

**Best Practices for Field
Instruction:
Competency-Based Approaches to
Professional Excellence**

Greg Merrill, LCSW

Director of Field Education
School of Social Welfare, UC Berkeley

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Berkeley Social Welfare

Course Description

Field instruction is noted to be the most important and meaningful pathway through which social workers develop. Despite its importance, field instructors often receive no formal training, mentorship, or support, and often progress through unguided discovery. In this brief, two-hour course, participants will be provided with an overview of best practices in field instruction to maximize their effectiveness with the students they have the privilege to supervise. Following lunch, field instructors will have the opportunity to participate in small group discussion sections by area of practice and with their assigned field liaison(s).

Course Objectives

Upon completion, participants will:

- 1.** Understand the mission of the UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare, the expertise of its field faculty, an overview of the MSW program, and recent developments;
- 2.** Assess their strengths and weaknesses related to the three fundamental roles associated with field instruction: supporter, teacher, and administrator;
- 3.** Improve their ability to engage, orient, and complete an educational assessment of their MSW student;
- 4.** Understand the competency-based outcomes and select learning tasks strategically from the agency environment;
- 5.** Commit to regular supervision, periodic observation-based tasks, and regular provision of effective feedback to promote maximum student development;
- 6.** Know how to recognize and respond to serious problems related to learning the profession of social work;
- 7.** Understand expectations related to summative, written evaluation at the end of each semester.

Biography of Course Instructor

Greg Merrill, LCSW, is currently the Director of Field Education. He teaches or has taught practice methods courses in the areas of health care settings, domestic violence, and motivational interviewing was voted teacher of the year in 2007 and again in 2009. In the last ten years, he has matched, monitored, and overseen nearly 1,000 field placements, directly observing a wide range of supervisee-supervisor dyads. He currently serves as a site visitor accreditation specialist for the Council on Social Work Education.

Prior to this position, Greg was the founding and supervising clinical social worker for the UCSF Trauma Recovery Center where he oversaw eight social workers and a wide variety of psychology, social work, and psychiatry trainees, all seeing complex, highly traumatized, public sector populations. In this position, he facilitated and led clinical seminars, group supervision, and individual supervision.

In addition to his role at the School, Greg is a motivational interviewing trainer and consultant experienced at working with public systems of care, including county child welfare and mental health departments, to improve practice.

Greg may be reached at gregmerrill@berkeley.edu.

THE THREE FUNDAMENTAL ROLES OF FIELD INSTRUCTOR



Supporter

Creates an environment that supports learning and growth, helps students feel understood, manage anxiety, take risks, negotiate challenges, and build professional confidence and identity



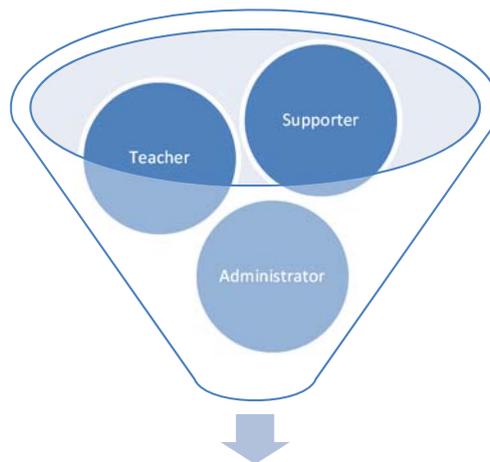
Teacher

Identifies key learning goals and directly explains ; creates related observational opportunities; designs rehearsal opportunities for student, observes their performance, and provides helpful and constructive feedback about strengths and ways to improve



Administrator

Plans and organizes, assigns work, upholds quality standards, monitors and evaluates to standards, establishes due dates, addresses problems efficiently and directly, serves as gatekeeper.



Field Instructor

PRACTICAL TIPSHEETS¹

Preparation for your Student

Careful planning and preparation before students arrive play an essential part in making this important transition as smooth as possible for them as well as for the agency. Students always feel awkward on their first days in their field agencies, and appreciate when arrangements are made for them in advance.

Below is a checklist of arrangements that have been used by other Training Coordinators and Field Instructors; feel free to add your own items and modify the list to suit the circumstances of your agency.

Before the student arrives:

- Inform staff of student's arrival date, and include the student's name, school, area of study, Field Instructor, and other relevant information
- Arrange for mail box, name on staff board, parking space, name tag/ID badge, email accounts etc.
- Give the student's telephone extension to the agency receptionist, and arrange for their name to appear on agency directories
- Identify the student's desk space, computer and telephone; work out coordination details with co-workers sharing space or equipment with the student
- Schedule introductory interviews with other staff
- Have agency telephone list, organizational chart, mission statement, and policy and procedure manuals etc. ready on first day for the student to review
- Arrange for any special agency requirements such as fingerprinting, medical testing, regulatory paperwork, etc.
- Contact the student to confirm start date and time, and suggest any other requirements that the student should complete before arriving
- _____

¹ These tipsheets were written specifically for field instructors who are receiving graduate students but could be adapted to employers preparing for a new supervisee to ensure a thorough orientation, engagement, and assessment process.

Engagement and Orientation

The engagement and orientation phase of placement is perhaps the most critical because it sets the stage for the rest of the placement. Careful thought and preparation is required to ensure that the student becomes familiar with the agency as a whole and the placement in particular in a relatively short time. **Abbreviating the orientation phase or assuming that the student will pick up information along the way is one of the most common causes of problems later in the placement.** Time and effort put into a systematic orientation in the first three or four weeks of placement will provide the student with the solid foundation and confidence needed to perform assignments successfully.

Here is a checklist of “getting settled” activities for the student’s first day or two:

- Introduce the student to staff
- Take student on tour of the agency
- Show the student his/her work space and how to use equipment and technology
- Identify clerical/support staff and explain their roles(s)
- Give student an organizational chart, agency manual(s), and other pertinent documentation
- Meet with personnel department, if necessary, to complete required forms
- Provide ID badge/name tag
- Explain protocols regarding risk reduction and worker safety
- Explain procedures regarding parking, meals and break times, dress codes, mileage reimbursement, etc.
- Explain agency hours and schedule expectations
- Explain procedures for signing in and out of agency, notification, re: absences
- Review schedule of meetings for first weeks
- Establish weekly meeting time for field instruction hour
- Discuss scheduling informational interviews with agency staff

Generally, the student will not assume primary responsibility for clients or projects until the three or four week orientation is complete. Three or four weeks is the average amount of time expected for first year students to complete the orientation, although it may take somewhat longer if the agency system is very large and complex. During this time, the student and Field Instructor are also developing the Learning Agreement.

During the orientation phase, it is expected that the student will spend a considerable amount of time reviewing records, manuals, charts, etc. as well as observing and interviewing staff. Another effective orientation activity is visiting affiliated agencies/programs/services. The Field Instructor should assist the student in identifying other appropriate staff and agencies and in arranging these site visits. Other important components of an effective orientation include presenting clear expectations regarding start and end of time, absences, space, workload, the nature and scheduling of supervision, and how the student is to introduce him/herself. It is the School's requirement that students should introduce and present themselves as students or interns in order to be clear with clients and staff about their role in the agency.

Agency Risk Reduction Guidelines

Berkeley Social Welfare focuses on preparing social workers to serve disadvantaged clients through the publicly supported human services. The School recognizes that these settings can be under enormous financial pressure and often respond to clients in serious crisis. In this context, social workers experience a variety of risky and threatening situations as a routine occupational hazard.

The School recognizes that students in training cannot be completely insulated from the realities of professional life, nor should they be, if field education is to continue to be a real life learning situation. On the other hand, students frequently lack experience, judgment, and skills that help seasoned practitioners to assess danger, take appropriate precautions, and remain safe. We recognize the School's responsibility to provide classroom content on issues of safety and to prepare students with knowledge to handle potentially dangerous situations. However, we would be remiss were we not to require that a serious effort also be made to reduce risk in field settings.

The following guidelines outline risk reduction policies and procedures that agencies should have in place. Modification of these guidelines for particular students and in special circumstances may be made only with the explicit approval of the assigned Field Consultant and should be noted in the student's learning agreement.

Agency Safety Policy

A field agency should have a policy and/or procedures on safety covering at least the following matters, and should provide students with a copy of these as part of the orientation process in addition to appropriate training about their implementation:

- Building and office security;
- Emergency procedures, including when and how to summon security or police assistance and in the event of natural disaster, evacuation routes and procedures;
- Staff responsibilities and procedures governing the management of violent clients or other individuals;

- Safety on home community visits, including when, where, and under what conditions visits should or should not be made, when the student should be accompanied, and how back-up is provided; and
- Procedures for ensuring that the Field Instructor and/or other staff know (or can easily ascertain) the student location during field practicum hours.

Home Visits

Thorough preparation should be made for student home community visits with consideration given to the following elements:

- Selection of clients and home environments that are not presumed to be dangerous to the student;
- Provision of a safe means of transportation, whether by agency vehicle, the student's car, or public transportation where such can be judged normally safe;
- Discussion of the neighborhood including any potentially dangerous areas;
- Discussion of appropriate risk-reducing behaviors in the neighborhood and in the client's home;
- Clarification of the purpose and development of a specific plan for the visit;
- Discussion of what to do should the client or anyone else present a threat to the student;
- Opportunity for the student to observe home visits before conducting them and/or to be partnered with another member of the agency; and
- Provision of appropriate support and backup. Depending on the situation and the student's experience with home visits, this may range from accompaniment by another worker or security person, to immediate availability of telephone consultation. At minimum, the student's Field Instructor should know when and where a visit is to take place, and arrange for telephone consultation.

Prohibited Student Activities

Students in field education placements may not be assigned the following activities:

- Physical restraint of clients;
- Transportation of a client in the student's private car;
- Transportation of a client with a recent history of violent behavior;
- Treatment of a client with a history of violence toward staff;
- Work in the agency at times when and/or in areas where other staff, are not present;
- Distribution or handling of medications;
- Clinical responsibility for a client at high risk for suicide without reviewing if the student possesses the requisite time, skills, knowledge, and supports to manage the client;
- Clinical responsibility for other high risk clients without review; and
- Other activities that go beyond the scope of social work practice or the capacity of an MSW intern or may place the intern or client at risk for harm

Debriefing Critical Incidents

It is not unusual for students in field placement to directly witness, hear about, or be party to a critical incident including a patient death, an incident of violence, involuntary hospitalization, the arrest of a client, or other incidents that could be considered traumatic or highly distressing. Reactions to these incidents can vary widely, and students can be much more sensitive to adverse events than experienced social workers. We encourage all Field Instructors to proactively inquire about student reactions to adverse events in the placement agency. We further encourage students to debrief incidents with their assigned Field Consultant. If a student would like to debrief an incident in field seminar, the Field Consultant should be consulted in advance to determine how to help the group receive the information and offer support.

Required Reporting to Berkeley Social Welfare

Agencies are required to immediately report any incidents involving student safety, client safety, or privacy violations to the appropriate Field Consultant. If the Field Consultant is not available, the report should be made to the Director of Field Education via the Field Assistant at 510-642-1306.

ORIENTATION TO AGENCY ENVIRONMENT

Using the following list, practice orienting the student to your agency environment verbally and suggest one follow-up task assignment that will follow in the future that will help the student complete their understanding of the agency environment. The goal is to be brief, informative, and engaging.

1. Review agency mission, history, and clients, communities, or populations served;
2. Review the organization structure of the agency, program, or service (who is in charge of and responsible for what, hierarchy/chain of command etc.);
3. The various roles and/or disciplines in the agency, how and when management and related communication occur, and formal and informal agency rules;
4. The role of social work in the program or agency vs. the roles of any other disciplines or classifications of staff;
5. Review who the agency's clients are, mechanisms of referral, common reasons for referral, assessment strategy, common interventions and services provided, and how clients experience the system and quality of service;
6. How the agency is funded, the political climate related to funding, and what the target outcomes are and how they are measured or evaluated;
7. Understand what laws, regulations, ethical codes as well as pragmatic resource constraints govern decision-making in the agency;
8. Understand how the agency or unit fits into an overall system of care and/or the community and complete site visits to collaborators and/or frequent referral sources;
9. Become oriented to agency's IT and record-keeping systems;
10. Review policies related to safety including student safety and client safety (risk management, mandatory reporting, dangerousness to self and/or others etc.).

ENGAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT AND ESTABLISHING A TEACHING-LEARNING RELATIONSHIP

Open-Ended Questions

1. When you finish this internship, what are the most important knowledge and/or skills you want to walk away with?
2. Walk me through your prior work and volunteer experience, letting me know the kinds of things you have done before and feel fairly confident about.
3. Tell me about your last internship or job, the kinds of things that you liked and learned, how that happened, and the kinds of things that you did not find helpful related to your learning.
4. Describe a time you were given an assignment you did not know how to perform and how you handled that.
5. What are the things that make you the most excited about this internship? What are the things that you fear or are nervous about?
6. Describe a past teacher, mentor, or supervisor and, specifically, what he or she did that made him or her so meaningful for you.
7. If I were to ask past teachers, mentors or supervisors about you, what would they say your strengths were? where you most needed to improve?
8. What are some factors related to your background, your identity, and your lived experience that you'd like me to be aware of and/or sensitive to in my role as your field instructor?
9. What are some preferred ways you like to be approached with feedback or suggestions about how to improve?
10. If I have a concern about you or, how and when is the best way to bring it up with you?
11. Many students feel anxiety, disappointment, and frustration with their field instructor, the agency, or social work in general. How will I know if you are feeling this? If you raise concerns directly, what can I expect?
12. In your experience, what reactions might you have to clients or to this work? How do you prefer to handle those reactions so that you can take care of yourself and be effective in your role? What kinds of support do you need or want from me?

Sharing Your Expectations and Experiences: Transparency

1. These are the kinds of experiences I have had in my career
...
2. Here's what I like and find challenging about my position in this agency. . .
3. The reason why I offer field instruction to students is . . .
4. Generally what I know about my style of providing instruction is . . .
5. Past students have tended to like this about my style . . . and yet also commented on the following as being a challenge . . .
6. Things that matter most to me regarding student behavior and my interactions with students are . . .
7. I like to observe my students directly from time to time so that I can help you to know what you are doing well and to offer you some brief suggestions for continued improvement. Here's how that typically happens . . .
8. Parts of my background, identity, and lived experience that might be important for you to know because it affects how I practice and teach social work are . . .
9. Although I imagine and hope we will have a very enjoyable year learning together, I have come to expect misunderstandings and conflicts as a natural part of the process of working together. Here's generally how I approach that and would like you to approach that.
10. There are a lot of demands on my time here but our time is extremely important to me. Here is how I prefer you let me know if a matter is urgent. . . If an item can wait, I typically prefer you put it on your supervision agenda for our next meeting.
11. What do you think of this?
12. What else would you like to know about me that might be important to you?

Protecting The Rights and Needs of Bilingual-Bicultural and Other Interns from Underrepresented Groups

(Adapted by Peter Manoleas from Maria E. Zuniga, San Diego State University School of Social Work with additional adaptation by Greg Merrill)

The following is a list of considerations and guidelines for bilingual and/or bicultural student interns from populations who may be simultaneously under-represented in our profession but overrepresented in the clients of social work:

- They should have diverse caseloads so they can learn from different cultural/racial groups
- They should serve a carefully selected caseload that does not overload them
- The training needs of these students must be addressed as the first priority
- It is critical to recognize that the needs of most monolingual/immigrant clients are more complex and will therefore more time to establish relationships and craft interventions. Typical characteristics can include:
 - Immigration concerns
 - Acculturation stress
 - Structural poverty and economic (housing, food) insecurity
 - Lack of referral access to the systems of care if not documented
 - The need to help immigrant clients navigate the bureaucratic nature of health and social services in the United States

Given the added complexity and demands, field instructors must assign cases thoughtfully so as to avoid exploiting student interns.

The field instructor has the responsibility to teach how to address the cultural context. Students should know be expected to know this automatically because they may come from a similar cultural background as

the clients. If the field instructor cannot provide this more complex type of supervision, they need to have a bilingual/bicultural consultant who can provide additional insights to help support the student's development.

MSW students should not be asked to translate documents or translate sessions for other providers.

The School of Social Welfare recognizes the special demands on these interns and ensures they are not overburdened and have access to the same quality of educational attention as their non-bilingual/non-bicultural counterparts.

Survey of Supervision Methods and Techniques with Examples Adapted from Campbell (2006) by Greg Merrill, LCSW

Case Consultation

Involves the intern presenting the client to the field instructor for feedback to improve accuracy of assessment and effectiveness of treatment; “thinking together”; especially useful for auditory and verbal processing learners.

Trainees often need help learning an organized format to present cases in and identifying their key focal question or concern.

Instructor can also ask an array of evocative questions to increase self-efficacy, elicit more content, and facilitate problem-solving such as:

1. Tell me a few things you did successfully with this client.
2. If you could go back in a time machine and re-start this session, what would you do the same? What would you do differently?
3. How does it feel to you to be in the room with this client?
4. You seem certain that the main problem is _____. On what evidence do you base this? Are there any other possibilities you may have overlooked?
5. What would the client say the main problem and solution are?
6. The people who care about the client, what would they say his/her main problem is? Solution?
7. What diversity factors might be operating in the client’s life and between you and the client?
8. You clearly covered x, y, and z with the client. What about (items not mentioned)?
9. If I asked the client directly to tell me honestly what their impressions of you were, what do you suppose he or she would say your strengths are? Liabilities?
10. Most people feel two ways about most things. You’ve mentioned that the client seems mostly to be saying x. What do you suppose the other side might be?

11. When you think about this client and anticipate worst case scenarios, what risks should we be thinking proactively about?
12. What is your main concern right now? How could I be most helpful to you in serving this client to the best of our combined abilities?
13. What would a “realistically successful outcome” look like six months down the road with this client?
14. How much do you think or worry about this client? What have some of your thoughts and reactions been and what might this mean?
15. What is the one thing you wish you knew how to do with this client but you are still unsure about?
16. If you imagine yourself being successful with this client down the road and looking back at what the turning point was, what do you think you would say?
17. You seem confused/overwhelmed/worried about/depressed/frustrated/angered by this client. Let’s see if we can sort out which of those feelings are uniquely yours, which are feelings this client provokes in most relationships, and which feelings are actually the clients that he or she is getting you to feel?
18. When you talk about this client, I don’t perceive a lot of your normal energy. Does this seem accurate?
19. What are the best moments you can recall between you and this client?
20. If you had the power to magically give this client one skill or ability to help them navigate their situation, what would it be?
21. In discussing this client with me, what were you hoping I’d help you with? What did you imagine I’d say? What did you most want me to say? What were you afraid I might say?

Written Activities

Involves the intern spending time reflecting and writing down key pieces of information and some of their reflections or reactions; especially helpful for visual learners or learners who need a little more time to know what they think and feel; can be time-consuming so use efficiently. Guideline: if you don’t have time to review it with them in a meaningful way, then don’t assign it.

Suggested activities:

1. Journaling freestyle or on key focal theme such as:
 - a. Countertransference
 - b. What I did well
 - c. What I worry about
 - d. Ethical dilemmas
 - e. Ways I am different from my client
 - f. The ecological context of the client
2. Process recordings and transcripts (of a segment or entire session)
3. Worksheets that organize key information
4. Documentation review including graphic treatment plans
5. Written case formulations (supply format)
6. Written cultural assessments and formulations (supply format, DSMIV appendix)
7. genograms, ecomaps, or problem system maps
8. Two-sided lists (what client wants; what supervisee wants)
9. Use butcher paper or white board during supervision to note key themes, denote pros and cons, or graphically depict client dynamics
10. Create “handouts” for client that provide psychoeducation or simple worksheets or self-monitoring logs

Audiotaping and/or Videotaping

Interns usually flinch at the idea of hearing or seeing themselves but how else can they most honestly self-reflect upon their clinical performance? With proper consent from clients and confidential handling and disposal of taped material, there can be no better way for the intern to see and hear what they sound and look like AND to have control over what the instructor sees and hears -- they select the client they wish to tape and the segment of the session they wish to present. In fact, I insist that my interns listen to their taped segments first, critique themselves, and select segments for me to listen to that demonstrate their best work or a clinical dilemma or question they'd like help with.

As a prelude to reviewing their work, I often have them review a tape of my work and prepare comments, questions, and reactions.

In general, it is best to listen to or watch tapes in about 5 minute segments.

To promote feelings of self-efficacy, you can ask:

1. What were you happy with?
2. What skills did you demonstrate?
3. What positive relationship traits are observable between the client and you?
4. What part of what you looked or sounded like wasn't so bad?

Early on, provide lots of verbal praise for the risk-taking, strengths, efforts, and demonstrated improvement you witness (remember the magic ratio – 4 pieces of feedback to every 1 piece of constructive feedback).

To help the intern understand and explore their reactions to client material and make their rationale more explicit, you can use questions like these adapted from Kagan (1997) in what is called Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR):

1. What were you feeling right when the client said _____ ?
2. Where did you want to go with that comment/statement/question?
3. I noticed when the client mentioned several times that she/he _____ , you didn't really respond. Any thoughts on that?
4. The client's face and vocal tone really changed when said _____. What do you make of that?
5. I found myself feeling very bored/sad/anxious/angry/frustrated in reaction to the client's presentation. What are some of your reactions? What do you think this means?

In closing, ask the intern:

1. What was the most helpful thing you learned from hearing/seeing yourself?
2. What did you make of some of my feedback? What was most useful? What did you disagree with or feel uncertain about?

3. What might you want to share with the client about what you learned about them from reviewing your work so carefully? How might this affect them?

Live Observation

It can be exceptionally anxiety-provoking for interns to be directly observed by a field instructor, and the instructor's presence in the room may artificially change the dynamic with the client. That said, there is evidence that clients take comfort with the instructor being in the room and visible at times as they feel their care is improved (Locke & McCollum, 2001), particularly if the purpose and procedures are clearly explained to them at the onset of treatment and are reviewed again prior to the instructor's presence. Also, once interns become entrained to this training technique, they tend to feel better seen, understood, supported, and helped by an able supervisor.

Live observation can occur behind a one-way mirror or by the instructor being in the room with the client. The observation can be strictly that or can be interactive with the instructor communicating directly to the intern and/or client. In minimalist form, the instructor introduces him/herself at the beginning and makes a few brief comments at the end; in maximum form, the instructor and supervisee conduct co-therapy together. To introduce the supervisee to this, you might begin by inviting them to "visit" one of your sessions to observe and comment.

Provide client and intern with clear instructions about your purpose and role and what they can expect. Tell the client that you are there more to observe and help their therapist than to observe and critique them and that "three heads may be better than two" at problem-solving. If intern is highly anxious about being observed, highlight observed strengths and improvements, praise them for tolerating the experience, and ask them to self-evaluate, limiting your critique until they grow more comfortable with the process whenever possible.

At times, you may also appear in session to directly talk with the client as a sort of quality assurance check-in with the therapist present:

1. What is your understanding of what you and your therapist are working toward together?
2. What is the most helpful thing about your time with _____ ?
3. What progress do you feel you are making? How are you accomplishing this?
4. How satisfied with you are the efforts your therapist is making to assist you?
5. How satisfied are you with your own efforts to assist yourself?
6. If your therapist could make one change that would improve the sessions for you, what would it be?
7. How could I support your therapist better in supporting and assisting you?
8. Anything else you'd like me to know?

Experiential Methods

These creative methods can help deepen the intern's understanding of their client's psychological world, their appreciation for their own reactions, and their recognition of the client-therapist dynamics that are present. They require the instructor and student to take risks with one another and can end up being very fun and can also elicit insight breakthroughs.

Roleplay and *Role Reversal* are typically the most common experiential methods involved. The message to the intern is essentially "show me" (instead of tell me) what you experience with the client and then let me "show you" (instead of tell you) a variety of response options to think about. It is usually safer for the intern to start with reversal where you demonstrate and take risks and to have them evaluate you; eventually, you should switch and have them stay in the clinical role and you be the client, asking them to try certain approaches or techniques.

Other methods include *the Gestalt empty chair* in which there are two empty chairs and the client switches between playing themselves and the

client. The supervisor can coach from the side and ask the therapist to amplify certain statements, making the underlying meaning or dynamic more visible to the supervisee.

Guided visualization techniques can involve inducing relaxation, suggesting evocative images involving client interactions, and then either imagining a calm, confident response or different, more therapeutic response. By pairing anxiety provoking material with a relaxed state, the supervisee can gain more self-control and stay in the provider role more effectively.

Other types of experiential techniques can include *psychodrama* and *expressive art projects* that all stimulate feeling and help the supervisee gain perspective on their dilemma using a modality other than reflective discussion and analysis.

Topical Review

As you may recall, academic courses rarely provide students with all they need to know and they often have gaps in their exposure to important material based upon the degree program they are in, the instructors they happened to have, and the experiences they happened to have.

You and the intern can make a list of topics that you can review together as a brief didactic. Common topics include risk assessment, crisis intervention, case formulation, differential diagnosis, medication interventions, vicarious traumatization and self-care, legal and ethical mandates, psychodynamic defense structures, etc.

You may review these topics in any number of ways together including simple discussion, you preparing a mind-handout or lecture for the intern, reading-based discussion, the supervisee presentation to you, or the supervisee setting up a one-on-one tutorial with an identified expert in this area. Most topics can be easily researched on the internet, using reliable web sites or a search engine such as Google scholar. Design a format which matches time constraints and optimizes your intern's natural learning style and preferences.

This strategy allows you to cover material that may be overlooked in case review and yet can deepen the supervisee's understanding of professional practice. Once a topic is covered didactically, look immediately to case material to find relevant application so the link between conceptual and applied can be made.

SPOTLIGHT ON DEVELOPING CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Students Speak to Field Instructors: What We Want To Know About Cultural Diversity and Our Recommendations for How to Teach Us (N=14)

Content

How to work effectively with specific populations that are different from us but frequently use services in our setting;

Certain things to look for and/or be aware of when working with people from specific cultures while being careful not to stereotype;

How to adjust our typical “introduction,” “assessment,” “listening,” or “responding/interacting” patterns for persons of varying backgrounds and preferences;

How to identify key components of culture such as norms, beliefs, customs, and rituals that might be related to or impacting the client’s presenting problem;

How to conduct ethnographic interviewing and cultural assessments;

Exposure to different philosophies about what cultural competence means and involves;

How to think and what to do about gaps in services to and unique barriers for diverse populations;

How to conceptualize and react appropriately and with a social welfare framework to tensions and problems within the agency related to human diversity and/or power dynamics.

Methods:

Deliberately assign us a diverse caseload and be transparent about why;

Actively provide information about norms, beliefs, patterns, and customs of groups with which we may be unfamiliar;

Allow us to watch you assessing or working cross-culturally with a client and then be willing to be transparent with us about your own biases, thoughts, and assumptions, and why you did what you did;

Share your own cross-cultural experiences and mistakes openly with us as this will allow us to feel more comfortable/less ashamed about sharing our mistakes with you;

Make time during supervision to specifically ask us about and talk to us about diversity issues as they are coming up in the clinical work or in the agency; if there are diversity conflicts in the agency, be upfront with us about the key issues without trying to get us to take sides;

Give “mini-assignments” that require us to reflect upon our own norms, experiences, values, patterns, and expectations vs. the client’s;

Assign relevant readings before or after we are exposed to cultural populations with which we are unfamiliar;

Ask us about populations we would like to work with more effectively and then help us creatively brainstorm ways to learn how to do so;

Give us praise when we take risks and go outside of our cultural comfort zones, even if we make mistakes;

When we make mistakes, discuss them with us in a compassionate way, not in a way that elicits judgment/shame/blame; *do*, however, discuss them with us; When we demonstrate cultural competence, let us know exactly what it was we said or did that you think exemplified cultural competence so we’ll know what to keep doing.

REFLECTIVE AND INTEGRATIVE CONVERSATIONS

Questions that elicit deeper reflection and integration about professional dilemmas faced:

1. What were your thoughts, feelings, and reactions? What did this event or situation mean to you? Why do you think that was?
2. What do think was going on behind it all? What were the full dynamics?
3. What were the important factors in the situation related to diversity and difference?
4. What concepts have you learned in your courses or in other places that may help you to understand this situation more fully?
5. How did you have to manage yourself and your own reactions to be able to respond professionally?
6. What do you think the most ethical way to proceed was? How did you arrive at that?
7. If you could go back in a time machine, what would you do differently now that you have had the opportunity to think this through?
8. What would continue to help you practice and refine the knowledge and skills you need to face situations like this in the future?

SELF-ASSESSMENT OF FIELD INSTRUCTION PRACTICES
Adapted from Falendar & Shafranske (2007)

1. The field instructor *understands* the specific types of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and related competencies that their supervisee will need to master in order to become a safe, independent practitioner of their discipline.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

2. The field instructor initially *orients* the supervisee to both the day-to-day tasks (duties), to safety policies, and to the overall agency environment (context).

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

3. The field instructor *engages* with the supervisee to facilitate development of a viable supervisory relationship, leading to the emergence of a working alliance.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

4. The field instructor *assesses* the supervisee for their relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes, interests and fears, style of learning, and for personal, temperamental, cultural, and/or identity related factors that may inform how they approach learning of the assigned tasks in the agency environment.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

5. The field instructor *commits* to the practice of educational supervision by making consistent time available and integrating the following superordinate values: integrity in relationship, ethical values-based practice, appreciation of diversity, and science-informed/evidence-based practice.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

6. The field instructor *delineates expectations* whenever possible in advance including standards, rules, and general practice procedures.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

7. The field instructor *identifies* setting-specific tasks that help the supervisee obtain the identified and *develops* with the student a comprehensive learning contract.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

8. The field instructor *arranges* for the supervisee to have opportunities for observational learning in which they observe a competent practitioner performing the tasks asks them to reflect upon their observations.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

9. The supervisor *directly observes* a cross-section of the supervisee’s work at intervals and provides timely, specific, balanced feedback to the supervisee that affirms what they did well and offers them sequenced suggestions for improvement.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

10.The field instructor *facilitates inquiry* leading the supervisee to greater personal awareness and helping them to articulate their understanding to conceptual, theoretical, and/or philosophical approaches consistent with the profession.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

11.The field instructor *directly and fairly addresses* concerns, maintains responsibility for observing problems in the teaching and learning relationship, and encourages and accepts feedback from the supervisee.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

12. The field instructor writes a comprehensive, thoughtful, honest and fair evaluation of the supervisee supported by behavioral examples at the end of specified periods and discusses it thoroughly with the supervisee, revising goals and supervision strategies as needed.

<i>Needs Improvement</i>	<i>Fair, Emerging</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Generally Good</i>	<i>Excellent – a real strength!</i>
1	2	3	4	5

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