompson, op cit : 68).

4.10.1 Ethical issues in social work

At present South African social workers operate under the auspices of the South African Council for social services profession's, code of ethics (1986). They are stipulated as follows :

4.10.1.1 General approach

The general approach in this code of ethics (course of conduct) is based on the ethics that :

- every human being has a unique value and potential, irrespective of origin, ethnicity, sex, age, beliefs, socio-economic and legal status;
- each individual has the right to the fulfilment of his innate and acquired skills;
- the social worker has a responsibility to devote his professional knowledge and skills scientifically for the benefit of each individual, group, community and mankind;
- the social worker has a primary obligation to render services professionally;
- the social worker shall recognise and take into account his personal and professional limitations.

4.10.1.2 Conduct that concerns the profession

Conduct that concerns the social work profession shall mean, *inter alia*, for a social worker to :

- scientifically evaluate and support the profession in order to enhance and raise the dignity and integrity of the profession;
- challenge unacceptable social work practices and uphold those that

- are acceptable;
- protect the profession from unfounded criticism which could bring it into disrepute;
- remain actively involved with the formulation, development, determination and implementation of professional policy;
- base social work practices on scientific knowledge, keep abreast of relevant developments and participate in research.

4.10.1.3 Conduct that concerns a client

Conduct that concerns a client shall mean, *inter alia* for a social worker to :

- recognise the uniqueness of each client;
- maintain a professional relationship with the client;
- acknowledge the right to self-determination of the client;
- take into account the client's rights, preferences and objectives when structuring service-rendering, even in the case of a statutory order;
- maintain the client's right to confidentiality;
- not refuse service-rendering to a client, irrespective of whether or not the client is in a position to pay the fees for such services;
- inform the client of and prepare him for any decision regarding the termination of service-rendering.

4.10.1.4 Conduct that concerns a colleague or another professional person

Conduct that concerns a colleague or another professional person shall mean, *inter alia*, for a social worker to:

- respect and honour the training and service-rendering of colleagues

and other professional persons;

- respect the trust that exists between colleagues;
- resolve criticism of and differences between colleagues in terms of the authority structure of the employer(s);
- protect and defend colleagues against unfair criticism;
- promote opportunities for the exchange of knowledge and experience between colleagues and other professional persons.

4.10.1.5 Conduct that concerns an employer

Conduct that concerns an employer shall mean, *inter alia*, for a social worker to acknowledge and honour his employer's authority as far as it is compatible with this course of conduct.

4.10.1.6 Conduct that concerns a social work institution

Conduct that concerns a social work institution shall mean *inter alia*, for a social worker to co-operate with those social work institutions whose policies, procedures and operations are directed towards adequate service-rendering and encouragement of professional practices consistent with this course of conduct.

4.10.1.7 Conduct that concerns the community

Conduct that concerns the community shall mean, *inter alia*, for a social worker to:

- enhance and promote service-rendering to the community under all circumstances by utilising and developing resources in the community;
- have the responsibility to be aware of/or initiate, develop and change

social policy consistent with professional practice.

4.11

THE VALUE BASE OF SOCIAL WORK AS A PROFESSION

Social work involves working with some of the most disadvantaged sections of the community and with people who, for a variety of reasons, are experiencing major problems and distress, often with unmet needs and other difficulties that may at times seem intractable. In view of this, it should be clear that social workers must guard strenuously against the possibility of exploiting or oppressing their clientele through unethical practices. Consequently, the question of moral values in social work has to be recognised as a major one, in terms of both its complexity and its ramifications (Thompson, 2000:104). Therefore we will look into the significance of values as a central feature of social work theory, policy and practice. The question is what are values?

Barks (1995) as cited in Thompson (2000:104) points out the complexity associated with the term "values". 'Values' is one of those words that tends to be used rather vaguely and has a number of different meanings. In everyday usage, 'values' is often used to refer to one or all of religious, moral, political or ideological principles, beliefs, or attitudes. In the context of social work, however, it seems frequently to be used to mean: a set of fundamental moral/ethical principles to which social workers/student social workers are/should be committed.

At its simplest form a value is something we hold dear, something we see as important and worthy of safeguarding. Consequently, values are an important influence on our actions and attitudes, thus they will encourage us to do

certain things and to avoid certain others. In this way, values are not simply abstract concepts thus they are very concrete in the sense that they have a very strong influence over what happens and they are very strong forces in shaping people's behaviour and responses to situations. It would therefore be very fooling to underestimate the significance of values in social work. An important point to note is that values will continue to influence social workers actions even if they are not aware that they are doing so.

It has long been recognised that values have an important part to play in shaping social work practice. In particular, the work of Biestek (1961) has been especially influential. The basic values of traditional social work are as follows :

4.11.1 Individualization

This refers to the need to recognise each person as a unique individual in his/her own right. This social work value relates to the importance of making sure that clients and carers are not treated in a blanket way but rather are recognised for what they are: particularly individuals with problems, concerns and needs which are specific to them and their circumstances.

Biestek (1961:25) explains individualization in the following form: Individualization is the recognition and understanding of each client's unique qualities and the differential use of principles and methods in assisting each person towards a better adjustment. It is based upon the right of human beings to be individuals and to be treated not just as a human but as a human being with his personal differences.

Individualization has important implications for practice. Although there may be many things in common with other situations, the particular combination of factors, what this means to the person concerned and how it is experienced, will be unique to each individual client at any given time. Failing to recognise this is to treat clients as representatives of broader categories, rather than as persons in their own right. In effect, this amounts to “dehumanizing” clients, treating them as if they are things, rather than as important human beings with dignity and rights.

4.11.2 Purposeful expression of feelings

The feelings dimension is an important part of social work. If people's feelings are not given due consideration, then it is unlikely that significant progress will be made with helping the client. Giving clients the opportunity to vent and discuss their feelings is an important part of good practice. This recognition reflects the psycho dynamic roots of traditional social work, with its emphasis on inner psychological factors. As a value principle the purposeful expression of feelings relates to the recognition that clients should be enabled to talk about their feelings openly and not have to keep them submerged or repressed. To deny clients the opportunity to do this at a time of distress could be regarded as unethical. Biestek captures the point well when he argues that: purposeful expression of feelings is a recognition of the client's need to express his feelings freely, especially his negative feelings (Thompson, 2000:107).

4.11.3 Acceptance

Biestek (1961:72) acknowledges that this is a rather vague term and is difficult to pin down precisely. He tries to present its meaning in the following

passage: acceptance is a principle of action wherein the caseworker perceives and deals with the client as he really is, including his strengths and weaknesses, his congenial and uncongenial qualities, his positive and negative feelings, his constructive and destructive attitudes and behaviour, maintaining all the while a sense of the client's innate dignity and personal worth. This value has much in common with the notion of "unconditional positive regard". It refers to being prepared to work with someone whether or not we like them, we approve of them or what they may have done. The underlying ethical principle is that everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. This reflects the humanistic principle that every human being has a value. Acceptance is a fundamental social work value. Accepting someone as they are involves recognising their strengths as well as weaknesses. Consequently, one important implication of this principle is that client's can and should be helped to draw on their own abilities and strengths. The social work task, in this regard, is to help the client realize his/her potential for self-help.

4.11.4

Non-judgemental attitude

Closely related to the value of acceptance is that of the need to adopt a non-judgemental attitude. It is not the social worker's role to judge individuals or families, in the sense of approving or disapproving of them. It is not a matter of assigning quick or innocence, or client responsibility for the problems or needs (Biestek, 1961:90). That is, it is deemed unhelpful for workers to stand in judgement of their clients. This is not to say that clients can do no wrong, or that the worker must approve of everything they do. It is also important to note that a non-judgemental attitude is important as a basis for a sound working relationship. This is because such a relationship must be based on

a degree of trust and respect - two things that are unlikely to be present if the worker indulges in being judgemental.

4.11.5 Client self-determination

In adhering to and encouraging clients' self-determination, the worker-interviewer establishes an atmosphere of mutuality, encourages clients-participation in problem-solving efforts, and respect client's initiative (Kadushin, 1983:52). According to Kadushin implements her belief that the client has the right, and the capacity, to direct his own life, self-determination guarantees the interviewer's help without domination. The effort to actualize client self-directive decision-making implies a recognition of, and confidence in the clients capacity for constructive self-determination. It indicates a respect for the interviewer's autonomy.

4.11.6 Confidentiality

Kadushin, (1983:66) explains confidentiality as a strong assurance for the client-interviewer that, in revealing himself to the worker-interviewer, he is not making such information available to a worker publicly, thus reduces the level of ego threat and facilitates communication. According to Thompson, (2000:112) confidentiality is to enable a client to feel comfortable enough to discuss sensitive, personal matters and it is important that they feel that they are able to speak openly without the information they provide being made widely available. That is, confidentiality is necessary as a basis for social work intervention based on trust and honesty. Biestek (1961:121) expresses the idea in the following terms: Confidentiality is the preservation of secret information concerning the client which is disclosed in the professional relationship. Confidentiality is based on a basic right of the client, it is an

ethical obligation of the caseworker and is necessary for effective casework service. The client's right, however, is not absolute. Moreover, the client's

secret is often shared with other professional persons within the agency and in other agencies, the obligation then binds all equally.

4.11.7 Empathy

This is similar to, but also different from the better known concept of "sympathy". To have sympathy for someone means to have the same feelings as they do for example, to sympathise with someone who is feeling very sad is to share some of that sadness ourselves. Empathy, by contrast, involves recognising, and responding to the other person's feelings without necessarily experiencing those feelings themselves. According to Kadushin (1983:62) in empathetic understanding the worker is demonstrating a response to the latent as well as the manifest content of a client's communication. The worker understands, sensitively and accurately, the nature of the client's experience and the meaning this has for him, and understands the client's world cognitively and empathically from the client's point of view. She understands with, as well as about, the client, and the capacity to communicate her understanding to the client in words attuned to the client's feelings.

4.11.8 Unconditional positive regard

This refers to the need to work positively and constructively with all clients, and not just those that the social worker approve of or feel comfortable with. That is, their positive regard should be unconditional - something that all clients are entitled to. This confines elements of two of Biestek's values,

namely acceptance and a non-judgemental attitude. If social workers do not live up to this value, there is a real danger that they will discriminate against certain sections of the community, giving some people a lower standard of service because there is something about that that they are not happy with. This can be seen as a significant abuse of professional power and is therefore understandably seen as ethically unacceptable. It means that clients are given a quality of service, which is not according to their needs, but to the whim of the worker (Thompson, 2000:114-115).

4.11.9 Congruence

This refers to the practitioner's willingness and ability to be genuine and open, not playing games or being manipulated (Thompson, 2000:113). As Rogers (1961) cited in Thompson, comments that: it has been found that personal change is facilitated when the psychotherapist is what he is, when in the relationship with his client, he is genuine and without "front" or facade, openly being the feeling and attitudes which at that moment are flowing in. The term "congruence" was coined to try and describe this condition. If a positive working relationship based on trust and respect is to develop, then a degree of such 'congruence' or genuineness must be achieved. To attempt to influence others without this could be seen as highly unethical.

4.12 CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

In the context of this chapter professionalism in social work was discussed. For social work to be fully professional the following need to be considered:

- * helping process
- * sound professional practice

- * what is social work professional knowledge base
- * knowledge base of social workers
- * the social work process
- * theoretical paradigms
- * methods of intervention
- * using knowledge in a professional practice
- * reflective practice
- * ethics and values underlying social work as a profession
- * the value base of social work as a profession

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRICAL STUDY ON STUDENTS INTERNSHIP

5.1

INTRODUCTION

Names of the agencies where respondents were placed for their internships.

- Mafikeng Dept of Social Services
- Mogwase Dept of Social Services
- Rustenburg Dept of Social Services
- Garankuwa Dept of Social Services
- Klerksdorp Dept of Social Services
- Bloemfontein Dept of Social Services
- Litchtenburg Dept of Social Services
- Taung Dept of Social Services
- Temba Dept of Social Services
- Tshitale Dept of Social Services
- Bophelong Psychiatric Hospital
- Mafikeng Provincial Hospital
- Potchefstroom Correctional Services
- Wits Mental Health Society
- Pretoria Mental Health Society
- Vryburg Social Services
- Ganyesa Social Services
- Kuruman Social Services

The study group consisted of 91.7% of the fourth final year students and (18.3%) of third year social work students.

5.2 The data collected from students concerning their internship is discussed in detail as follows :

5.2.1 The table below seeks to determine the type of agency where the students (respondents) were placed for their internships.

Table 5.1

Type of the agency where students were placed for their internships.

	No	%
Governmental agency	31	86.1%
Non-governmental agency	5	13.9%
Total	36	100%

According to the above information it is evident that the majority of social work students (86.1%) were placed with governmental agencies. The reason for the greater number of students placed at governmental agencies is that non-governmental agencies are not always equipped or prepared to accept students. On the one hand non-governmental agencies in the North-West province either have insufficient qualified staff members or limited finances and therefore find it difficult to accept students for internship purposes. On the other hand governmental agencies generally do not experience the same problems as their counterparts. From this standpoint it is accepted that students should receive a more effective internship as these agencies experience manpower or financial restraints.

5.2.2 The table below seeks to establish the methods performed on a regular basis by the agencies where the respondents were placed.

Table 5.2

Main methods performed on regular basis by the agencies.

Methods	No	%
Casework	16	44.4%
Group work	4	11.1%
Community-work	4	11.1%
All methods implemented	12	33.3%
Total	36	99.9%

As the majority of the agencies (44.4%) handle mainly casework on a regular basis, may indicate that students most probably did not acquire sufficient field training in the remaining social work methods. This may have further obstructed the respondents opportunity to utilize the integrated approach in their interventions. The use of one method only on a regular basis, may be as a result of certain circumstances such as shortage of staff, lack of knowledge of the other methods or that the agency only specializes in one method. This finding is also complemented by the survey of Mfelang (1995) that the majority of the respondents (60%) only performed casework on a regular basis. Thus apart from the 33.3% students who were placed with agencies where all the methods were practised, the remaining students most probably did not receive sufficient experience and supervision in the remaining methods.

5.2.3

The following table seeks to establish reasons why all the methods were not performed by the mentioned agencies.

Table 5.3

Reasons why all the methods were not practised.

	No	%
All methods are offered	12	33.3%
Agency specialises in one method	19	52.8%
Lack of knowledge of other methods	1	2.8%
Insufficient staff members	4	11.1%
Total	36	100%

According to the information provided in the above table 52.8% of the respondents indicated that the agencies where they were placed specialises mainly in one method. As mentioned in the previous table, specialisation do not favour internship of students as the other methods may be neglected. This table is complemented by the previous table, in that it indicates that the majority of the respondents, (44.4%) only practised casework which meant that they themselves had to make additional arrangements to practice the other methods. Only 33.3% of the respondents indicated that they had an opportunity of practising all social work methods in accordance with the practising policies of the agencies..

5.2.4

The following two table seeks to determine the degree to which students/respondents experienced supervision during their practicals and how often they received supervision.

Table 5.4

Regularity of supervision received

	No	%	
Daily	13	36.1%	} 83.3%
Twice a week	17	47.2%	
Once a month	2	5.6%	
Irregular	4	11.1%	
Total	36	100%	

Table 5.5

Respondents experience of supervision

	No	%
Readily accepted supervision	24	66.7%
Fair acceptance of supervision	12	33.3%.
Negative attitude toward supervision	-	-
Total	36	100%

According to the information provided, it is indicated that the majority of the respondents (83.3%) mentioned that they either received supervision on a daily basis (36.1%) or twice a week (47.2%). This is an indication that the majority of the respondents were fully supervised despite the fact that a great number of the respondents in the previous table indicated that the agencies performed only one method on a regular basis. With this response it can be accepted that the emphasis of supervision was mainly on the practised method of the agency although they were most probably also assisted in the other methods. In essence learning is acquainted easily through supervision

and therefore, supervision encourages learning among students. This also implies that the respondents were fully supervised during the practicals, which helped them to be in a better position of integrating social work theory with practice, thus quality practical training of students was achieved. This is so, because the majority of the respondents, (66.7%) indicated that they have readily accepted supervision which implies that they have learnt a great deal through the use of supervision and valued it as being very crucial in their development as professional social workers. Supervision is both beneficial to students and supervisors alike. Supervision is an educational process defined as the traditional method of transmitting knowledge of social work skills in practice from the trained to the ill-trained, from the experienced to the inexperienced, (1st edition of Encyclopaedia, 1965:785). A total of 33.3% of the respondents stated that they have fairly accepted supervision. In summary it is however, confirmed by the respondents that supervision helped them in their learning process and that the quality required of their practical training were enhanced.

5.2.5

According to prior information that 66.7% of the respondents indicated that they received and readily accepted supervision from the agencies where they were placed and furthermore that 83.3% of the respondents indicated that supervision was given to them on a regular basis, it became necessary to establish the extent to which lecturers are and should be involved in co-supervision with the agencies. In the following table respondents were asked to what extent, according to their opinion, should lecturers be involved in consultation supervision during their internship.

Table 5.6

Involvement of lecturers in supervision of students

	No	%
On a regular basis using telephone	12	33.3%
One consultation session at the agency	11	30.6%
More than one consultation session at the agency	3	36.1%
Total	36	100%

} 66.7%

According to the information provided in the above table (66.7%) of the respondents was of the opinion that lecturers should have at least one consultation (30.6%) but preferably more than one joint session at the agency (36.1%) supervising students with their field supervisors. This response indicates that students felt the need for joint supervision by the lecturers and the field supervisors. Furthermore dual collaboration will secure quality practical training of students as well as enabling students to integrate theory with practice under the careful guidance of university social work lecturers and social workers attached to welfare agencies. The advantages of joint consultation are that the abilities and limitations of students can be discussed; the expectations of both university lecturers and agencies concerning the students can be stipulated and agreed upon; and the quality of the students internship can be monitored and evaluated. In conclusion joint supervision will help students to realise and internalise the principles, procedures and skills with regard to all the methods of treatment in social work.

- 5.2.6 The following table looks at the applicability of theory learnt in class at the university to practice during internship.

Table 5.7

Applicability of theory to practice

	No	%
Completely applicable	10	27.8%
Reasonably applicable	20	55.5%
Not applicable	6	16.7%
Total	36	100%

The table data shows that 55.5% of the respondents indicated that social work theory learned in class is reasonably applicable to practice. This may be as a result that the majority of the respondents 44.4% (table 3) indicated that they mainly performed one method on a daily basis, therefore the students did not have an opportunity to sufficiently practice all social work methods. This possible limitation may have hampered the quality training of students. A total of 27.8% of the respondents indicated that social work theory learnt at the university completely synchronised with the practice they were expected to undertake. The reason for this response may be that, these respondents were placed with agencies where all methods of social work practice were implemented together with appropriate supervision. This finding is complemented by table 4 which indicated that 33.3% of the respondents practised all the methods at their particular agencies. These students therefore enjoyed the privilege of having a better chance to integrate theory with practice.

5.2.7

To this point the researcher looked at the integration of theory to practice in general. To verify this information it is now necessary to evaluate the integration/all methods in more detail. The following section comprises of specifically the casework method with the view of determining the integration of theory with practice. The number and variety of problem cases handled by students will enhance the experience of students doing casework. However the number of cases is not necessarily an indication of the quality of casework. Of greater importance is the manner and quality in which cases are dealt with by respondents during their internship are indicated. In the following table the number of cases dealt with by the respondents during their internship are indicated.

Table 5.8

5.2.8

Number of cases handled during internship

	No	%
Two cases	10	27.8%
Three-six cases	26	72.2%
Total	36	100%

According to the data encoded in the above table, the majority of the respondents (72.2%) handled three to six cases during their internship. This shows that most of the students were exposed to a variety of cases to broaden and deepen their knowledge and practical insight. This is complemented by the majority of the respondents (44.4%) who indicated that they have practised or performed the casework method on a regular basis.

The following table seeks to establish the nature of social problems that the respondents have dealt with during their internship.

Table 5.9

Nature of social problems dealt with

The main nature of cases handled	No	%
Marital dispute	10	27.8%
Domestic violence	15	41.7%
Child abuse	-	16.7%
HIV/AIDS	5	13.8%
Total	36	100.0%

} 86.2%

According to the above information the majority (86.2%) of cases handled by the respondents were mostly family and child care cases. This may have been influenced by the nature of the agencies where the respondents were placed or the most pressing problems experienced by the communities the agencies serve. However in dealing with the case records of the respondents after completing their internships it became clear that included in their family and child casework services, a variety of complementary problems were dealt with such as alcohol and drug abuse, child neglect, unemployment, exploitation of the aged and poverty.

5.2.9

The following table seeks to highlight the type of approaches that the respondents mainly used in dealing with their clients. Integration of approaches to practice does not refer to one model of practice instead it is an attempt to bring together diverse factors such as the generic practice base and selected theories which inform practice. This implies that one can use

different theories or approaches and/or more models in his/her intervention integratedly.

Table 5.10

Approaches mainly used

	No	%
Integration of approaches	25	69.4%
Behaviour modification	10	27.8%
Client-centred approach	1	2.8%
Total	36	100%

It is the utilization of different theories subsumed under one concept. Therefore data encoded in the above table indicated that the majority of the respondents (69.4%) have mainly utilized the integration of approaches in dealing with clients problems. This indicates that the respondents were able to handle cases of clients using different approaches at the same time unlike using one approach at a given time. This also implies that the respondents were in a better position to integrate theory with practice and recognise the applicability of theory to practice. As a result the quality or good practical training of students was obtained. A total of 27.8% of the respondents mainly applied behaviour modification approach, which reflects that problems of the clients were mainly behavioural oriented.

5.2.10

The following table seeks to explore the problems which the respondents experienced in integrating theory with practice during their internships.

Table 5.11

Problems experienced when integrating theory with practice

	No	%
The nature of some cases dealt with	26	72.2%
Theory is not always applicable to practice	2	5.6%
Insufficient training with regard to integrating theory with practice	8	22.2%
Total	36	100%

According to the information provided in the above table, the majority of the respondents (72.2%) indicated that the problems experienced when integrating theory with practice were due to the nature of some cases dealt with. Some cases allocated to social work students because of the superficial nature of their problems are not always subjected to theory eg. application for grants, financial assistance or foster care supervision. Furthermore the abilities of students differ and for this reason it may be expected that some students do not have a sufficient theoretical grounding to integrate into practice. Referring to table 8, (55.5%) of the respondents indicated that theory is reasonably applicable to practice, which may complement the two reasons indicated above. The proper integration of theory with practice will more effectively develop when students acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and practical training offered to them during their internship placement.

5.2.11

The table below seeks to establish the level of training the respondents received to sufficiently deal with practical cases.

Table 5.12

Respondents level of training

	No	%
Sufficient preparation	23	63.9%
Reasonable preparation	13	36.1%
Insufficient preparation	-	-
Total	36	100%

According to Craig Winston Lecroy (1999:29) theory provides a lens through which a practitioner can get a better perspective and understanding of a practice situation. In fact, practising theory should suggest the effects of a social worker's intervention. The information tabled above shows that the majority of the respondents (63.9%) rate themselves as being sufficiently trained in social work theory to handle practical cases. This indicates that the respondents were able to intervene or deal with a variety of cases allocated to them irrespective of the nature of the cases or their problems. This finding relates to table 11 in the sense that, the majority of the respondents (69.4%) indicated that they have utilized an integration of approaches in dealing with clients problems. Using an integration of approaches in their interventions, proves that the respondents were sufficiently trained/prepared to sufficiently deal with practical cases. A total of 36.1% of the respondents felt that they were reasonably prepared/trained in terms of using theory to deal with practical cases. In an effort to find a reason for this finding, it should be borne in mind that the abilities of students differ and for this reason some students do not do well in theory therefore they may not have a sufficient theoretical grounding to integrate theory into practice. Of greater importance however,

is that the majority of students were satisfied with their theoretical preparation for their ultimate internship placement.

5.2.12

The following section is based on group work as one of the social work methods which also form part of social work theory. The focus of this section is to establish how group work theory was integrated with practice by the respondents during their internship. It also looked into the applicability of group work theory to practice.

The following table seeks to establish how the respondents started their groups during the internships.

Table 5.13

How the respondents started their groups

	No	%
Initiated own group	24	66.7%
It was part of the agency programme	6	16.7%
As a result of agency case load eg. foster care parents	6	16.7%
Total	36	100.1%

According to the figures depicted in the above table the majority of the respondents (66.7%) started their own groups. The reasons why students indicated that they had to start their own groups are that these agencies normally do not practice group work. This indicates that with the theoretical knowledge of group work the respondents have acquired enabled them to initiate and effectively run their own groups. The other reason why majority

of respondents initiate their own groups may be that the agency specialised in one method for instance case work only.

5.2.13

The table below is an indication of the applicability of theory learnt in the lecture room to group work practice during the respondents internship placement. Again in this regard one should also take cognisance of the fact that students capabilities differ and therefore some of the students who indicated that their theoretical applicable was average or little can to some extent be subscribed to their own inability or a lesser grasp of the theory as presented in the lecture room.

Table 5.14

The applicability of group work theory to practice

	No	%
Sufficient background knowledge	28	77.8%
Average background knowledge	7	19.4%
Little background knowledge	1	2.8%
Total	36	100%

Data encoded in the above table indicates that the majority of the respondents (77.8%) stated that they had sufficient background knowledge with regard to the applicability of group work theory to practice. This proves that most of the respondents experienced no problems in terms of integrating social group work theory with practice. If one considers that the majority of respondents according to table 14 (66.7%) had to initiate their own groups (group work being requirement of their internship) it is sufficient proof that

students are given basic theoretical knowledge to start and run groups successfully.

- 5.2.14 The following table serves to bring to the fore the purpose of the groups which the respondents conducted during their internship.

Table 5.15

Purpose of the respondents groups

	No	%
Sharing of information on pertinent social pathologies eg. HIV/AIDS, drug abuse etc.	32	88.9%
Re-integration of children living on the streets with their families	4	11.1%
Total	36	100%

According to Toseland and Rivas (1984:29) the purpose is the general aim of the existence of any group. The communal purpose is further explained as a reason for bringing members together in a group situation. As mentioned in the above table respondents concentrated on pertinent matters in dealing with groups. According to the information encoded in the above table, the majority of the respondents (88.9%) reflected the purpose of their groups being mainly to share/dessimilate information on pertinent social and health pathologies on e.g HIV/AIDS, drug abuse etc. This indicates that the respondent's groups were mainly educational in nature, that is, they imparted information to members of the group originating from different communities.

As prospective professional social workers the respondents proved that they are capable of dealing with pertinent matters by means of the group work method.

5.2.15 In the following table the nature of the groups that the respondents conducted during their practicum is explored.

Table 5.16

The nature of the groups

	No	%
Educational groups	36	100%
Remedial groups	-	-
Growth groups	-	-
Total	36	100%

The above table to a great extent corresponds with table 16 in which it was mentioned that the majority of the respondents concentrated on pertinent matters in dealing with groups. The purpose of their groups were mainly to disseminate information on pertinent social and health pathologies eg. HIV/AIDS, drug abuse etc. According to the information provided in the above table all (100%) the respondents indicated that the nature of their groups were educational. This indicates that the respondents opt for the educational groups in a sense that they will be able to integrate group work theory with practice over and above other types of groups. Educational groups provides the opportunity for learning.

In running their groups, the respondents utilized different programme activities such as discussion, talking, music and role plays. Discussion was mainly used in that it provides a medium through which ideas and opinions are shared and goal attainment. It also facilitates the group processes and communication in the group.

5.2.16 The following table serves to establish the types of group work approaches that were mainly utilized by the respondents in running their groups during the internship.

Table 5.17

Main approach utilized in doing group work

	No	%
Positive peer culture model	9	25%
Behaviour modification	10	27.8%
Person-centred approach	9	25%
Reality	8	22.2%
Total	36	100%

According to the figures indicated in the table above the respondents had an opportunity of utilizing all the approaches in doing group work. This also proves that the respondents theoretical knowledge enabled them to apply appropriate approaches to successfully conduct the group work method.

5.2.17 The following section serves to understand and explore how community work theory is applicable to practice.

Table 5.18

The way in which community work projects were initiated.

	No	%
It was part of an ongoing agency programme	21	58.3%
Initiated own community project	5	13.9%
It was based a case load assessment	6	16.7%
It was based on a community need assessment	4	11.1%
Total	36	100%

} 41.7%

Contrary to group work (table 14) where the majority of the respondents (66.7%) indicated that they had to initiate their own groups, in community work a great number of the 58.3% respondents indicated that their projects were part of ongoing agency programmes. However, of greater importance is that 41.7% of respondents had to arrange their own community project in order to adhere to their internship requirements. The fact remains that whether respondents had to start their own projects or partake in ongoing agency community projects they were apparently theoretically able to do so.

5.2.18

In the previous table it was indicated how the students initiated their community work projects. In the following table the phases/stages of the project followed are discussed.

Table 5.19

Project phases/stages

	No	%
Situation analysis	4	11.1%
Need identification and assessment	5	13.9%
Planning	17	47.2%
Implementation	10	27.8%
Total	36	100%

According to the data encoded in the table above, most of the respondents (47.2%) engaged themselves in their projects at a planning phase. Ferrinho (1980:62) as cited in Lombard (1990:263) stated that planning points at the involvement of the leaders to interpret the situation creatively, to ensure consensus on planned action, and to gain people's participation in implementing the plan. Furthermore 27.8% of the respondents indicated that they joined the projects at the implementation stage. Ferrinho, (1980:65) as quoted in Lombard (1990:207) stated that implementation of the plan includes the transformation of the plans into actions. Basically the information provided by the respondents proves that with the theoretical knowledge the students received they were in a position to do community work at any stage of the project development.

5.2.19

The following table seeks to establish how community work theory is applicable to practice.

Table 5.20

Applicability of community work theory to practice

	No	%
Applicable	33	91.7%
Not applicable	1	2.8%
Uncertain	2	5.6%
Total	36	100.1%

According to the information depicted in the above table, the overwhelming majority of the respondents (91.7%) highlighted that community work theory is applicable to practice. This shows that the respondents received sufficient theoretical knowledge with regard to community work which helped them to effectively integrate their knowledge into practice in order to secure good/quality practical training in community work.

5.2.20

The table below serves to establish or explore different community work approaches or models which were mainly utilized by the respondents in their community work projects.

Table 5.21

Main community work approaches used in community work

	No	%
Community development	18	50%
Empowerment model	14	38.9%
Social development	4	11.1%
Total	36	100%

Apparently the respondents experienced minimal problems in executing community work for the following reasons :

Firstly, theoretical training in community work at universities is greatly geared towards community development in order to be in line with governmental policies especially to combat, alleviate or prevent poverty; and secondly, students generally take a great interest in community work (development) because of it's challenging and innovative nature.

The approach to be utilized in community work is dependent on the community needs and purpose for doing community work. The data encoded in the above table the majority of the respondents (50%) indicated that they have used community development approach in the running of their projects. This approach was mainly used based on the needs of the community. The reason why the respondents used this approach is because it has people as a focal point. According to Lombard (1990:111) community development approach refer to the active involvement of people at the local community level to either oppose or support a matter, a phenomenon or a programme in which they are interested.

5.2.21

RESEARCH UNDERTAKINGS AS PART OF INTERNSHIP

All the respondents did not do research in different agencies where they were placed. The reason for this is two-fold in nature, namely the internship period is too short for students to start and properly complete a research project; and universities normally make provision for proper research experience by means of an acceptable research undertaking and the composition of a mini-dissertation.

5. SUMMARY

In the context of this section the respondents were asked about the applicability of theory into practice during the internship and how they experienced supervision. This section further covers methods performed by agencies for practice and lecturer's involvement in student supervision during the placement.

CHAPTER 6

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF STUDENT PLACEMENT DURING INTERNSHIP

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The following are the names of different welfare organisations where students (respondents) were placed for their internship:

- Mafikeng/Mmabatho service point
- Bophelong Psychiatric Hospital
- Mafikeng Provincial Hospital
- Lichtenburg service point
- Mogwase service point
- Rustenburg service point
- Klerksdorp service point
- Taung service point
- Ganyesa service point
- Kuruman service point
- Garankuwa Dept of Social Welfare and Population Development
- Wits Mental Health
- Sanpark Psychosocial civic

6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The study group (respondents) was composed of the professional social workers employed by the above-mentioned welfare organisations and who served as field supervisors for the students during the practical placement. Their responses to the questionnaire are set out in the tables to follow:

- 6.2.1 Table 6.1 seeks to establish the type of agency where these social workers (respondents) are employed.

Table 6.1

Type of Agency

	No	%
Governmental	12	80%
Non-governmental	3	20%
Total	15	100%

According to the above information the majority agencies who accepted students for their internship were governmental agencies (80%). As mentioned previously governmental agencies generally do not experience the same problems as non-governmental agencies such as finances and limited staff members, to accept students for internship purposes.

- 6.2.2 The following table seeks to determine the number of years of experience the social workers have had as professional social workers.

Table 6.2

Years of experience as a social worker

	No	%
Less than 3 years	-	-
3-6 years	5	33.3%
7-10 years	4	26.7%
10+ years	6	40%
Total	15	100%

According to the information provided in the above table the majority of the respondents (40%) indicated that they have had ten years plus of experience as social workers whereas 26.7% have had seven to ten years of experience. This gives an indication that most of the respondents have a significant background with regard to social work as a profession and therefore should have been able to effectively supervise students although as indicated experience in supervising students is not a problem, but supervising ability and updating of recent developments may pose some uncertainties. Despite possible limitations the fact remains, that according to the measurable factors (experience) supervisors were potentially able to assist students to integrate theory with practice.

6.2.3

The following table seeks to determine the number of the students the respondents supervised during the past three years.

Table 6.3

Number of students supervised

	No	%
None	-	-
1-5 students	3	20%
6-10 students	5	33.3%
10+ students	7	46.7%
Total	15	100%

According to the above table, the majority of the respondents (46.7%) indicated that they have supervised more than 10 students in the past three years. Apart from experience as social workers this information also indicates

that the respondents had previous experience in supervising students for their practical placements. This information together with the overall years of experience of the supervisors leaves no doubt that the respondents were adequately equipped to supervise students.

6.2.4 Having looked into the number of students who the respondents have supervised during the past three years, the following table seeks to establish the year group of students who the respondents mainly prefer to supervise.

Table 6.4

Year group of student mainly prefer to supervise

	No	%
2 nd year	-	-
3 rd year	6	40%
4 th year	9	60%
Total	15	100%

According to the information stipulated in the above table, it is clear that most of the respondents (60%) prefer to supervise fourth year students. Various reasons were cited; as to why this level of study is preferred. Amongst others it was stated that the fourth years are to a great extent acquainted with the necessary theoretical knowledge that is required in social work and can therefore assist the agencies in their case-loads. Due to the long duration of the fourth years practicum, they are able to get an exposure to learn different services rendered by the social workers, under supervision. At fourth year level the students show an element of responsibility and maturity, therefore it is easy to work with. Apart from working under supervision, students are

also in a position to work on their own. Basically since they are final year students, they are more experienced in fieldwork and therefore they are able to integrate theory learned at the university with practice. The final year students are ready to work independently. A total of 40% indicated that they mainly prefer to supervise third year students. This may be because at third year level students are more susceptible to training whereas the training period is much shorter than for fourth year students.

6.2.5

As the above table looked into the level of study group which the respondents prefer to supervise, the following table seeks to explore problems experienced with regard to student supervision.

Table 6.5

Problems experienced with student supervision

	No	%
Experience no problems	3	20%
Students are not effectively prepared for practical training	7	46.7%
Insufficient theoretical training of students	5	33.3%
Total	15	100%

According to the above table respondents indicated that 33.3% of students have insufficient theoretical training to fully benefit from their practical training. From this it can be derived that 66.7% of students are theoretically prepared and present no problems in this regard. For this so called problem, university training cannot be blamed as the majority of students coming from the same university proved to be sufficiently trained. The only reason why

supervisors see this as a problem is because some students themselves as a result of their own abilities are not sufficiently theoretically prepared. Of greater importance is that 46.7% respondents mentioned that students are not effectively prepared for their practical training between university lecturers and agency supervisors, and secondly that most enough attention is given by lecturers to students in preparing them for their practical placement. If pre-placement arrangements are not adequately done, it will most probably negatively affect the quality of the students internship especially with regard to integrating theory with practice.

6.2.6

The above table gave attention to the problems experienced with regard to student supervision, therefore the following table seeks to establish the difficulties that the respondents experienced within their own agencies regarding adequate supervision of students.

Table 6.6

Difficulties regarding proper/extensive supervision of students

	No	%
No time scheduled for student supervision	8	53.3%
Not all social work methods are implemented at the agency	5	33.3%
Understaffed	2	13.3%
Shortage of office space	-	-
Total	15	100%

According to the information depicted in the above table, the majority of the respondents (53.3%) indicated that one of the major difficulties experienced

by them is that they do not have specific time scheduled for student supervision. Student supervision is annually for a short period of time and additional responsibility for agency supervisors who are normally overburdened with work loads. Supervision need to be slotted in whenever it is suitable to the workers. Therefore although desirable, a pre-determined supervisory schedule is not always possible. Altogether 33.3% of the respondents mentioned that not all social work methods are implemented at the agency. This indicates that students are not subjected and supervised to practice integrated approach which includes the combination of all methods, theories and models in social work and as a result the practical work of the students may suffer. Although office space was not mentioned by the respondents, students have pointed out that in many instances they are expected to share an office with other students or social workers which hampers privacy, spontaneity and confidentiality in dealing with clients.

6.2.7

The following table seeks to establish the duration of students practical experience depicted by the respondents.

Table 6.7

Period of student internship

Minimum period	No	%
2 weeks	2	13.3%
3-6 weeks	5	33.3%
Three months	8	53.3%
Six months	-	-
One year	-	-
Total	15	100%

According to the information provided in the above table the majority of the respondents (53.3%) are of the opinion that 3 months internship for the final year students is sufficient. Table 2 of the student questionnaire also indicated that the majority of the students (70%) confer with this finding. Supervisors, lecturing staff and students therefore agree that students should be in a position to internalise the principles, procedures, approaches and skills with regard to all the methods of treatment in social work practice within a period of three months. This also proves that within this period of time quality practical training of students can be achieved. Furthermore this also indicates that the students are able to accomplish specific objectives set to be achieved during their prescribed internship.

6.2.8

The table hereunder seeks to establish the extent to which lecturers should be involved in the supervision of students during the internship of final year students.

Table 6.8

Involvement of lecturers

	No	%
Telephonically	2	13.3%
Regular contact once a week	5	33.3%
Regular contact more than once a week	8	53.3%
Total	15	100%

According to the information provided in the above table, the majority of the respondents (86.7%) indicated that lecturers should be involved on a regular basis in the supervision of students during their internship. In this regard

33.3% of the respondents stipulated at least one consultation meeting at the agency per week whereas 53.3% were of the opinion that more than once a week was more desirable. The rationale for this is that the internship of students are both the responsibility of students and both the responsibility of field supervisors and university lecturers. The integration of social work theory into practice by students will be more effective under joint supervision to achieve optimal quality practical training of students. Furthermore the advantages of joint supervision are that the student abilities and limitations can be identified and discussed whereas the expectations of both field supervisors and lecturers concerning the students practical training can be outlined and agreed upon. The student internship can also be assessed and evaluated looking into its quality.

6.2.9

The table below seeks to establish the methods performed on a regular basis by the agencies where the respondents were employed.

Table 6.9

Main methods performed on a regular basis by the agencies

Methods	No	%
Casework	6	40%
Group work	2	13.3%
Community-work	3	20%
Research	-	-
All methods	5	33.3%
Total	15	100%

According to the information in the above table, the majority of the respondents (40%) handled mainly casework on a regular basis. As a result of practising only one method, students most probably do not acquire sufficient field training in the other social work methods. This may also deny the students the opportunity to utilize the integrated approach in their interventions. The reasons for the use of only one method by some agencies may be as a result of certain circumstances such that the agency only specialises in one method or lack of knowledge of the other methods.

The same arguments are applicable for those agencies who specialize in group work (13.3%) or community work (20.0%). In specializing in one method one will expect intensive supervision in that particular method whereas the additional methods may be neglected. However, during internship students are expected to practice all the methods and where possible to use the integrated approach. As mentioned in the students' questionnaire, where other methods are not practised by agencies, students have to initiate their own workload. Although it is expected that agency supervisors may also assist students in utilizing other methods, because it is not part of their workload, students may not receive adequate supervision. In 33.3% the respondents mentioned that they practice all methods.

6.2.10

According to prior information where it was mentioned that 73.3% of the agencies only specialise in one method it became necessary to determine reasons why all the methods are not performed by them.

Table 6.10

Reasons why all the methods are not performed by some agencies

	No	%
Insufficient staff members	6	40%
The agency specialises in one method	7	46.7%
Lack of knowledge of other methods	2	13.3%
Total	15	100%

According to the information provided in the above table 46.7% of the respondents indicated that the agencies where they are employed specialises mainly in one method of practice. As mentioned in the previous table specialization do not favour the internship of students as the other methods may be neglected. This finding is also complemented by the previous table, in that it indicated that the majority of the respondents (40%) only practised casework which meant that they themselves had to make additional arrangements for students to practice and gain experience in the other methods.

As it is the prerogative of agencies, according to their objections and/or community needs, to specialize in one method, it may detrimentally affect the internship of students. However, 40% of respondents acknowledged insufficient staff and 13.3% lack of knowledge of other methods, as probable reasons for not practising the integrated approach.

6.2.11

In the following table respondents were asked to evaluate the theoretical knowledge of students during their internship.

Table 6.11

Theoretical knowledge of students

	No	%
Sufficient	1	6.7%
Average	10	66.7%
Insufficient	4	26.7%
Bad	-	-
Uncertain	-	-
Total	15	100%

According to the information tabled above, the majority of the respondents (66.7%) indicated that they rate the theoretical knowledge of students as being average. One would have expected that the majority of respondents would have rated the theoretical knowledge of students as sufficient. The only reason that can be given for the evaluation of average knowledge is because students have not had sufficient prior opportunities to put their knowledge into practice. Because of this reason it is of great importance that students are given the opportunity to undertake practical work with guidance from both agency supervisors and university lecturing staff. With sufficient or even average theoretical knowledge, but effective supervision should afford students quality practical experience which can serve as the first step to professionalism.

6.2.12

The following tables seek to establish the student use of supervision and to determine as to whether supervisors are prepared or contended to supervise students.

Table 6.12

Student use of supervision

	No	%
Readily accepts supervision	4	26.7%
Fair acceptance of supervision	9	60%
Negative attitude towards supervision	2	13.3%
Total	15	100%

Table 6.12.1

Supervisors preparedness to supervise students

	No	%
Accept it as part of their work load	4	26.7%
Fully enjoy supervising students	7	46.7%
Supervising is a demanding experience	2	13.3%
Students assist in the agencies workload	2	13.3%
Total	15	100%

According to the above table the majority of the respondents (60%) indicated that the students fairly accepted supervision during their internship whereas a total of 46.7% of the respondents mentioned that they fully enjoy supervising students. The only explanation why respondents mentioned that students fairly accepted supervision, may be that the type of training that they need to adapt to supervision other than their previous training and supervision by university lecturers. The human factor by both supervisors and students may also be a factor. Both these tables are not fully significant accept that it proves that if internship placements were purposefully planned

and placement agencies were accredited, supervision would have been part of the workload of agency supervisors and more readily accepted by them.

- 6.2.13 The table below seeks to determine the students knowledge and integration of theory and practice.

Table 6.13

Students knowledge and integration of theory and practice.

	No	%
Exceptionally good integratory ability	1	6.7%
Satisfactorily integratory ability	9	60%
Poor integratory ability	5	33.3%
Total	15	100%

According to the information given in the above table the majority of the respondents (60%) indicated that the students ability to integrate theory into practice had enough theoretical knowledge which enabled them to handle their practical cases fairly effectively and integratedly. This also indicates that the practical work of students can be of a quality standard if it is accepted that the internship is still part of their training process.

In conclusion agency supervisors were asked how they kept abreast of new developments in social work. In this regard they indicated that they mainly used strategies to keep up to date with the most recent developments in social work is through the in-service training programme, holding regular workshops and seminars and attending additional courses. These strategies

will keep supervisors abreast with the contemporary issues in social work and enable them to effectively supervise students during internship.

6.3

SUMMARY

The essence of this section was based on the effective students supervision during the internships. Thus how field-supervisors ensure proper and quality training of the students. Furthermore emphasis was on the students knowledge on integrating theory with practice.

CHAPTER 7

EMPIRICAL DATA ON SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS BY AGENCIES DURING INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The study group was composed of the heads of departments of social work from various tertiary institutions offering social work programmes. The study consisted of 10 participating universities namely:

- University of South Africa
- University of Free State
- University of Potchefstroom for Christian Higher Education
- University of Durban-Westville
- University of Western Cape
- University of Natal
- University of Vista
- University of Fort Hare
- University of Pretoria

7.2 The information concerning the practical training of social work students are presented in the following tables.

7.2.1 The following table seeks to determine the problems that different social work departments normally experience with regard to the internship of their final year students.

Table 7.1

Problems experienced

	No	%
Students have insufficient knowledge to integrate theory into practice	4	40%
Agency supervision are not always available to sufficiently supervise students	4	40%
Some supervisors at placemen agencies are not sufficiently trained or experienced to supervise students	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Despite the fact that universities on the whole are satisfied with the placement of students as well as the contribution agencies are offering in the practical training of students, they mentioned some constraints experienced by some agencies. In this regard the following constraints were mentioned in descending order of importance.

Agencies' staff members are over taxed with caseloads and do not always have sufficient time for attending to students. Students have insufficient knowledge to integrate theory into practice. Some supervisors at placement agencies are not sufficiently trained or experienced to supervise students. Students have financial constraints that is, for travelling/transport costs. High staff turnover, that is increasing and the demand for services of agencies without a commensurate increase in resources makes it difficult for agencies to entertain additional responsibilities. Different geographical areas in our

country focus on different needs of the community, therefore it takes time for the student to adapt to these different situations.

7.2.2

The table below seeks to determine the duration of students placement for the internship during their final year of study.

Table 7.2

Duration of student placement

Minimum period	No	%
3-5 months	7	70%
6-9 months	2	20%
One year	1	10%
Total	10	100%

According to the data encoded in the above table, it indicates that the majority respondents (70%) are of the opinion that 3-5 months placement is sufficient. This proves that within this period of time students are able to internalise the principles, procedures, approaches and skills with regard to all the methods of treatment in social work practice. This also indicates that the students are able to achieve specific objectives set to be accomplished during the internships. Furthermore it is an indication that within this period of time quality practical training of students can be achieved.

7.2.3

The table hereunder seeks to establish the extent to which lecturers should be involved in the supervision of students during the internships.

Table 7.3

Involvement of lecturers

	No	%
Telephonically	1	10%
Regular contact once a week	4	40%
Regular contact more than once a week	5	50%
Total	10	100%

} 90%

According to the information provided in the above table the majority respondents (90%) indicated that the lecturers should be involved on a regular basis in the supervision of students during their internship. In this regard 40% of the respondents indicated at least one contact a week and 50% more than once weekly. Universities are therefore adamant that the internship of students can not only be left in the hands of agency supervisors. Lecturers are equally important in continuing their training responsibilities and to assist students in collaboration with agencies, to more effectively integrate theory with practice..

7.2.4

The following tables seek to establish whether students are remunerated for their internship and if so the amount they earn.

Table 7.4

Remuneration of students

	No	%
All students	-	-
Some students	1	10%
None	9	90%
Total	10	100%

Table 7.5

Minimum amount remunerated

	No	%
None	9	90%
Less than R300 per month	1	10%
R301 - R500 per month	-	-
R501 plus per month	-	-
Total	10	100%

As mentioned in tables 4 some of the constraints experienced by universities in the practical training of students are the financial difficulties encountered by the students themselves. This includes travelling costs, accommodation in instances where students are not practising in their home towns and also for some basic needs like food etc. It has become an issue among social work students that they should be remunerated for the services they offer during their practical training. In this regard, when students are not being remunerated it may hamper their motivation to practice effectively. Furthermore, it is argued that students may be dissatisfied by this issue and as a result may not offer the best services as required.

Suggestions by respondents for improving the quality of the internships

- Students should be paid for the internships as a motivation to do their internships. This is, of course, a debatable point for the following reasons:
 - * Firstly, internship is part of training and because of its educational function, should not be remunerated as if the student has been permanently employed;
 - * Secondly, if students are paid for their internship, agency supervisors should also be paid for the time spent to supervise/educate students; and
 - * Thirdly, governmental agencies, because of bureaucracy, will not be in a position to create jobs for shorter periods per year whereas private welfare organisations normally do not have additional funds to subsidise student internships.
- The co-operation between the academic staff and field supervisors should be improved by having more consultation sessions at the agencies.
- Group supervision during the internship with the university supervisors can be very helpful.
- Training or keep field supervisors conversant with the developments in social work eg the refreshment courses.

- Students must be well prepared for the internships by giving them the opportunity to deal with various cases, before the final year where theory can be put to practice as part of their concurrent placements.

7.3

SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE INTERNSHIP

Universities were requested to offer suggestions to improve student's integration of theory with practice during their practical training. The following suggestions were made :

- It is important to offer training or refresher courses to supervisors of co-operating agencies to keep them abreast of new social work developments and in order to ensure ongoing training of students.
- To provide workshops to field supervisors and regular liaison between lecturers and supervisors to ensure up-to-date sharing of theory and practice, hence quality practical training of students and effective service delivery.
- The standard generating body (S.G.B) assessment criteria to be the guidelines to plan and assess quality of student's social work practicals.
- Group supervision during the internship between the university supervisors and field supervisors is of great importance, in that they will be able to complement each other with regard to the practical requirements of the students.

- Report writing must include a column in which the students reflect clearly the theory they applied when dealing with practical social work situations.
- Universities need to pay more attention to the assertiveness of students which eventually enables them to render more effective services, hence more effective training and integration of theory into practice.

7.4

CONCLUSION

In the context of this section, the researcher basically wanted to compare the university under study with others in the country in terms of the following:

- problems experienced with regard to student internship
- duration of student placement
- lecturer's involvement in the supervision of students during the internship
- student remuneration for the internship

CHAPTER 8

MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the knowledge, experience and information gained from the data reflected in the previous chapters.

This chapter will indicate whether the objectives set at the beginning of the study have been met or not. It will also indicate whether the assumptions previously formulated have been tested or not.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS/MAIN FINDINGS

The conclusions reached in this chapter are based on the objections of the study. The following were the objectives of the study.

8.2.1 To determine the nature and extent of integrating social work theory with practice during field training of students in social work.

The research revealed that the relationship between theory and practice in social work is described as the ability to integrate theory and practice (Sheldon in McKendrick, 1990:127). According to Barbour cited in McKendrick (1990:127) student's view social work as an essentially practical subject with theory having little relevance. The profession of social work is built on the assumption that social workers should use theory to guide practice. Social work as a profession has a body of knowledge that is organised into a consistent framework of practice. It is against this

background that the theoretical knowledge of different social work methods were discussed. These are the theoretical requirements which social work students need as a basis for effective practice. According to the empirical findings it was indicated that the majority of students (82.8%) agreed that their theoretical background assisted them to successfully undertake their internship. The empirical findings also indicated that the majority of the agencies (44.4%) where students were placed for the internship mainly handle casework on a regular basis, which indicate that most probably the students did not acquire sufficient field training in the other methods of social work. In this regard this may have obstructed the student's opportunity to utilize the integrated approach in their interventions as well as integrating theory into practice effectively.

8.2.2 To examine the level of understanding of students with regard to social work theory integrated with practice.

The aim of this objective was to assess the students understanding of integrating social work theory into practice. It is therefore important that social work students receive experiential training in class to prepare them for the realities of social work practice and to integrate theory into practice (Kolb 1984:25). Furthermore it is vital that students develop their skills through practical classroom applications before they venture into real practical work. The majority of the respondents (72.2%) indicated that the problems they experienced in integrating theory with practice were due to the nature of some cases they dealt with. In this regard some cases allocated to social work students were of such superficial nature, that it was not always subjected to theory. Furthermore the information encoded in the empirical

study indicated that social work theory learned in class is reasonably applicable to practice. This may be as a result that a great number of respondents (44.4%) indicated that they did their practical placements at agencies who only concentrated on one method. Therefore the students did not have an opportunity to sufficiently practice all the social work methods. According to Craig Winston Lecroy (1999:29) theory provides a lens through which a practitioner can get a better perspective and understanding of a practice situation.

8.2.3

To determine supervision mechanisms of students during internships.

The aim of this objective was to detect how student supervision during the internship can be appropriately conducted. Attention was also given to strategies that can be employed to improve the quality of practical training of students and their supervision in particular. According to Weyers (2002:169) supervision for social work students is a process of education, support and management to develop student's competence in performing professional social work. Supervision should adhere to the outcomes of the training institution's practice education programme, in an effort to integrate theory into practice. It also involve interactive guidance, based on educational needs, academic developments and empowerment of students. According to the social work journal (1995) during supervision the setting of objectives is an important factor to consider. Clearly set objectives help the supervisor to evaluate whether the student is achieving a tangible goal from the practice experience emphasising the integration of theory into practice. The empirical findings also revealed that the lecturer's involvement in supervision of students is of great importance. According to the information provided the majority of respondents (66.7%) was of the opinion that lecturers should to

a greater extent be involved in supervision in collaboration with agency supervisors. The reason why respondents mentioned a better organised dual supervisory function, is because at present university lecturers are seldomly involved during practical placements. Dual supervision will secure quality practical training of students as well as enabling them to integrate theory with practice. Added advantages of joint supervision or consultation are also that the abilities and limitations of students can be discussed, as well as the expectations of both university lecturers and agency's supervisors.

The research also found that field supervisors were of the opinion that students generally are not effectively prepared for their practical training. Of great importance was the finding that the majority of agency supervisors allocated to supervise students were the more senior and experienced social workers. This indicates the seriousness with which agencies consider the practical training of students. Supervisors with a significant background in social work should have been more able to effectively supervise students. Unfortunately the study also found that agencies did not draw up a schedule for student supervision. The student respondents indicated that they did not have specific times scheduled for supervision. Student supervision therefore seems to be an additional responsibility of agency supervisors who are normally overburdened with work loads. The conclusion is therefore that supervision is done on an ad hoc basis when it is practically possible for agency's supervisors.

8.2.4

To determine strategies and develop effective supervision mechanisms that will facilitate students' understanding of social work theory integrated with practice during the internship.

The aim of this objective was to determine possible measures to develop an effective supervisory function. Therefore to meet this objective recommendations made by the respondents about improving the quality of practical placements, are used as the strategies to develop effective supervision mechanisms.

8.3

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE STUDENT RESPONDENTS

- Students should be paid for the internship as a motivation to do their internship. This is of course a debatable point for the following reasons:
 - * Firstly, internship is part of training and because of its educational function, it should not be remunerated as if the student has been permanently employed;
 - * Secondly, if students are paid for their internship, agency supervisors should also be paid for the time spent to supervise/educate students, and
 - * Thirdly, governmental agencies, because of bureaucracy, will not be in a position to create jobs for shorter periods per year whereas private welfare organisations normally do not have additional funds to subsidise student internships.
- The co-operation between the academic staff and field supervisors should be improved by having more consultation sessions at the agencies.
- Group supervision during the internship with the university supervisors can be very helpful.
- Training to keep field supervisors conversant with the developments in social work for example through short/certificate courses.

- Students should be well prepared for the internships by giving them the opportunity to deal with various cases before their final year of study where theory can be put to practice.

8.4

RECOMMENDATIONS BY HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND FIELD SUPERVISORS

- It is important to offer training or refresher courses to supervisors of co-operating agencies to keep them abreast of new social work developments and in order to ensure ongoing training of students.
- To provide workshops to field supervisors and regular liaison between lecturers and supervisors to ensure up-to-date sharing of theory and practice, hence quality practical training of students and effective service delivery.
- The standard generating body (SGB) assessment criteria to be the guidelines to plan and assess quality of student's social work practices.
- Group supervision during the internship between the university supervisors and field supervisors should be of great importance, in that they will be able to complement each other with regard to the practical requirements of the students.
- Report writing must include a column in which the students reflect clearly the theory they applied when dealing with practical social work situations.

- Universities need pay more attention to the assertiveness of students which eventually enables them to render more effective services, hence more effective training and integration of theory into practice.

8.5

RECOMMENDATIONS

Emanating from the results of the present study, several recommendations are made to address the problem of student supervision during the internship and integration of social work theory with practice and further improve quality practical training of students. These recommendations are made in line with key themes that were explored.

8.5.1

ACCREDITATION OF AGENCIES

The study found that some students/respondents were placed with agencies that practice only one method of social work. This denies the student the opportunity to practice the integrated approach as well as integrating theory into practice. Therefore it is recommended that students should be placed with accredited agencies which practice all social work methods. Agencies should provide practical training in all methods.

It is also recommended that universities should employ lecturers in their departments who are mainly responsible for preparing and supervising students during their internship at welfare organisations. Lecturers specifically responsible for supervision on a more permanent basis will rigorously improve the quality of practical training of social work students as the university lecturer (supervisor) will be involved in the supervision of students on a more intensive and regular basis. In this regard universities

may even co-operate with one another by sharing lecturing supervisors at agencies.

8.5.2 JOINT SUPERVISION

The empirical study also found that there is a need for joint supervision of students during the internship between the field supervisors and university lecturing staff. It is therefore recommended that co-ordination between the lecturing staff and field supervisors with regard to the training of students during practical placement should be greatly improved. Group or joint supervision of students is of great importance, in that they will be able to complement each other with regard to the practical requirements of the students. Furthermore dual collaboration will secure quality practical training to integrate theory with practice under the careful guidance of university social work lecturers and social workers attached to welfare agencies. The limitations and abilities of students can be discussed, the expectations of both university lecturers and agencies concerning the students can be stipulated and agreed upon, and the quality of the students internship can be more effectively monitored and evaluated.

In conclusion joint supervision will help students to better integrate theory into practice, thus to internalise the principles, procedures and skills with regard to all the methods of treatment in social work.

It is also recommended that for the social work profession to survive, a partnership needs to be established between the workers and educators working together to create new supportive structures and develop knowledge

and skills on an ongoing basis with the aim of helping students during the internship to integrate theory with practice.

8.5.3 REMUNERATION OF AGENCIES

Subsidization is based on programming and therefore provision in the programme can and should include student internships especially for accredited agencies. Although it is the responsibility of agencies to accommodate students for their internships. This will also minimise the problems that the institutions are experiencing in placing the students for the internship. Furthermore this will improve the quality of the practical training which will benefit the country as a whole.

8.5.4 TIME SCHEDULE

The study found that agencies did not have a time frame for supervising students. The students/respondents indicated that they did not have specific times scheduled for supervision. In essence student supervision is an additional responsibility of agency supervisors who are usually overburdened with work loads. As a result supervision of students is done on an ad hoc basis when it is practically possible for field supervisors. Therefore it is recommended that agencies should draw up a time schedule for student supervision. In actual fact they should have a specific time to supervise students and as a result this will improve the quality of the practical training and better understanding of integrating theory into practice.

8.5.5 PROPER GUIDE

It seems that there is no proper guide in terms of the practical training of students with regard to the expectations of both the universities and agencies

from the students. Therefore it is recommended that both the universities and agencies should have a proper guide as to what they expect in the practical training of students.

8.5.6 PREPARATION OF AGENCY SUPERVISORS

Social workers supervising students especially the final year students needs to be theoretically updated and prepared for this task. It is therefore imperative for the training institutions to offer refreshing courses to supervisors of co-operating agencies to keep them abreast of new social work developments and to ensure ongoing training of students. The provision of workshops to field supervisors and regular liaison between lecturers and supervisors to ensure up-to-date sharing of theory and practice, hence quality practical training of students and effective service delivery. The tertiary institutions should also offer the following to assist social workers to keep abreast of changes in the social work field:

- provide non-degree courses
- certificate courses
- modular courses

One should not only see the acceptance of students for their internships by welfare agencies as their responsibility. To a great extent it is also an indication of good will extended by agencies. In the internship process universities expect quality supervision, supervisors are expected to be abreast of the most recent developments and approaches in the welfare field. In this regard universities can secure quality supervision and also show good will towards the agencies by offering regular refresher courses to practising

social workers free of charge. This gesture will also ensure better co-operation between universities and agencies resulting in more effective supervision.

8.5.7 PREPARATION OF STUDENTS

It seems that students are not well prepared before they go for the practical training and as a result they experience difficulties in integrating theory into practice. Therefore it is important that social work students receive experiential training in class to prepare them for the realities of social work practice and to integrate theory into practice. It is vital that they develop skills through practical classroom applications before they venture into real life situations.

8.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, supervision of students during the internship is reasonably satisfactory so the integration of theory into practice. The word reasonable is used due to some shortcomings found in the study such as: lack of proper co-ordination between the university lecturing staff and field supervisors.

Agencies did not have a specific time frame for student supervision. Supervision is done on an ad hoc basis when it is suitable for field supervisors. Students are also not well prepared before they go for the practical training and as a result they encounter problems in integrating theory into practice students are also placed with agencies which are not accredited.

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ADDENDUM 1

To : Student Social Workers (University of North West)

Title : An investigation of social work theory integrated with practice

Researcher : Mercurio M Motshedi
Department of Social Work
University of North West

The researcher requires data on the integration of Social Work theory with practice from social work students at the University of North West. The objective of this exercise is to see how theory learned at the university is applicable to practice during internships.

The students co-operation and willingness to provide this survey with valuable data is highly appreciated. It is requested that the respondents put a cross in the relevant block, to indicate their responses.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Name of the agency where you were placed

.....

.....

2. Type of the agency:

Governmental

☐

Non-governmental

☐

3. Which level of study are you doing?

2nd year

☐

3rd year

☐

4th year

☐

4. Which methods were utilised on a regular basis by the agency in which you were placed.

Case work

☐

Group work

☐

Community work

☐

Research

☐

All methods were implemented

☐

5. Reasons why all the methods were not employed by the agency in which you were placed.

All methods are offered

☐

The agency specialises in one method

☐

Lack of knowledge on other methods

☐

Insufficient staff members

☐

Other (specify)

6. How did you experience supervision during your practicals

Readily accepted supervision

Fair acceptance of supervision

Negative attitude towards supervision

7. How often was your supervision?

Daily

Twice a week

Once a month

Other (specify)

8. Supervision can be both beneficial to students and supervisors alike.

Agree

Disagree

Uncertain

Kindly motivate your answer to the above statement

.....

.....

9. The ultimate objective of supervision is to provide effective and efficient services to the community

Agree

Disagree

Uncertain

10. In your opinion to what extend should lecturers be involved in the supervision of students during block placement

On a regular basis using telephone

One consultation session at the agency

More than one consultation session at the agency

Other (specify)

11. In your opinion how long should students be placed for practicals in their final year.
Minimum period.

2 weeks

3-6 weeks

Three months

One year

Other (specify)

Please motivate your answer to the above statement

.....

12. How is theory learned in class applicable to practice

Completely applicable	
Reasonably applicable	
Not applicable	
Uncertain	

Please motivate your answer to the above question

.....

13. In your opinion how do you rate your theoretical knowledge with regard to integration with practice

Exceptionally integratory ability

Satisfactorily integratory ability

Very well

Uncertain

CASE WORK

1. How many cases have you handled during your placement

Two cases

Three - six cases

More cases (specify)

2. During block placement which social problems did you deal with

Marital dispute

Domestic violence

Child abuse

HIV/AIDS

Other (specify)

3. In dealing with your cases, which approach was mainly employed

Behaviour modification approach	
Client centred approach	
Task centered	
Integrated approach	

Other (specify)

4. Did you yourself feel theoretically sufficiently trained to deal with practical cases

Sufficient

Average

Insufficient

5. What problems did you experience in integrating theory with practice

Theory is not applicable to practice

Insufficient training with regard to integrating theory with practice

The nature of cases deal with

Other (specify)

Please motivate your answer above

.....

6. In your opinion how do you rate your theoretical knowledge with regard to integration with practice

Theory				Practice		
	Sufficient	Average	Insufficient	Sufficient	Average	Insufficient
1. Interviewing skills						
2. Behaviour modification approach						
3. Problem solving process						
4. Systems theory						
5. Ecological perspective						
6. Client-centred approach						
7. Role theory						
8. Task-centred approach						
9. Integrated approach						

7. How often have you employed these approach(es) in your intervention during block placement

Every time

Where necessary

Other (specify)

INTRODUCTION

1. The respondents are humbly requested to skip the method(s) which they have not practised during their internship and continue with the other methods. If one social work method was not undertaken motivate/give the reason for this.

.....

.....

GROUP WORK

2. During block placement you were expected to run groups, how did you go about starting a group

Initiated own group

It was part of the agency programme

As a result of agency case load e.g foster care parents

Other (specify)

3. How is group work theory applicable to practice

Sufficient background knowledge

Average background knowledge

Little background knowledge

4. What was the purpose of your group?

To re-integrate children living on the streets with their families

To share information on pertinent social pathologies eg. HIV/AIDS,
drug abuse etc.

Other (specify)

5. There are different types of groups, what type of group did you handle during placement

Educational group

Remedial group

Growth group

Uncertain

Please motivate your answer above

.....

.....

6. Which programme activities were mainly used in your group

Discussion

Talking

Music

Role plays

Other (specify)

Motivate your answer above

.....

.....

7. In running the group during your internship, which group work approach was mainly utilised?

Positive peer culture model

Behaviour modification

Person-centred group work

Reality theory

Other (specify)

8. In your opinion how do you rate your theoretical knowledge with regard to the integration with practice

Theory				Practice		
	Sufficient	Average	Insufficient	Sufficient	Average	Insufficient
1. Positive peer culture model						
2. Person-centred therapy in group work						
3. Behaviour therapy						
4. Reality therapy						
5. Rational emotive therapy						
6. Group development theory						
7. Planning for the group						
8. Task-centred group work						

COMMUNITY WORK

1. How was your community work project initiated

Initiated own community project

It was part of an ongoing agency programme

It was based on survey findings

It was based on a case load assessment

It was based on a community need assessment

2. Before one can start a project it is important to do a situation analysis so as to be able to make contact with the community and identify the community needs

Agree

Disagree

Uncertain

3. What was the nature/purpose of your project

Poverty alleviation

Income generating

Skill development

Awareness programme on different pathologies eg. HIV/AIDS, drug abuse

4. How is community work theory applicable to practice

Completely applicable

Applicable

Not applicable

Uncertain

Motivate your answer above

.....

.....

5. Projects have a number of stages/phases, so at what stage have you joined the project if it was not newly started

Not applicable

Situation analysis

Need identification and assessment

Planning

Implementation

6. In running of your project which community work approaches/models were mainly employed

RESEARCH

1. Did you participate in a research project at the agency

Did not do research

Took part in an ongoing research project

Initiated a research project

2. What was the purpose (title) of the research

.....

.....

3. How did your research theoretical background assist you in the research undertaking

Completely applicable

Reasonably applicable

Not applicable at all

Uncertain

4. What was the nature of the research undertaken

Qualitative

Quantitative

Do you have any suggestions which will assist in improving the quality of the internship?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Questionnaire

To : The Professional Social Workers

Title : An Investigation of Social work theory with practice.

**Researcher : Mercutio M. Motshedi
: Department of Social Work
: University of North-west**

The researcher requires data on the integration of social work theory with practice by the students during their internship and how supervision is processed/conducted.

This questionnaire is sent to all the social workers in all the provinces where we place students for internships.

The social workers cooperation and willingness to provide this survey with representation and meaningful data is highly appreciated. The fact that data will be kept under the strict measure, confidentiality is assured. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire, since it is anonymous. It is requested that the respondents put a cross(x) in the relevant block, to indicate their responses.

Thanks

Mercutio Motshedi

Questionnaire for Social Work Supervisors

1. Name of the agency where you are employed : _____

2. Type of agency : Governmental ☐
: Non-Governmental ☐

3. Number of years of experience as a social worker

- Less than 3 years ☐

- 3-6 years
- ☐

- 7-10 years
- ☐

- 10 + years
- ☐

4. How many students have you supervised during the past three years?

- none
- ☐

- 1-5 students
- ☐

- 6-10 students
- ☐

- 10+ students [

5. Which year group of students do you mainly prefer to supervise?

- 2
- nd
- year
- ☐

- 3
- rd
- year
- ☐

- 4
- th
- year
-

- Uncertain
- ☐

6. Motivate your answer to the above question:.....

7. Which problems do you experience with student supervision?.

- Experience no problem.

- | | |
|--|--|
| Students not effectively prepared for practical training | |
|--|--|

- Insufficient theoretical training of students
- ☐

- Other, please specify:

8. What difficulties do you experience regarding proper/extensive supervision of students?

Under staffed

☐

Shortage of office space

☐

No time scheduled for student supervision

☐

Not all social work methods are implemented at the agency.

☐

Other (Specify):

.....

9. In your opinion how long should students be placed for practical experience?.

Minimum period

2nd year

3rd Year

4th Year

2 weeks			
3-6 weeks			
Three months			
Six months			
One year			
Other (Motive)			

10. To what extend should lecturers be involved in the supervision during block placement period of final year students?

On a regular basis using telephone

☐

One consultation meeting at the agency

☐

More than one consultation session at the agency

☐

Other (Specify):

11. Which methods are being utilized on a regular basis by your agency?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Casework | ☐ |
| Group work | ☐ |
| Community work | ☐ |
| Research | ☐ |
| All methods are implemented | ☐ |

12. Reasons why all the methods are not performed by your agency

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| The agency specializes in one method | ☐ |
| Lack of knowledge on other methods | ☐ |
| Insufficient staff members. | ☐ |
| Other reasons. (Specify) : | |
| | |

13. How would you rate the theoretical knowledge of students

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| Sufficient | ☐ |
| Insufficient | ☐ |
| Average | ☐ |
| Bad | ☐ |
| Uncertain | ☐ |

14. Student use of supervision

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Readily accepts supervision | ☐ |
| Fair acceptance of supervision | ☐ |
| Negative attitude towards supervision | ☐ |
| Other (Specify) | |
| | |

15. Are you prepared/contended to supervise students?

Accept it as part of my work load.

☐

Fully enjoy supervising students

☐

Supervising is a demanding experience.

☐

Students assist in the agencies workload.

☐

16. Supervision can be both beneficial to students and supervisors alike.

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Uncertain

☐

17. It is crucial that welfare agencies participate in the practical training of students.

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Uncertain

☐

18. The ultimate objective of supervision is to provide effective and efficient services to the client and the community.

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Uncertain

☐

19. Supervision encourages learning among students.

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

Uncertain

☐

20. Students knowledge and integration of theory and practice.

Exceptionally good integratory ability

☐

Satisfactorily integratory ability

☐

Poor integratory ability

☐

21. How does the agency keep up to date with the most recent developments in social work.

None

☐

In-service training

☐

Regular workshop & seminars

☐

Attending additional courses

☐

22. Please give any suggestions for the improvement of students supervision during block placement.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thanks for your patronage

QUESTIONNAIRE

**TO : HEADS OF DEPARTMENT
SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF**

**RESEARCHER : MR M. MOTSHEDI
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH WEST**

**TITLE : AN INVESTIGATION OF SOCIAL WORK THEORY
INTEGRATED WITH PRACTICE**

1. Which problems do you normally experience with regard to the internship of final year students.

(a)	Insufficient number of accredited agencies to place students	
(b)	Lack of co-operation between the academic staff and field supervisors	
(c)	Students have insufficient knowledge to integrate theory with practice	
(d)	Some supervisors at placement agencies are not sufficiently trained or experienced to supervise students	
(e)	Agencies do not practice all social work methods	
(f)	Supervisors are not always available to sufficiently supervise students	

Other (specify)

.....

2. According to your opinion for how long should students be placed for internship during their final year?

Minimum period	
3-5 months	
6-9 months	
One year	

Other (specify)

3. To what extent should lecturers be involved in the supervision of students during their internship?

(a) On a regular basis only telephonically	
(b) On a regular contact i.e at least one contact per week	
(c) Irregular contact i.e less than once a week	
(d) No contact at all	

Other (specify)

4. How did you rate the theoretical knowledge of your students with regard to integration into practice.

	Sufficient	Average	Insufficient	Sufficient	Average	Insufficient
	Theory			Practice		
1. Casework						
2. Group work						
3. Community work						
4. Administration						
5. Research						

5. Are your students paid for their internship?

(a) All students	
(b) Some students	
(c) None	

6. If so, how much do they earn?

Minimum amount	
(a) Less than R300 per month	
(b) R301 - R500 per month	
(c) R501 plus per month	

Other (specify)

7. Do you have any suggestions on how to improve on the integration of theory into practice by students during their internship?

.....

ADDENDUM 2

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH WEST

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

SOCIAL WORK PRACTICAL TRAINING (WORK EXPERIENCE)

1. Objectives

- 1.1 To enable students to integrate theory with practice under the careful guidance of university social work lecturers and social workers attached to welfare bodies.

- 1.2 To help the student to internalise the principles, procedures and skills with regard to all the methods of treatment in social work by emphasizing those in practice and in supervisory discussions.

- 1.3 To broaden and deepen the students' knowledge and practical insight with regard to social and individual problems by means of actual examples taken from practice, as well as the promotion of a genuine interest in current welfare services.

- 1.4 To broaden the students' knowledge with respect of existing social resources and their functions by means of illustrations and actual examples in the community.

- 1.5 To enable students to learn and practice office administration, especially the filing system, correspondence, office rules and etiquette, etc.

- 1.6 To encourage the development of a professional person with regard to an individual work method, professional opinion and professional code. This should include :
- 1.6.1 the development of a sense of responsibility and integrity;
 - 1.6.2 self-growth and development;
 - 1.6.3 identification with the social community, - feeling part of the social work profession or agency - being accepted as a staff member, - and being loyal towards the profession and the welfare agency;
 - 1.6.4 commitment to the social work profession as such and realisation that "it is not a 8 to 4.30 type of work - but a profession". Such a sense of commitment should involve undertaking social action in a positive manner at the student level.
 - 1.6.5 on the part of the welfare body, the student should be accepted as a member of staff and should be encouraged to participate fully in all activities and to express his/her views;
 - 1.6.6 encouraging the student to use his initiative and to think and evaluate independently;
 - 1.6.7 afford the opportunity of learning through experience especially by even making mistakes;

1.6.8 learning through supervision - supervisors are partners with the student in a growth (developmental) process;

1.6.9 introducing the student to the local Social Workers' Association.

1.2 **Specific objectives, content and procedures of work experience**

Work experience (practical work) is undertaken by the study in social work throughout his/her entire four year training course and consists of the following:

2.1 **First Year Students (SWK 103 and SWK 104)**

2.1.1 **Observation visits** are undertaken to various welfare bodies (at least 3 visits per semester) followed by tutorial discussion classes as well as laboratory sessions. A report has to be written on each visit containing particulars as set out in the guide.

The specific objectives of observation visits are:

- * to expose students to welfare bodies and to acquaint them with the professional services rendered by social workers;
- * to realise and get a better understanding of social problems relevant to social work;
- * to introduce practical skills in recording and report writing.

2.1.2 **Group work experience** is afforded to students by being group members themselves of growth groups managed by third year students. Specific objectives being:

- * to experience the worth of group work as a member of a group;
- * to instill personal growth and relationship building;
- * to develop self knowledge/self awareness and relationship skills which are important for social work practice.

2.2 **Second Year Students (SWK 203, SWK 204 and SWK 207)**

2.2.1 **Laboratory sessions** are arranged fortnightly for casework and group work per manageable group. Course methods include the following:-

Case studies (2 reports); seminars on specialised fields of practice (1 assignment); peer tutoring; role playing; conducting interviews with clients in the community (2 reports).

Special objectives are to apply the theories, skills and principles underlying the problem-solving model; acquaint them with the services and appropriate legislation pertaining to family and child care; assist them to acquire the basic skills in social work administration; practically applying organisational policy and social welfare policy; and introducing the practical application of group work and community work.

2.2.2 **Block placement** of five weeks during the winter vacation at a welfare agency or state department. Students work under tutorial supervision of staff at the welfare body in collaboration with university lecturers. A consolidated report is required based on the experience gained.

The specific objectives being to enhance the skills of students in the practical application of social work knowledge especially in the case and group work methods; to expose students to experiential learning; to stimulate their sensitivity to social problems which can be resolved through appropriate social work intervention; and to gain experience in administrative (office) procedures.

2.3 **Third Year Students (SWK 303, SWK 306)**

2.3.1 **Concurrent Field Instruction** is undertaken by students for the entire academic year. If necessary and where possible concurrent placements may even be extended to include the winter vacation (last mentioned will substitute SWK 374. Course contents will include :

2.3.1.1 **Case work**

Students should take full responsibility for at least three (less complicated) cases. These cases may include long or short-term cases. At least six reports must be submitted during the year.

Fortnightly tutorial sessions will include case conferences as well as video-taped role plays. The last mentioned practice will concentrate on model-theory, skills and techniques regarding the case work method. Supervision by lecturers will be conducted individually or in small groups.

Specific objectives being to help students to improve and develop appropriate interactional skills for working with individual clients; to enable them to internalise essential interviewing skills that are normally used in case work to understand the client and his problematic situation and to help the client understand himself; and to expose students to varied problematic situations and appropriate actions strategies.

2.3.1.2 Group work

Each student is expected to handle one group for the entire year consisting of at least five contacts. **Groups are mainly made up of first year social work students.** Reports to be written one each group session. Four tutorial sessions will be arranged by the lecturers during the academic year. It is expected from students to individually start the groups; develop appropriate programmes; and handle the groups starting from pre-group stage to termination. Specific objectives are to provide opportunity to students to operationalise knowledge gained theoretically; and to gain the necessary experience in handling a group individually.

2.3.1.3 Community work

Student undertake field exercises in community work and community studies. The exposure of students to community work practice will be in the form of concurrent placement programmes in the community either as part of an existing community work project or taking full responsibility for a less complicated project. Students will be divided into small groups to allow for manageable supervisory sessions consisting of role playing, modelling and case discussions. Students to write three reports per semester.

Specific objectives are to provide opportunities for students to test their potential for social work, their capacity to give service by becoming involved in helping people; to study and practice community work and to learn to integrate this method with case and group work; to learn to relate in a professional way to clients, colleagues and other professionals; and to afford them the opportunity to recognise their own values and attitudes, realise their own strengths and weaknesses and also how to apply their own personal experience to the professional work situation.

2.4 Fourth Year Students (SWK 405 and SWK 411)

2.4.1 Concurrent placements

2.4.1.1 Caseload

Practical work in casework will include at least ten interviews/contacts designed to implement such approaches and techniques as taught in theory. Students are expected to submit at least five progress reports per semester as well as one comprehensive report at the end of the practical work in casework. The specific objective is to give the students the opportunity to individually as “full fledged” social workers deal with problem cases of a more complicated nature.

2.4.1.2 Group work

It is expected from each student to handle one group during the academic year. Furthermore, students are required to run at least ten sessions with the group, five sessions per semester, therefore a proposal and four progress reports per semester as well as one comprehensive report at the end of each semester depicting the development of the various group processes as well as the application of a specific approach in social group work.

The specific objective being to enhance the experience of the student in the “professional” use of group work.

2.4.1.3 Community work

This is a field practice programme where students study and practice social work at an advanced level with the emphasis on community work. It is expected from students to practise the integrated approach including in their community work experience all the methods in social work i.e. casework, group work, community work (development), administration, supervision and research.

The course content regarding community work per sé is as follows: students are incorporated into an existing community work project or they are followed to identify their own project. Collectively or independently students under the guidance and supervision of lecturers run the projects as facilitators in the community. Students are expected to attend to the project on a regular fixed schedule as well as write and submit progress, process and comprehensive reports as determined and outlined by the course coordinator.

Specific objectives include the following: to develop the students community service skills; to expose students to the opportunities of developing strategies for action plans, formulate these plans and finally implementing them; to expose students to the situation where they can develop their potential of identifying, assessing and prioritizing needs in the community; to assist students to clearly differentiate between community work, community development, social planning and social action; and to expose to situations

where they learn to integrate the methods of social work practice whilst practising community work.

2.4.1.4 Social Work Research (SWK 412)

A research report (mini-dissertation) on an approved topic is expected from each individual student. The report must demonstrate ability to conduct and report on independent research based on theory including selection of an appropriate research design, data collection methods, sampling and analysis. A typed report to be handed in at the end of the academic year.

The specific objective is to prepare students to be able to conduct and successfully complete especially implementation research.