

Imagining futures for field education impacted by current contexts

2013 AASWWE symposium: Field Education
Workshop

Workshop presented by

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*Acknowledgement of traditional
owners, the Nyungar people*

Overview

A. Presentation to raise issues

*B. World Café workshop to
imaging futures*

A:

- Current context of field education in Australia
- Specific Issues in Field education
 - Rural and Remote
 - Contexts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students
 - Internationalisation
 - International students
 - Australian students doing field education overseas
- Models
 - External Supervision
 - Pilot Project – Model of mentoring for International Students



Current context of field education in Australia

- Human Service Field under pressure
- Neo-liberal Market Principles strain social workers
 - Competition for funding
 - Cost-effective
 - User-pays
 - Risk Managers
 - Heavy workloads
- Public Management Policies
 - Accountabilities and performance
- Competency based learning
 - » field education impacted



Impacts:

- Pressures to achieve outcomes hard to reconcile with ethics
- Devaluing of social work and loss of meaningful social work identity

» field students enter is changing

How do we prepare students for that?

- Social work supervisors of students heavy workload
- Increasingly hard to find placements
- Field education marginalised in Academia
- Recruitment of International students as revenue source
- Students expectations :
 - Ideal placements, paid work, perfect supervisors

Do we need to rethink traditional models of Field Education?



Specific Issues in Field education

- **Rural and Remote**
- **Contexts for Aboriginal and Torrens Strait Islander Students**
- **Internationalisation**
- **International students**
- **Australian students doing field education overseas**



Rural and Remote



- AASW (2012) Expectations
 - Three liaison contacts
 - Face to face visit
 - Access to library facilities
 - Field educator training and support
- Creative solutions

How can we work in partnership with Field Teachers and Organisations to identify and support creative and appropriately challenging social work placements for our students?

How can we find creative ways to provide accessible, engaging and relevant Professional Development opportunities to Field Teachers?

How can we create time and space in which to provide this support, given the diverse and demanding contexts in which Field Teachers live and work?



Contexts for Aboriginal and Torrens Strait Islander Students



Internationalisation

- Internationalisation has meant increasing numbers cross borders to go to developed countries to study
- International education is big business
- Now it is one of Australia's main export industries
- Universities are income driven
- in 1995 there were 111,300 overseas students , now 233,099 onshore international students (AEN 2013)
- Southeast Asian students making up over 80% of the international students (Egege & Kutieleh 2004).



International students

- should be viewed as providing cross cultural insights and making a positive contribution to our society!
- Are not just sources of revenue
- are a cost to Universities as they must provide academic and support services
- Some face prolonged isolation, miss their family networks and support structures; some are under huge pressure to succeed
- Some experience language difficulties, particularly with written English and discomfort with verbal communication in tutorial classes
- Have experienced some reluctance by field teachers to accept them for field placements



Australian students doing field education overseas

- Requests from students every year
- Four competing models of international field placements include: independent/one-time, Neighbour-country, onsite group and exchange/reciprocal models
- Must explore the motivation of students and staff
- Most universities offer study abroad semesters/internship programs as part of internationalisation of curriculum
- UWS has a two way exchange program with USP in Fiji where students and academics are involved with community sector staff and return promote education with Pacific Island communities in Sydney



What is the primary purpose of tertiary education in Australia and who should fund it?

Do we recruit international students to become Australian citizens and train them for our workforce or to return to their countries and seek employment?

How should we assist students with literacy issues (including domestic and international students)? Any innovative strategies for making students more ready for the written requirements of field placement?

How can we improve the educational (including placement) experience for International students in our programs?

What place do international student placements (for domestic students) have in our programs? Should these placements be subsidised? Who should be involved in final year overseas placements?

Models

- **External supervision**
- **Pilot Project – Model of mentoring for International Students:**



External Supervision

- Traditionally: apprenticeship model
 - Placements with internal supervision difficult to source
- Students more satisfied?
- Opportunities:
 - multidisciplinary work, increased job opportunities, experiences in emergent fields, flexible graduates
 - Open up new fields, cultural supports, sharing loads
- Challenges:
 - Social work identity, feeling competent, complexity of four way reporting and assessment,
 - matching, valuing of task supervisor
- Important:
- Relationships, information sharing, authenticity, understanding of context, role clarification, extra supports

What other issues are there?

How do we deal with the potentials and challenges?



Pilot Project – Model of mentoring for International Students

- Phase 1 : The pre-placement mentoring – preparation for field practicum
- Continuing the mentoring program during placement: Phase 2
- Phase 3 of the Mentoring model: