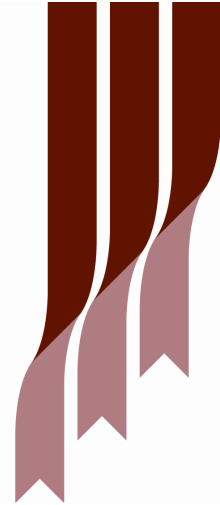


SCOTTISH INSTITUTE
FOR EXCELLENCE IN
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



**LEARNING FOR EFFECTIVE
AND ETHICAL PRACTICE**

*Integration of Learning for Practice
Opportunities for Inter-professional Learning
Agency-based Practice Learning Opportunities*

Practice Audit (working paper)
March 2004

University of Edinburgh
University of Dundee
The Robert Gordon University

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This practice audit was carried out as part of the Learning for Effective and Ethical Practice project, funded by the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education. The audit examined three different but related areas: integration of learning for practice, opportunities for inter-professional learning and agency-based learning opportunities. A Scotland-wide postal survey was conducted and a small number of telephone interviews were carried out as follow up.

The response rate for the three sections of the postal survey was between 23% and 27%, suggesting that findings should be interpreted with some caution. What is presented is therefore a snapshot of current ideas and practice, as well as some key implications for the future.

An important finding from the audit is that although we have some way to go in developing opportunities for integration of learning, inter-professional learning and agency-based learning in general, there is nevertheless a willingness and commitment to explore new approaches, in both field agencies and within higher education institutions. This openness will be crucial as we move into the next phase of the Learning for Effective and Ethical Practice project, when new ideas will be piloted in demonstration projects.

1 Integration of Learning for Practice

The University of Edinburgh was commissioned by the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education to ‘carry out a practice audit of approaches currently used in university and workplace education to enhance the integration of learning (educational approaches, learning resources, models and methods) and summarise current best practice issues and indicators.’

Findings from education providers suggest that integration of learning is one of the key aspirations of social work education, and that many different approaches currently in use aim to enhance learning integration, including Problem Based Learning, social work skills teaching, case study approaches and the use of practitioners and service users in the classroom, as well as, of course, all the learning which takes place in practice learning opportunities (placements).

In spite of this, the overall finding that 30% of respondents were not satisfied with current arrangements for integration of learning is undoubtedly a cause for concern. Service providers and practice teachers identified a clear gap between the university and the field,

and specifically between theory and practice in social work, and this was backed up by comments made by education providers themselves.

Respondents indicated a number of reasons for the identified gap between university and field, and these can be categorised as issues affecting agencies; affecting universities; and affecting students:

- There may not be a 'learning culture' in agencies, and some contexts may even be openly antagonistic to what is seen as 'academic learning'.
- Degree programmes may be overladen and overly assessed, leaving little space for imaginative learning opportunities.
- Students may be anxious and insufficiently supported to integrate their learning for practice.

Looking ahead, many respondents suggested that the new degree in social work held the possibility of improvement in the future. The renewed emphasis on partnership (between HEIs, agencies and other stakeholders) gave them optimism that we might move to a position where there is less of a sense of 'two separate worlds'. The current stress on Continuing Professional Development for practitioners also provides grounds for confidence that there is likely to be more institutional support for learning in agencies in the future.

Findings from the practice audit match the themes which have emerged in our review of literature in relation to integration of learning for practice. Taken together, they provide a strong steer to the demonstration projects in which we will pilot a new approach to integration of learning, principally by re-evaluating the role of the tutor in practice learning, as a support to students' learning and also as a learning resource to the placement agency more broadly.

2 Opportunities for Inter-Professional Learning

The University of Dundee was commissioned by the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education to 'carry out a practice audit of current and recent approaches to inter-professional learning within social work and related professions (educational approaches, learning resources, models and methods) and summarise current best practice issues and indicators'.

The audit identified many examples of innovative and challenging joint learning opportunities, covering such student combinations as nursing/social work, social care/early years, and nursing/mental health.

Collaborative learning was facilitated on three levels, namely strategic planning embracing course design and content, developmental such as linking community-based

research and practice, and individual affecting a range of practical/support measures required for successful learning.

Key concepts in facilitating learning opportunities included a flexible entry policy and course content, sensitive scheduling of modules and placements, and greater student participation in tutorial planning, group activities and assessment tools. The main areas of difficulty for students centred on practical issues such as the size of class groups, suitability/availability of class and tutorial rooms, and the co-ordination and timetabling of inter-disciplinary lectures and tutorials. Some interpreted this as anxiety on behalf of social work students who may be a minority in a mixed cohort of students.

Statutory agencies identified a commitment to inter-agency training based on legislative and social policy initiatives, including Community Care and Child Protection, and more recently in relation to Community Safety and Community Schools initiatives. There was a strong tradition of collaborative learning in the voluntary sector. They were able to provide a number of imaginative and flexible examples of such practices, including the relevant involvement of volunteers in 'professional' service delivery, and in addressing more peripheral issues such as addiction, homelessness, and ethnic minority services, in tandem with other statutory and voluntary partners.

The key to facilitating learning opportunities for students lies with effective organisation and structures, in and across agencies, covering strategic planning, common policies and priorities, and effective implementation plans - 'flexible learning organisations with limited bureaucracies'. Interpersonal factors also contribute to successful outcomes for students, including goodwill, open attitudes and debate, trust, and 'champions' of collaborative learning.

There was universal approval from tutors, practice teachers and students on the benefits of inter-agency learning. These included; improved understanding of own professional identity and values and those of other professions, greater familiarity with agency processes and systems, enhanced communication, and joint work practices on behalf of clients/patients.

There are two distinct forms of inter-professional learning available to students on placement, namely (a) being part of the agency's own joint training programme with other professions and (b) individual initiatives developed by practitioners in multi-professional teams, such as mentoring, shadowing, and shared discussion with colleagues. The principle of partnership was identified by practice teachers as a key theme in successful inter-agency placements for students. Networking within and across agencies was an associated theme, which added to the potential for success outcomes for students.

Practice teachers argued that there needed to be closer integration between what happened in class teaching and group tutorials at university, with practice teacher learning on placement. This relationship had to be underpinned with a shared commitment to open and flexible learning, particularly around core issues of Values and Identity. There was considerable concern expressed at the practical hindrances to effective placement opportunities, including time, resources, and priorities. Professional boundaries and

protectionist attitudes were also regarded as drawbacks to successful inter-agency learning. This was compounded by organisational problems between the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Students and practice teachers reacted enthusiastically to inter-agency learning opportunities. Students' competencies, skills and values were all enhanced, practice teachers grew with the inter-agency model, applying it in practice more effectively, and agencies found that standards of service to clients/patients reached a higher standard.

Those groups who responded were enthusiastic about inter-professional learning with nursing demonstrating the clearest developments in relation to social work. Inter-agency placement experiences with Police authorities are not yet routine but there is scope for beginning this process, based on openness, goodwill, and a desire to improve the learning of both student professionals. Community Development Initiatives are likely to generate more learning opportunities for housing, health and social work. Community Schools are creating further opportunities for inter-professional learning opportunities

3 Agency-based Practice Learning Opportunities

The Robert Gordon University was commissioned by the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education to 'carry out a practice audit of current and recent arrangements for the provision of agency-based practice learning opportunities (structure, scale, educational approaches, models and methods) and summarise best practice issues and indicators'.

Responses from practice teachers showed that 20% of respondents had not taken a student in the previous year, 40% had taken one student and 20% had taken two students. Few practice teachers took more than three and those who did were in funded practice teaching posts.

Educational approaches used by nearly all respondents were adult learning approaches and reflective and evidence based practice. In terms of models of practice teaching, 100% of respondents used individual supervision: only 30% used group or team supervision. In terms of methods, nearly 100% of respondents used process recording and shadowing. Videoing was rarely used.

In relation to what helps or hinders the provision of practice learning, organisational issues, resource issues and collaborative working can both hinder and help. Important factors contributing to the successful provision of practice learning included operational managers commitment to placement provision, the existence of an overall agency learning culture and practice teaching being part of workload management. Team commitment and input in placements was also an important factor in successful practice learning.

The audit should be examined in conjunction with the literature review where similar key themes occur.

Practice Audit Overview

Introduction

In November 2003, The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education commissioned The Universities of Edinburgh, Dundee and The Robert Gordon University to undertake a study of Learning for Effective and Ethical Practice, the main purpose of which was as follows:

‘To improve radically the quality, quantity, range, relevance, inter-professional and management of practice learning opportunities for the new social work honours degree.’

As part of this project, practice audits of current provision of practice learning across Scotland, were to be conducted, focusing on three related, but different, topics:

1. The University of Edinburgh was commissioned to examine the integration of learning for practice.
2. The University of Dundee in partnership with Paisley University and the Open University was commissioned to examine inter-professional learning opportunities.
3. The Robert Gordon University was commissioned to examine agency-based practice learning.

Methodology

It was clear from the outset that while the focus of each audit was different, the respondents were likely to be largely the same, with the exception of the inter-professional learning project which required to engage with an additional audience of non social work personnel. We therefore chose to adopt a joint approach (i.e. one audit with three sections), with the aim of ensuring a reasonable response and lessening any confusion or survey fatigue.

A postal questionnaire was chosen as the preferred survey tool because it could be sent to a geographically wide range of relevant respondents within the very tight timescales set by the project funders (mid November to final report end of January). A covering letter introduced the purpose of the audit and the three sections of the questionnaire (on integration of learning, inter-professional learning and practice based learning). (See Appendix for an example of one questionnaire.)

In addition, it was agreed that follow-up telephone interviews would be used firstly, to fill in any obvious gaps in the responses and secondly, to probe responses which indicated that further depth could be added to our analysis.

Information was sought from:

- Practice teachers (those in dedicated practice teaching posts and practitioners who had supervised students in the last year)
- Service providers (agency managers in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors)
- Education providers, i.e. Universities in Scotland which run social work programmes
- Two additional key stakeholders in social work education, i.e. Scottish Social Services Council and BASW

The sections of the questionnaire which explored integration of learning and inter-professional learning adopted a mainly qualitative approach, asking open-ended questions which allowed respondents maximum scope for presenting their ideas and experience. The agency-based learning section, which required more specific responses, also included quantitative questions.

Distribution of the questionnaires was organised as follows:

- The University of Edinburgh distributed the pack to the East of Scotland
- Glasgow Caledonian University distributed the pack to the West of Scotland
- The Robert Gordon University distributed the pack to Tayside, the North East, the North of Scotland and the Isles

An additional questionnaire was prepared and distributed by Dundee University targeting related professional groups including nursing, teaching, housing, community education, occupational therapy, and the police.

Respondents were asked to return their completed questionnaires to The Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education, using a stamped-addressed envelope, and Institute staff then sent the relevant sections on to the lead universities (Edinburgh, Dundee and The Robert Gordon University) for coding and analysis. Three prizes of book tokens were offered as an incentive to encourage respondents to return their questionnaires quickly.

The following points should be considered in interpreting the results of the audit:

- In the North and in the South East of Scotland, an attempt was made to target all known practice teachers and relevant agencies. In the West of Scotland, the number of potential practice teacher respondents was very much higher and, given the shortage of time available for the audit, a decision was made to sample one in three of potential respondents, whilst ensuring that key agencies were represented in the audit.
- Unfortunately, databases of practice teachers were not always up to date and different databases used had different information. (In the findings, we show that a number of respondents held on databases as 'active' had not taken a student in the previous year.)

The number of questionnaires sent out was as follows:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| South East Scotland | 230 |
| West of Scotland | 270 |
| North of Scotland, Tayside & Isles | 222 |
| Total | 722 |

The response rates will be discussed in more detail in introducing each of the sections of the audit, but overall it is clear that we cannot claim that a totally comprehensive audit of practice learning has been undertaken. Because of short timescales and difficulties in accessing up-to-date database information, as well as the additional pressures created by large numbers of audit requests coming from Institute projects at the same time, response rates varied from 23% to 27%. This means that this survey can offer at best a snapshot of current ideas and practice in Scotland.

Authorship of the Report

This report has been brought together by the University of Edinburgh, on behalf of the three lead HEIs in the Learning for Effective and Ethical Practice project. Nevertheless, it should be stated that each section of the report stands alone as the responsibility of the individual LEEP project teams.

Acknowledgements

The authors of the audit report gratefully acknowledge the thoughtful responses offered by the many respondents who took the trouble to complete and return the questionnaires at such a busy time of year. We look forward to following up the useful information provided. We would also like to express our thanks to Glasgow Caledonian University for distributing the audit forms in the West of Scotland. Finally, we are grateful to the Institute staff for collating and forwarding the completed questionnaires.

Integration of Learning for Practice

Practice Audit Section 1

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Introduction

The aim of this project is to explore current ideas and practice in relation to integration of learning for practice, with a view to identifying helpful ways forward for facilitating this in the future.

Methodology

The Integration of Learning for Practice section of the practice audit asked one ‘tick-box’ question about the respondent’s general satisfaction with integration of learning for practice, defined on the questionnaire as ‘the process by which students successfully bring together their learning (from university, field and personal lives) so that they operate as effective and ethical practitioners.’ The questionnaire went on to address four open questions in relation to:

- Educational and learning resources currently used to encourage students to integrate learning for practice.
- What facilitates integration of learning for practice?
- What are the obstacles to integration of learning for practice?
- How might integration of learning for practice be improved in the future?

Responses

The questionnaire was completed and returned by a total of 193 respondents: 144 practice teachers; 43 service providers and six universities. Ten questionnaires were returned as ‘no longer at this address’. This represents an overall response rate of 27%. We view this as a reasonable response rate, given the tight turn-around and the timing of the audit, coming as it did just before Christmas. It should also be noted that high levels of movement in the social work profession mean that significant numbers of questionnaires

may not have reached their intended recipient. Following the survey, telephone calls and email contacts filled in some of the obvious gaps, including one key stakeholder.

Some responses were brief, indicating a hurried and probably immediate reaction to the questions. Others were more detailed, exploring issues that were highly pertinent to student learning and to the wider learning culture in the workplace. Not everyone answered all the questions and there was feedback that some of the questions might not have been relevant to the individual's situation. Significantly in the case of service providers, 15 people described themselves as being in roles in which they had little or no experience of student learning in their agencies.

Findings

A simple numerical count based on the opening question suggests that there is reasonable satisfaction with students' integration of learning for practice. 67% were satisfied or very satisfied with this, compared with 30% who were not, and 3% who made no comment. But expressed differently, almost one-third of those who responded were not satisfied – clearly a cause for some concern. The qualitative findings will unpack this further.

In pulling together the responses from the different groups (practice teachers, education providers and service providers), it is clear that some key ideas about integration of learning are shared by all – hence practice teachers and education providers both mentioned the importance of adult learning principles in facilitating learning integration, and, at the same time, drew attention to the over-laden curriculum as an obstacle to integration of learning. However, some opinions expressed were mirror images of one other. Thus practice teachers were critical of universities' remoteness from the world of practice, while university staff found some practice teachers unwilling to engage sufficiently with theoretical concepts. There was general agreement, nevertheless, that more could and should be done to integrate learning for practice.

1 Education Providers' Responses

The responses from the six HEIs which took part in the audit gave a detailed picture of the approaches and models used to promote and encourage integration of learning for practice. The responses provided information about the range of resources used at present, while noting also some of the obstacles which have impeded progress in integration.

1.1 Examples of educational approaches which encourage students to integrate learning for practice

Many consistent themes emerged in the approaches described:

- Problem Based Learning and Enquiry Action Learning
- The use of case studies and practice analyses
- Skills workshops and role play
- E-learning

- Service User input
- Concurrent placement (noted by one education provider)

The range of approaches was supported by the use of specific resources in each HEI. Again there was consistency in the resources cited:

- E-learning
- Distance learning workbooks
- Seminars/workshops
- Tutorial support
- Simulation

In addition the importance of an evidence based approach and one in which research, policy and practice are linked strongly throughout the course were emphasised, as were the concepts of adult learning and empowerment.

1.2 Facilitation of integration of learning

Respondents provided a range of examples of the ways integration is encouraged and, broadly, these focused on the quality of teaching.

- Quality of teaching
 - Good university-based teaching respected by students and practice teachers
 - Knowledge base applied to practice
 - Clarity of presentation of core themes
 - Directed reading to support lectures
- Assessment
 - A well managed assessment diet
 - Imaginative/creative assessment
 - Appropriate assessment tools
 - Assessment which requires integration
- Collaboration
 - Good co-operation between university staff and practice teachers
 - Social work tutors/lecturers with a sound current practice base
 - Practice teachers confident in their own knowledge and skill base to encourage students to use knowledge appropriately.
- Learning environment
 - A supportive learning environment
 - A learning environment based on adult learning principles
 - An openness to learning on the part of the learner
 - Peer group learning
 - Encouragement to students to use their own practice examples

The questionnaire asked about the obstacles to the achievement of integration. Again there was overall consensus in the following areas:

- Teaching and programme structure
 - Abstract teaching of theoretical concepts
 - Overladen curriculum
 - Limited opportunities to 'revisit' teaching
 - Academic staff with few links to practice bases
 - Inadequate staffing levels - staff/student ratios

- Student experience of learning
 - Student apprehension that theory is difficult
 - Feeling de-skilled entering practice and unable to use knowledge gained
 - Learners' fear of change
 - Misunderstanding of the learning approach
 - Lack of attendance at lectures

- Learning in practice

A third cluster of responses made specific reference to perceptions of student learning in practice. Four of the six respondents included specific reference to practice.

 - Practice teachers having no up-to-date range of knowledge and theory
 - Some resistance by some practice teachers regarding the place of theory
 - Denigration of new ideas by practice teachers and other field workers
 - Poor placement experiences where practice learning opportunities do not match university learning

1.3. Improvements for the future

Unsurprisingly, all respondents looked positively at the opportunities provided by the new degree and future arrangements for teaching and learning, seeing ways to address the difficulties in existing programmes. The key areas for change focused on improved programme structures and better partnership between lecturers, practitioners and practice teachers.

- Structures
 - Development of problem based learning across all modules
 - A more open curriculum
 - Specific links from module outcomes to practice learning outcomes
 - Integration seminars

- Partnership between university staff and practice staff
 - More fluidity between university and field
 - Greater use of shared models
 - Better quality mechanisms for evaluating placement learning
 - Maintaining staff experience of practice
 - More secondments between university and practice

2 Service Providers' Responses

The 43 service providers who responded to the audit request represented a diverse range of agencies in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. It should be noted, however, that just under half of those who responded gave very brief reports that they did not have time to complete the full questionnaire, and one private agency (BUPA) said that it had not been involved in social work education to date.

2.1 Preparation for practice

A consistent theme in this audit was the need for better preparation of students in university prior to going into practice placements. Service providers recognised the responsibilities of agencies to prepare students and to create positive learning environments but also saw improvement being achieved by narrowing the perceived gap between university and agency. This was described in terms of need for better collaboration over course design and content and also through shared involvement in how to encourage integration. Examples of views expressed were:

‘Use of course material not relevant to today's practice issues.’

‘Practice often does not match the normative approaches in the classroom.’

‘An expectation that the student is able to 'jump in' and learn taking on complex tasks without having opportunities to understand the separate components and the link to research and theory, e.g. assessing children without the essential understanding of child development.’

2.2 Practice learning

The role of the practice teacher was recognised as key to the development of student learning on placement. Respondents were unanimous in expressing the need for ‘high quality practice teaching’ with ‘open, honest supervision’ from a practice teacher able to ‘select work appropriate to student level of experience, knowledge and confidence’. Stress was placed on the importance of the practice teacher as the model of integration for the student.

These views were helpfully summed up and expressed as a process of:

‘Structured, incremental introduction of theory integrated with practice experience and with opportunities for the student to reflect through supervision, reflective journal and practice analysis.’

2.3 The agency role

Within the audit there was a clear theme valuing the learning in the wider agency. It was described as ‘using input from other experienced practitioners to reduce the insularity of the placement experience’ and the ‘team/workplace culture where integration is the norm not the exception’. Service providers saw the opportunities for students to shadow practitioners and to learn from different experienced professionals as a crucial context to

support integration of learning. One specific comment was a plea to ‘recognise the value of good practice teaching and acknowledge the range of learning opportunities in rural Scotland’. This, like a number of service provider views, drew attention to the richness of learning for students in some agencies and places not currently used but ones which provide high quality services with much potential for good practice and opportunity for learning.

2.4 Way forward

The practice audit reflected much optimism that the new degree will address many of the areas criticised in the present delivery of social work education. A wish for better collaboration in planning, developing and delivering the degree was central to this optimism. The introduction of Learning Centres was welcomed and thought to be the vehicle through which practice and theory ‘are soon to be integrated’. Similarly references to joint training initiatives and to the possibilities of ‘rotation’ between academic and agency staff were seen as positive ways forward.

2.5 Commentary

This part of the practice audit contained a wide range of views about how learning is and is not supported and achieved at present from the perspective of service providers. It was valuable to receive some very detailed and knowledgeable responses which reflected on the questions and gave answers with considerable authority. It was also important to recognise that there are significant numbers of service providers with key roles in the future developments for learning within their agencies who have had little time or opportunity to be informed about the issues. There is a need to develop strategies to encourage agencies to be included and to become knowledgeable about the imminent developments which set high expectations for the quality of learning. A significant challenge remains achieving a strong learning culture within agencies - one which is supported by access to contemporary knowledge and research in universities and in which academic staff are themselves knowledgeable about current agency policies and practice. The encouragement from this part of the audit is that there is an energy and belief on the part of service providers that these goals can be achieved.

3 Practice Teachers’ Responses

144 practice teachers took time to complete and return their forms, many giving very full accounts of their experiences. The over-riding phrase used by practice teachers throughout the audit was ‘reflective practice’. This phrase was given as a response to each question, and was not defined by anyone. This suggests two possibilities: either that the term requires no definition (which seems unlikely) or that respondents were using the term as a ‘catch-all’ panacea for a range of issues and problems in relation to student learning. This indicates that the concept of ‘reflective learning’ may merit further exploration in the future.

3.1 The relationship between universities and practice

This was expressed in the following ways:

- Students not being prepared properly by universities, both in terms of pre-placement preparation and theoretical input.
- Unhelpful and out-of-date theories being taught in universities.
- Universities being out of touch with what is happening in practice.
- Timetabling issues – students not getting input at the right time.
- Universities not making enough use of practitioners in teaching and in preparation of materials.
- Students should learn things that are being taught in practice; taught a narrower range, rather than trying to be taught everything.
- Helping students to link theory and practice is consistently difficult. One practitioner noted: ‘If we find it difficult, how can we expect students to do it?’

3.2 Practice learning

A range of suggestions were made in relation to practice learning:

- That placements should be longer, and more of them.
- Concurrent placements are valued.
- That a short non-assessed practice experience is helpful at the beginning of programmes, to help orientate students towards the expectations of a student in placement e.g. through use of a common exercise on linking theory and practice; exercises on reflective practice; time spent on placement requirements and organisation.

3.3 University programmes

Different options were considered here, including:

- The issue of attendance at lectures – should this be compulsory and a record kept? The question was raised by one person – ‘How do we know that students learn theories if they do not attend lectures?’
- Student cohorts are too large – students would be helped to integrate their learning by being in smaller groups and using more experiential learning approaches.
- There should be less academic work required on placement.
- More shared research between university and practice.
- Some practice teachers are seeking updates on theories and on general teaching used by universities.
- The suggestion was made that more use could be made of e-learning for preparation of placements and in the use of case-studies.
- There was comment that the assessment diet is too tight – too much is expected of students in two years.
- Similarly, the view was expressed that the competence model is unhelpful.

3.4 Agency issues

Practice teachers and practitioners also reflected on their own experience in agencies:

- Practice teachers said that they feel undervalued and unsupported in their agencies.
- They find it difficult to do this work in agencies where there is a poor approach to learning and a lack of commitment to a 'learning organisation'
- One person suggested that practitioners should be paid for teaching on programmes.
- Another noted that in agencies with a positive learning culture, it is easier to integrate learning for practice, e.g. in an agency where staff and students meet monthly to review literature.

3.5 Commentary

This part of the practice audit contained few surprises; the ideas which emerged have been rehearsed publicly and privately over a number of years. However, this does not take away from the importance of what was said. On the contrary, the audit raised central issues that need to be confronted and worked on as we move into the new social work degree.

Firstly, the concept 'reflective practice' needs to be defined and some agreement reached as to how this is used in student learning. Moreover, we have to seek to address what is experienced across-the-board as a gap between the university and practice, as well as the lack of support felt by many practice teachers. The audits highlight some possible ways forward, already mentioned. Many of these will be taken forward into the demonstration projects where there will be opportunities to try them out in practice, although we need to recognise that some of this work has already begun outwith the context of the LEEP initiative. Some suggestions (e.g. the idea that we teach a narrower range of subjects, or that learning is predicated on class attendance) remain open for discussion and review, but raise some fundamental questions about the nature of learning in general and about what a social work degree in particular should contain.

4 Other Key Stakeholders' Responses - SSSC

It was acknowledged by the SSSC adviser who responded to our follow-up request for information that the need for better linkages between theory and practice is demonstrated consistently in quality assurance contexts, in Practice Panel information, in External Assessors' reports, and in Practice Teaching programmes. This suggests that there is currently no coherent sense of theory and practice relating to one another.

The adviser felt that there are examples of good practice: e.g. where case studies from practice are used in the university, or where there is active skill development work, often using video. She felt that the introduction of practitioners into the classroom needs to be supported well by academic staff so that practitioners are clear why they are there and what their input should be.

Finally, she suggested that there is optimism that there is less of a sense of two separate worlds. People are trying to join thinking on this, but there is still some way to go in involving service users, and in staff being able to move to and from each other's worlds. This should be a priority across the board, not just for qualifying social work training.

Conclusion

This practice audit has identified many important themes for integration of learning for practice, suggesting that there is much to be done at the level of the university, the practice agency and with individual students in setting a climate where integration of learning can flourish. Some of the ideas which came up were not new ones, demonstrating that integration of learning has been a main concern for educators and practitioners alike for a considerable time. But there is also a sense in which the pressure on academics and on the field in recent years has been such that good practice has not always been maintained, and that some students may have not felt sufficiently supported in their learning in either field or university.

The audit points to the need for a new look at integration of learning for practice – at what practice teachers and agencies are doing, and also at what lecturers, tutors and universities are doing to bring academic and practice learning together. It is this challenge which we take with us into the demonstration projects.

Opportunities for Inter-professional Learning

Practice Audit Section 2

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Introduction

This project seeks to develop innovative opportunities for inter-professional learning within new service settings to serve as models of good practice, by radical improvement in the quality, quantity, range, relevance, inter-professionality and management of practice learning opportunities.

A brief questionnaire was devised to capture the perspective of relevant professional groups most closely allied to social work. These were thought to be nursing, education, community education, housing, police and occupational therapy. Had time permitted, general practice, physiotherapy, community pharmacy, chiropody, dietetics, and perhaps even undertakers might have been possible and fruitful sources of information.

Methodology

Given the very real possibility of survey fatigue as outlined in the introduction, it was decided that a light touch, broad brush approach to gaining the required information offered the best chance of success. The questionnaires were designed, therefore, on a limited number of open-ended questions, with a range of sample answers. Permission was sought to follow-up any useful information. The qualitative approach does not, of course, permit any accurate numerical analysis, or any comparison across professional groups. What was sought however was a snapshot of current practice as a guide to existing routine and innovative activity.

Sample

The general introduction to this document has described the national audit undertaken on behalf of the Institute Project, Learning for Ethical and Effective Practice.

Sampling for the additional professional groups was determined as follows. The University of Dundee, Department of Social Work shares a Faculty with the Departments

of Education and Community Education. It was relatively easy, therefore, to acquire comprehensive databases of relevant HEI and FE training providers and all local authority Education Services Departments. Community Education Services were surveyed through Community Education providers within local authorities and voluntary organisations, as well as HEIs and FE colleges.

Housing training and service providers were accessed through the Chartered Institute of Housing who were, perhaps understandably, reluctant to provide contact details but kindly offered to channel the questionnaire electronically to key respondents (n=70). This should have facilitated a quick distribution to the key people. In the event it yielded no responses, in spite of a reminder, and any information gained from a housing perspective has been gathered through telephone contact with HEIs.

Questionnaires were sent to the eight Police authorities in Scotland via their personnel departments. Nursing colleagues were surveyed by means of HEI and FE departments and all NHS Trust Directorates across Scotland. Questionnaires were sent to Schools of Occupational Therapy although it is unclear if any questionnaires reached Occupational Therapy practitioners in the survey of service providers and practice teachers. As with the larger survey, responses were returned to the Institute and forwarded to the University of Dundee for analysis.

Some issues resulting from the methodology

Given the nature of some integrated services, it was not always possible to identify the professional background of respondents. Accordingly unidentified service providers could not be assumed to be from social work, unless other indications were available. Similarly it was not always possible to identify whether a service provider was also a practice teacher, as it emerged that questionnaires had been forwarded to key individuals within departments and agencies. It is possible that once questionnaires reached the appropriate agency the identified respondent became quite arbitrary. Some health respondents identified themselves as practice teachers. Voluntary organisations were represented under both service providers and practice teachers and some voluntary organisation respondents identified themselves as health professionals. There appear to have been no responses from Community Education practitioners or education providers unless their identities have been masked by their location in other local authority departments or voluntary agencies.

This lack of definition within the categorisation of professional grouping has influenced the way the findings are presented. What follows therefore are findings presented as key themes emerging from each of the section questions, amalgamating responses from a range of professional groups.

Findings

1 Education Providers' Responses

Responses were received predominantly from social work, education, nursing and housing.

1.1 Examples of inter-professional learning

The main category of respondents covered areas linked to module or programme developments. These include, for example, an inter-disciplinary module for health and social work students on comparative health, a module with divinity students on spirituality, health and healing, a masters programme in health and social care, jointly delivered by social work and nursing, and a management module for health and social work students delivered through joint lectures and tutorials. Other under-graduate modules for first year students included shared learning opportunities across various health disciplines, and one under-graduate social work programme with modules jointly taught with education and community education. Some respondents, particularly nursing educators, described their programmes as suitable and available for a range of professions.

Another category identified 'placement/practice opportunities'. These not only linked up students on an inter-professional basis, but also connected with community-based learning opportunities across the statutory and voluntary sectors. Examples of this included community learning with voluntary agencies, community profiling between nursing and social work students, family centres providing joint placements for social care and early years students, social work and nursing students learning together in health centre placements, and nursery students on placement with a learning disability team.

1.2 Factors facilitating inter-professional learning

The responses to this question fell into three elements. The first is classified here as 'strategic planning/management', where the design, content, decision-making and implementation of programmes and courses were the responsibility of heads of department and course leaders. This included issues of logistics in timetabling, class sizes, module development between and across faculties, and the co-ordination of university based learning and associated placement learning. These were underpinned by the collaborative ethos of the university and supported by the experience/commitment of teaching staff, good communication across and between university teaching groups, and the willingness of staff to think differently and plan more innovatively, relative to their collaborative learning agenda.

The second is classified here as 'developmental', where ideas were offered by respondents about different issues surrounding the core elements of teaching and learning. These included reinforcing the relationship between practice and research, re-focusing practice energies around local communities, and on exploring together the concepts of, for example, risk, disadvantage, discrimination and empowerment.

The third theme was more ‘student/individual’ focused. It covered a number of practical measures which had facilitated learning for some education providers. In particular, a number of respondents commented upon the need to keep class sizes modest, in order to allow for more intense, innovative, and interactive learning.

‘Flexibility’ emerged as a key word, suggesting that entry policy to courses, module content across all fields of practice, and the timing of classes/tutorials should be tailored more flexibly to meet the busy and demanding personal schedules that many students brought to their course work. This included evening and weekend classes. The case was made for enhancing student involvement through peer and self-assessment, tutorial planning, and group activities, in order to encourage a more positive interface across student disciplines through sharing their own learning experiences with others.

1.3 Identified difficulties

This question provoked only a few responses and perhaps suggests that despite the potential and actual barriers to developing a collaborative learning strategy within academic institutions, there is an underlying positive attitude towards collaborative education and learning. Practical difficulties emerged as the main barrier, including the availability and suitability of class or tutorial rooms, and the related subject of class sizes. Some respondents commented on problems in timetabling lectures across disciplines, noting that some students may feel aggrieved if their particular professional slant on multi-disciplinary discussions was not taken account of by the mixed group, particularly where social work students were in the minority.

There was also general concern that the overview of courses was not seen in sufficient detail from each discipline’s perspective, and that this affected the successful dovetailing of joint teaching initiatives. Funding for students, inadequate resources for collaborative teaching programmes, and inflexible planning of lecture times were also highlighted as concerns. This further linked in with the subsequent co-ordinating of practice placements, which required to be meshed within each individual teaching course, as well as with associated courses in other disciplines with which they were collaborating.

2 Service Providers’ Responses

2.1 Examples of inter-professional learning

The majority of responses fell into two broad categories. The first of these represented service providers where organisational or agency-based events had proved helpful on an individual practitioner basis linked as they were to new policy initiatives or operational priorities. Examples of these included joint training or seminars on single shared assessments, child protection interviewing/investigation, direct payments, domestic violence and personal safety.

The second category focused upon direct learning opportunities for students in the work place in terms of detailed inter-professional learning opportunities. Examples included

joint placements for social care and early years students, multi-disciplinary placements in a community mental health team, children and family centres, placements for education and social work students together, and community projects in the voluntary sector for various health, social work and community work students.

A number of innovative ideas were put forward by voluntary sector providers, including inter-professional shared learning from a homeless perspective, working within an 'inclusive' volunteer scheme, an ethnic minority experience in youth counselling linked with schools, social work and local voluntary agencies, and joint training for health and social work staff who were sharing voluntary placements.

2.2 Factors facilitating inter-professional learning

The responses to this question again fell into two main categories. Organisational and structural factors played a key part in the facilitation of good learning opportunities. These included having a strategic plan developed from joint working mechanisms (e.g. planning groups) to common policies and priorities; recognition and support from managers; flexible learning systems with limited bureaucracy; and a combined learning strategy encompassing the local voluntary sector.

The second group of factors could be described as inter-personal, where individuals relied upon good-will, open communication, effective working relationships and trust in order to provide positive, collaborative learning experiences for students. Other comments in support of this issue included a willingness to embrace new learning opportunities, placement co-ordinators who champion the collaborative learning needs of students, and effective networking between university staff and fieldwork staff, and between service provider agencies, both statutory and voluntary.

2.3 Identified difficulties

Comments were limited in number, but fell into two main categories. They were (a) 'practical/operational' problems associated with placements, including demands on staff time directly supervising students, and indirectly through supporting colleagues. This was compounded by a shortage of practice teachers, time, and training for agencies in how to be effective training providers; (b) 'organisational' problems covering wider institutional issues such as limited finance and resources, poor administrative and managerial support, inter-agency problems with shared budgets, and joint funding issues in general.

One or two respondents questioned whether social work and health staff fully appreciated the value of joint training, and were therefore resistant to the inter-professional learning agenda within their own agency.

3 Education and service providers: evaluation of learning outcomes*

*The questionnaire did not seek specific detail on methods of evaluation, or longitudinal outcomes in terms of changed practice.

This section generated a positive response from almost all the respondents. It was perceived or assumed that by learning together participants were better able to enhance their own professional identities, as well as understand those of others. They also appreciated differing organisational and professional roles and value bases, and as a result argued that it clearly helped to facilitate and improve joint working practices.

Other benefits listed included greater familiarity with collaborative processes and systems across related disciplines. Shared communication and working perspectives were enhanced, and a recognition that ultimately roles, responsibilities, and expectations would have to change from an intra-agency to an inter-agency model of practice.

A second and lesser category of responses focused on the student experience, and the fact that it enhanced both their understanding and application of roles and responsibilities within an inter-agency learning context. There was unanimous feedback on the positive views of students in such placements, and recognition that at the end of the placement they thought and acted differently as practitioners.

4 Practice Teachers' Responses

4.1 Satisfaction with current provision of inter-professional learning opportunities

There were 139 responses to the Collaborative Learning Questionnaire, and the degree of satisfaction recorded amongst practice teachers was as follows:

| | | |
|--------------------|----|--------|
| Very satisfied | 5 | (3.6%) |
| Satisfied | 44 | (32%) |
| Not very satisfied | 51 | (37%) |
| Dissatisfied | 12 | (8.4%) |
| No comment | 27 | (19%) |

Slightly more practice teachers were therefore dissatisfied with learning opportunities than were satisfied.

The classification of returns from practice teacher was as follows:

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Local Authority | (102) |
| Voluntary Sector | (27) |
| Independents | (6) |
| Health Service | (2) |
| Unknown | (2) |

4.2 Examples of inter-professional learning

The responses to this question could be grouped in two distinct categories, namely joint training and multi-disciplinary learning. A minority of practice teachers suggested that their students benefited from being part of inter-agency or joint-team training opportunities that occurred between agencies during students' placements. Some of these shared initiatives were driven by legislative or social policy changes, such as child protection interviewing, single shared assessment, *Joint Future* and community schools.

However, the overwhelming majority of responses suggested that the agency in which students were placed had actively promoted or developed inter-agency or inter-professional team working within which students could directly enhance and inform their practice. Examples of this included shadowing or being mentored by other colleagues in the multi-professional team, experiential learning through joint working and shared discussion, both formal and informal.

4.3 Factors facilitating inter-professional learning

The key areas identified by respondents for facilitating learning opportunities for students were: the commitment of staff, the support of agencies, and the principle of working in partnership across disciplines and between professionals. It was suggested these could lead to increased networking within and between professionals and a desire to reach outcomes through working together.

Another area for opportunities was the relationship between module/curriculum learning and placement learning on a multi-disciplinary basis. Issues such as mixed student cohorts, joint training in university and on placement, and the timing and co-ordination of placements in order to maximise every collaborative learning opportunity, all supported the theories of integration and partnership through the collaborative learning process.

Some respondents reiterated the fact that while every participant in the 'collaborative learning loop' needed to function in an open-minded and reflective way, learning from one another, this also required a revisiting of basic professional ethos and values, discussing similarities and negotiating differences. As one respondent put it, 'shared values leading to shared practice'

4.4 Identified difficulties

Although this topic was not addressed by the majority of respondents, the principal issue noted was the collective hindrance to practice learning through limited placements, insufficient practice teachers, and where these problems have been overcome, a lack of vision, innovation and flexibility in delivering high quality collaborative learning. The results of this are (a) the organisation lacks energy and belief in investing in student learning, (b) service agencies working under pressure give student learning a low priority, and (c) operational teams lose an interest in and enthusiasm for, practice learning.

A number of professional hindrances impacted on positive learning outcomes for students. They included a lack of shared vision between professionals, sometimes reinforced by negative attitudes from other team colleagues. It was also suggested that there can be a professional 'parochialism' existing in the attitudes of practitioners to supporting and teaching students, particularly in a multi-professional learning context.

Professional boundaries can lead to a 'protectionist' attitude in specialist settings, and a subsequent resistance to change by professionals. Training links across agencies and professions and a lack of collaboration between the statutory and voluntary sectors often impede the broad development of inter-agency and inter-professional learning for students, leading to a narrow and sterile learning experience.

Some respondents commented on the vulnerability of those students on distance learning programmes. Distance learning can be a lonely and demanding activity but coupled with the complexities of inter-agency learning, it can have the potential for leaving students educationally and professionally exposed, particularly where there are unhelpful attitudes in evidence from the agency, relative to the role and influence of an external practice teacher.

Some singleton practice teachers also found the role challenging and time-consuming. It was suggested that this situation could be strengthened by the introduction of support systems and effective structures, such as placement teaching tools, practice teacher support groups, and inter-agency learning protocols.

4.5 Evaluation of Learning Outcomes*

*The questionnaire did not seek specific detail on methods of evaluation, or longitudinal outcomes in terms of changed practice.

This question highlighted a number of significant areas:

Students themselves have been seen to develop a range of skills and competencies, enhanced through the collaborative learning process. These include increased knowledge, confidence and objectivity, particularly in the assessment process. Networking skills have grown, and the ability to reflect and analyse more holistically has been enhanced. One respondent added:

'social work deals with loss and change, so dealing with multi-agency circumstances by the student is a learning process in itself'.

More widely, practice teachers noted that students warmed enthusiastically to an integrated practice learning experience. It had proved challenging but stimulating, and there had been universal, positive feedback from students. It had encouraged lateral thinking, and their sense of shared learning had led to greater empowerment, user involvement, and improved reflection by students.

Students had also developed a healthier and more positive understanding of the differing roles and responsibilities across professions that led to a consequent sharing of theoretical

models, practice skills, and participative methodologies. Overall, practice teachers had noted that such placements provided a higher quality experience for students and subsequently their learning reached a higher standard.

There was a small but noticeable response to the issue of values across professions and disciplines. The challenge of working within such a diverse value-based learning environment made students work hard at addressing their own sense of values and social work identity, whilst recognising and accommodating the differing value bases of other colleagues. Consequently, students reported that this general growth in knowledge and understanding of professional values, coupled with their increased competency and skills levels, led to more effective outcomes for clients.

5 Specific Professional Perspectives related or allied to Social Work

5.1 Housing

Little or no evidence of joint training opportunities with social work emerged although community development initiatives have generated some joint training in local authorities. Housing educators expressed a growing need and enthusiasm for more joint programmes with social work and health and they identified a Level 4 module related to *Supported Accommodation* which has clear relevance for social work.

5.2 Police authorities

Responses were received from all Police authorities in Scotland, which were all supportive of, and helpful with this enquiry. There is general agreement on the principle of inter-agency collaboration, and a willingness to take this debate further.

There are two levels of training and development for Police officers. In recent years, this has been reinforced by a commitment to collaborate with other statutory agencies in promoting a shared approach to crime prevention and community safety.

This approach seems to be taken into account in the basic training of Police officers at the Forces' training College, but has limited impact due to its *ad hoc* nature, and the large amount of learning by new recruits on core issues of Law etc. Unfortunately, it would appear that this has only been partially successful, as local authorities have been busy with their own government-led initiatives.

The first level of training is at headquarters, where training needs are met in response to long-standing requirements emanating from approved operational experiences and changes to national legislation. In particular, this agenda covers child protection training, mainly joint interviewing and investigations with social work departments. One Force is currently engaged in joint training with the local authority on managing sex offenders.

The second level of training is at command level, where training is tailored to meet the needs of local communities. While this still has child protection at its heart, it also accommodates other issues such as community policing, community safety, interviewing vulnerable clients, and in some areas there is growing interaction with education departments on the development of community schools.

It is clear however, that there are organisational and professional obstacles to closer collaboration, and this mirrors the findings contained in the related Literature Review. It also mirrors the views expressed in the responses from education and service providers, and practice teachers.

There are opportunities for exploring the closer integration of learning for police recruits and serving officers, based on university based learning and Police college teaching.

5.3 Community Education and Occupational Therapy.

Anecdotally we are clear that there are good opportunities, and examples of existing good practice, in joint practice learning and we therefore consider this an area for further exploration.

Agency-based Practice Learning Opportunities

Practice Audit Section 3

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LEEP 1.3 The Robert Gordon University Project Team

Introduction

The main objective for this part of the Learning for Effective and Ethical Practice project is to ‘Work in partnership with social work agencies to identify possible solutions to problems associated with or arising from the supply of agency-based learning opportunities.’ This report reflects the first key requirement, to ‘carry out a practice audit of current and recent arrangements for the provision of agency-based practice learning opportunities (structure, scale, educational approaches, models and methods) and summarise best practice issues and indicators’.

The report considers:

1. Methodology
2. Quantitative results
3. Qualitative results
4. Conclusions including best practice issues and indicators

Methodology

As outlined in the practice audit overview, the audit questionnaire in relation to agency-based learning invited responses from Service Providers, HEIs and Practice teachers. The questionnaires had a slightly different focus for each stakeholder group but were designed to elicit information about:

- Scale
- Structures
- Educational approaches
- Models and methods
- Learning resources
- What helps and what hinders

A sample questionnaire is attached. It includes both quantitative and qualitative questions.

Responses

Responses were received as follows: 137 Practice teachers, 20 Service Providers and five HEIs, making 162 in total, and an overall response rate of 23%. Likely reasons for the relatively low response rate are discussed in the project overview, and include the following:

- The time of year (late December to early January)
- The timescales (a two-three week response requirement)
- The rather variable data bases across Scotland in particular relating to practising practice teachers
- The overload of questionnaires from the Scottish Institute of Excellence's LEEP and assessment projects

A further telephone interview was conducted with a number of practice teachers who in their qualitative responses had given their views on what helped and hindered the provision of practice learning which merited further explanation.

Clearly we cannot provide a comprehensive and representative account of agency-based practice learning in Scotland. There are issues about who responded and why, and who did not and why. A considerable number of practice teachers who responded had not taken a student within the last year. Nevertheless we think this report should be read in conjunction with other reports (Price Waterhouse Cooper, 2002 Scottish Social Services Council, 2003 Scottish Executive, 2004) as a current snapshot of agency-based practice learning against which in the future we can compare an equivalent snapshot of the outcomes of new developments in practice learning.

Quantitative findings

We begin with a brief analysis of responses from Higher Education Institutes and service providers. The main results of the questionnaires from practice teachers are presented using bar charts and tables with a commentary. These are presented under the following headings:

1. Number of practice teachers responses and role in organisation
2. Numbers of students and organisation of practice teaching
3. Educational approaches
4. Models and methods
5. Learning resources
6. What hinders
7. What helps

1 Education Providers' Responses

The questionnaire for education providers was designed to gain information from an HEI perspective on organisational aspects of placement finding and what helps or hinders the process of providing sufficient high quality learning opportunities. A total of five returns were received from HEIs – The University of Edinburgh, Glasgow Caledonian University, Paisley University, The Robert Gordon University and Strathclyde University. A brief summary of their responses is given.

1.1 Organisational aspects

All five HEIs have either a designated placement co-ordinator or a lecturer/ placement co-ordinator in post. For four of the HEIs, the system of placement finding is managed entirely through the local consortium. One HEI operates through individual co-ordinators based within their consortium area and covering both the statutory and voluntary sectors.

1.2 What hinders – What helps?

Organisational issues

In the main organisational systems were not seen as problematic. However, two HEIs identified particular aspects which were problematic. One HEI identified the number of people involved in the placement co-ordination system as a hindrance.

Another HEI highlighted the issue of holding legal accountability for the provision of placements for students while not having control over resources. It is recognised that major changes in the organisation and funding of practice learning opportunities will be taking place with the introduction of the new degree in September 2004 (Scottish Executive, 2004).

With regard to other organisational aspects the folding of consortia will prove a challenging time for those areas where placement organisation is handled entirely through these structures.

Resources

All HEIs reported insufficient numbers of placements/practice learning opportunities to meet current demand with concerns also expressed about the increasing future demand. Concerns were also expressed about the lack of practice teacher availability. In particular there is an increasing usage of and shortage of independent practice teachers who long-arm into settings largely in the voluntary sector. Concerns were also raised by one HEI that the use of award holder practice teachers only by some local authorities restricted the availability of practice learning opportunities. One HEI expressed concern that some placement offers provided a limited range of learning opportunities.

Collaborative working

In terms of collaborative working, all HEIs were positive about present relationships with service providers/agencies and individual practice teachers/ practitioners. Although there are tensions at times arising from working across differing systems, all HEIs expressed commitment to the continuing development of collaborative working.

1.2 Summary

While present organisational aspects between HEIs and service providers are perceived to work well continuing attention will require to be given to establishing and developing efficient and effective partnership arrangements.

2 Service Providers' Responses

Questionnaires to service providers targeted local authorities and national and local voluntary organisations throughout Scotland. There were however only 20 returns and these represent a mix of both local authority (12) and voluntary organisations (8). We can only speculate as to why there was such a small return rate. It is likely to be a combination of the factors highlighted in the introduction; the tight timescale, the time of year (early December – January) and possibly the difficulty in accessing quickly the statistical information requested.

Given such a small sample and given variations in the size and remit of the service provider agencies who responded, it is not possible to provide either substantive or comparative findings. The emphasis is rather is on selecting what we believe to be significant information from the range of responses received.

2.1 Organisation of placement finding

The two most common positions of the person responsible for finding placements were a 'designated placement officer' and a 'training officer'. The respondents showed there were a variety of ways that the responsible person would link into the HEI; the most widely used method of linking was direct contact with the HEI (30%). 35% of respondents indicated that they did not know how their agency linked into the HEI.

Telephone (75%) and face to face contact (60%) were the most popular forms of communication for securing placements. Several respondents identified more than one person who they would address their placement request to; the majority (70%) included individual practice teachers in their answers.

Of the 20 respondents 18 of the agencies had offered placements over the period of January to December 2003.

2.2 Numbers of placements and practice teachers

Returns showed a total of 242 placements were offered by 18 organisations over the period of January to December 2003. 143 practice teachers were involved in this provision. Returns also showed that, of these practice teachers, 36 did not hold the practice teaching award. Approximately 240 practice teacher award holders employed by these agencies did not offer a placement over this time.

Given the shortage of placements, this does raise a number of issues over supply and demand and the need to encourage practice teaching award holders to continue to offer placements and remain actively involved in the activity of practice teaching.

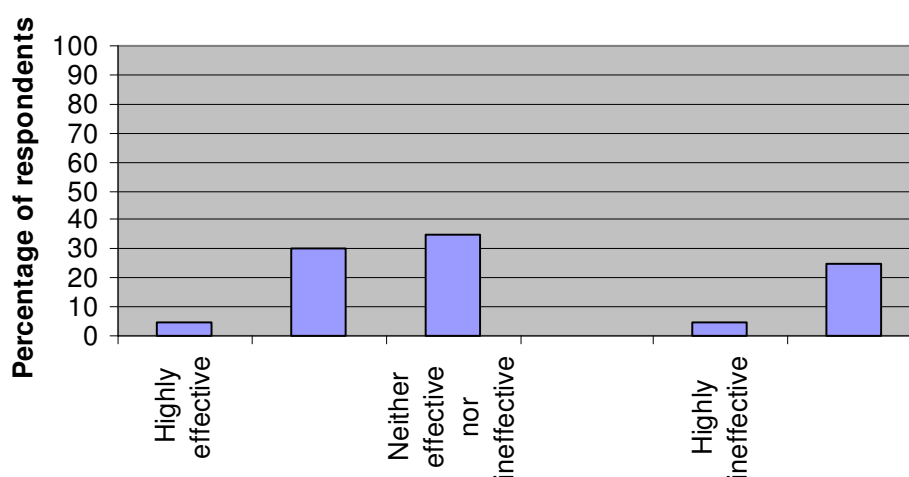
A total of 88 link workers were involved in these placements in both local authority and voluntary settings. The highest concentration however was in the voluntary sector with 49 link workers used.

Of particular interest in the responses were service providers' perceptions of University placement allocation process.

2.3 Perception of University processes of placement allocation

Table 1

Perceived effectiveness of University process



Respondents were also asked to indicate what they found helpful and what they found unhelpful within the university process. A summary of their comments follows:-

Helpful:

- Early information
- Single point of contact

- Collaboration in matching process
- Personal contact with tutor
- Having a practice teacher based in the university

Unhelpful:

- Little information re: student
- Little contact
- Lack of understanding about the difficulties of making matches
- Last minute placements
- Not always understanding of demands on practice teacher.

2.4 What helps and hinders the process of providing sufficient high quality learning opportunities?

Respondents were asked to provide comment on these two areas in relation to organisational aspects, resource issues and collaborative working. This section represents a summary of the written comments made by respondents.

What hinders?

Lack of time and staff shortages were cited by 45% of respondents and represent the main reasons in terms of hindering the process in offering practice learning opportunities.

Lack of space was also highlighted by 30% of respondents as problematic. The other main issue in relation to hindering the process was the lack of collaborative working across the voluntary and statutory sector.

What helps?

A range of responses were made as to what already helps or could potentially help in the process. The most reported aspect from these returns was collaborative working with opportunities across the voluntary and statutory sectors (30%). 25% of agencies also highlighted as important organisational commitment to practice teaching / students. Two further areas mentioned were financial payment to practice teachers (15%) and good systems of communication (15%).

2.5 Summary

As stated earlier, with such a low return rate, this sample of service provider responses can only provide us with extremely limited information.

We can however highlight what may be significant issues for service provider agencies and look to further research in this area.

1. Quantitative figures even for this very limited sample suggest there may be high numbers of practice teacher award holders who are inactive. It would be useful to

collate reliable data in this area and consider how better use can be made of currently inactive Practice Teacher award holders. (See Scottish Executive paper ‘Confidence in practice learning’ 2004).

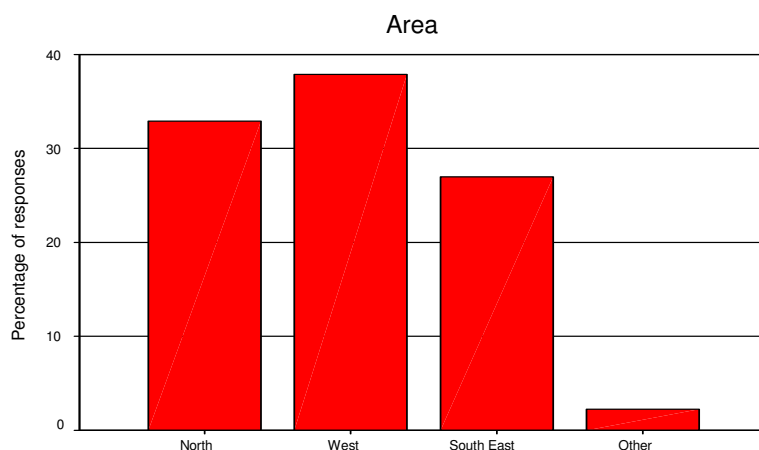
2. In terms of resources, lack of space is clearly a problem for these respondents. Results from the audit of practice teachers show it also to be an issue.
3. Organisational commitment to practice teaching and to students is seen as an important factor. Lack of time and staff shortages are the main reasons given for hindering the process. Again this mirrors findings from the audit of practice teachers.
4. Again in line with findings from the audit of practice teachers, collaborative working across the voluntary and statutory sector is highlighted as helping the process. Workable systems need to be in place to allow this to happen more easily.

3 Practice teachers/practitioners audit

3.1 Number of responses and role in organisation

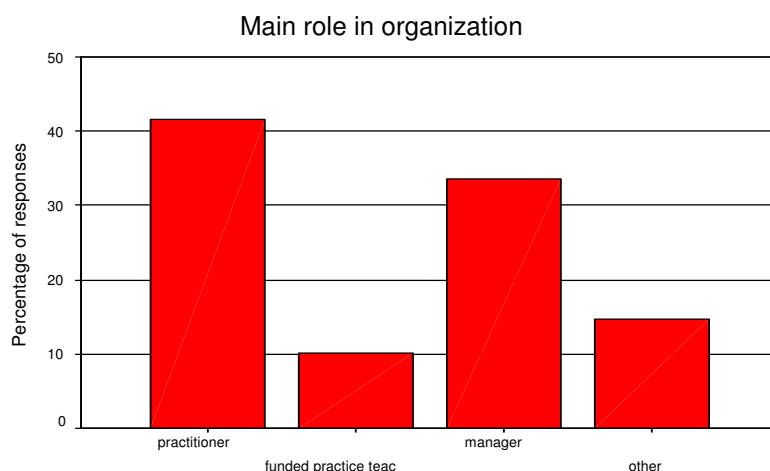
A total of 137 responses were received to the practice teachers/ practitioners’ audit. These responses were grouped into three distinct geographical areas of Scotland: **North** (Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Angus, Highland & Islands, Moray and Tayside); **West** (Argyll & Bute, Ayrshire, Dunbarton, Glasgow, Inverclyde, Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and Stirling) and **South East** (Borders, Edinburgh and Lothian). As Table 1 shows; the greatest number of ‘returns’ were received from respondents from the West area.

Table 1



The responses to the audit were also broken down by role in the organisation. This breakdown demonstrates that practitioners accounted for 42% of respondents, funded practice teachers 10%, managers 34% and others 15% (see Table 2 below).

Table 2



A surprisingly high percentage of the respondents were managers possibly because of the voluntary sector commitment to practice learning where a project manager may well supervise practice learning as part of their role.

An examination of the role in the organisation by geographical area shows a higher response rate from practitioners in the North and West, and from managers in the South East. The proportion of funded practice teachers compared to responding people in other roles was highest in the North (13%), compared to West (10%) and South East (8%), as Table 3 shows.

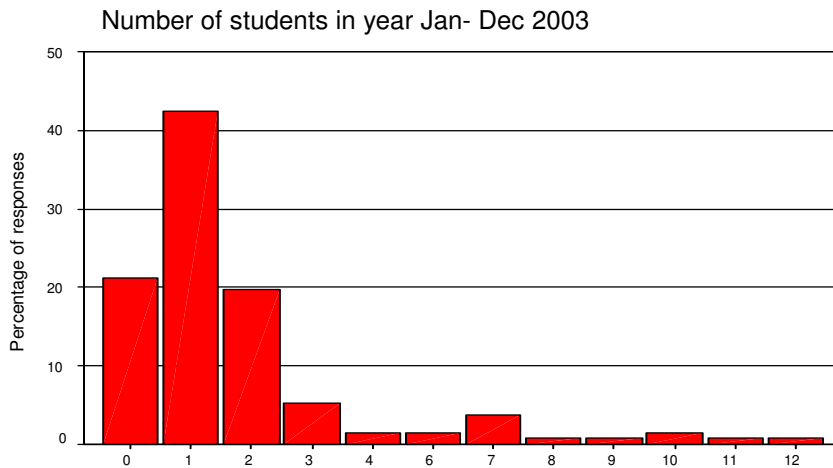
Table 3

| Geographical area | Main role in organisation | | | | Total |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|---------|-------|-------|
| | Practitioner | Funded Practice Teacher | Manager | Other | |
| North | 18 | 6 | 12 | 9 | 45 |
| West | 28 | 5 | 14 | 5 | 52 |
| South East | 10 | 3 | 18 | 6 | 37 |
| Other | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Total | 57 | 14 | 46 | 20 | 137 |

3.2 Numbers of students and organisation of practice learning

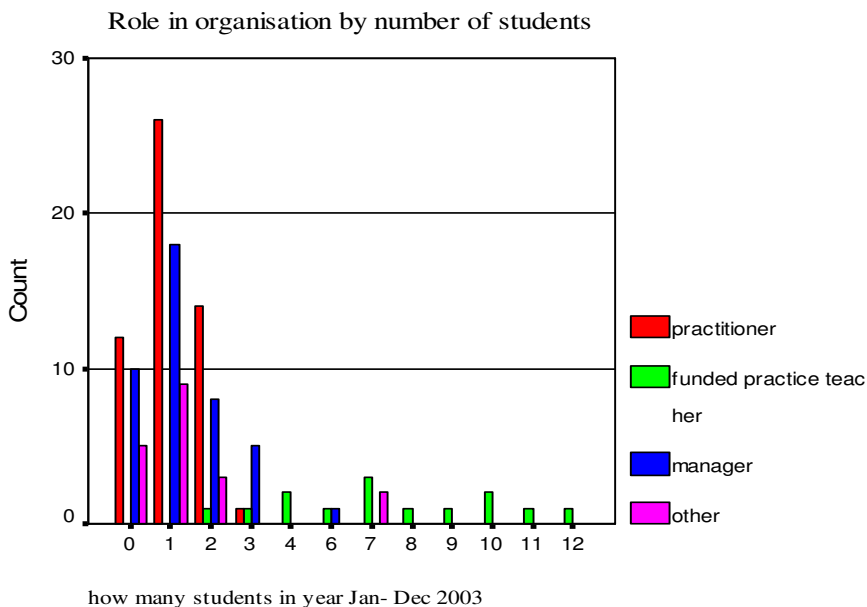
A total of 244 students were taken in the year January to December 2003. The range of students taken varied from 0-12, with the majority of respondents taking one student (41%) and a further 19% taking two students (see Table 4).

Table 4



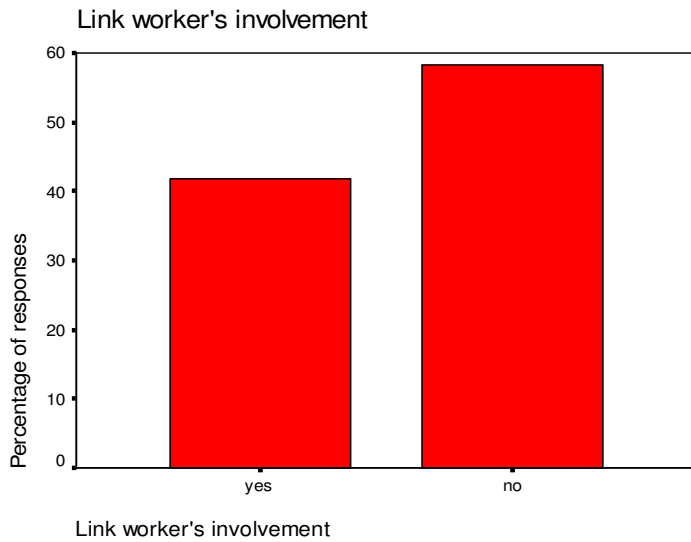
In addition, 20% of respondents did not take any students in the previous year (although they may have done so previously). Nevertheless, their responses are included in the subsequent review of agency-based practice learning, and will be included in the analysis of what helps and what hinders practice teaching and learning. Their responses are also included in the findings about educational approaches, learning resources and models and methods. It is however a flaw of the audit that that one fifth of respondents to these questions are not basing their answers on experience of practice teaching in the last year.

Table 5



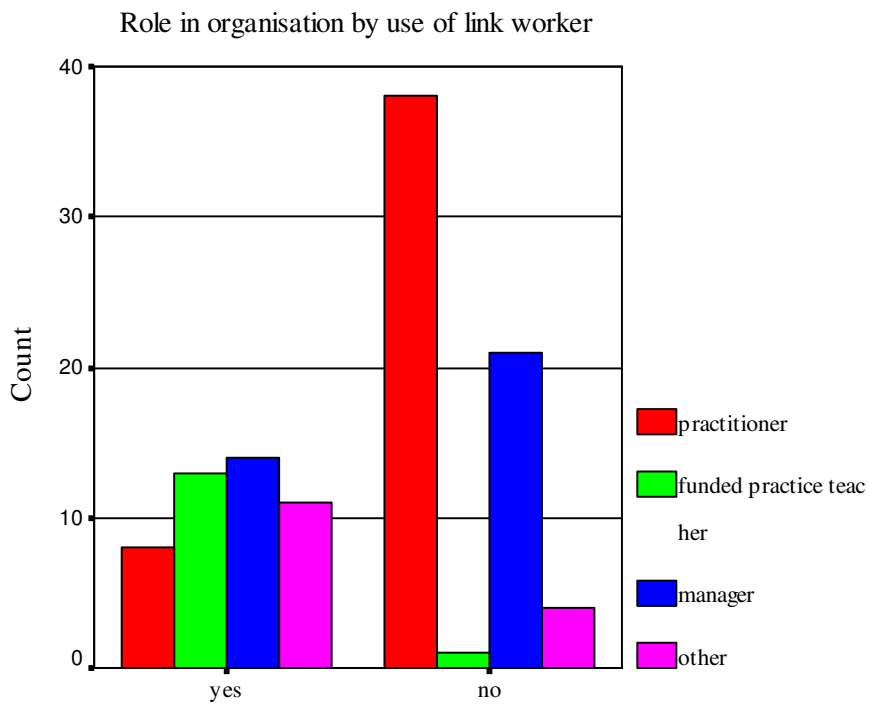
Although funded practice teachers represented only 10% of respondents, they took as many as 12 students in the previous year and accounted for 41% of the total students taken. Individual practice teachers in general took one student over the year.

Table 6



In just over 40% of practice learning placements, a link worker was involved.

Table 7



Although workers in all roles made use of link workers, funded practice teachers were far more likely to do so. A number of respondents who had not used a link worker stated that they would do so in the future.

3.3 Educational approaches

Respondents were asked what kind of educational approaches they used in practice learning. Almost all respondents used reflective practice, and adult learning and evidence-based practice were also widely used. Didactic or direct teaching was significantly less widely used as illustrated in Table 8.

Table 8

| Educational approach | % Use | % Useful |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Adult learning | 91 | 69 |
| Reflective practice | 99 | 86 |
| Evidence based practice | 94 | 82 |
| Didactic or direct teaching | 54 | 43 |
| Other | 12 | 10 |
| n = | 137 | 137 |

Examples of other educational approaches included observation, modelling and role-play.

Respondents were also asked to express how useful they found different educational approaches. There was broad agreement that reflective practice and evidence based practice were most useful, with adult learning rated highly and didactic or direct teaching the least useful of the options offered.

This may highlight an issue for new approaches to agency-based practice learning and the integration of knowledge, theory and practice involving a more extended range of teaching and learning approaches.

3.4 Models and methods

Respondents were asked whether they used individual supervision, group supervision and/or team supervision to facilitate learning opportunities. They were also asked what methods of practice teaching they used, including simulation/role play, process recording, videoing and shadowing.

As table 9 shows, individual supervision is the most reported model of supervision: all respondents used this model. 30% used team supervision and 28% used group supervision. Moreover, individual supervision was found to be the most useful model amongst respondents, with 95% claiming that they found it 'very useful' or 'useful'. In contrast only 28% of respondents use group supervision and 40% of respondents reported that they did not know whether group supervision was useful. Team supervision is only used by 30% of the respondents.

Table 9

| Model/method | % Use | % Found useful |
|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Individual supervision | 100 | 95 |
| Group supervision | 28 | 35 |
| Team supervision | 30 | 33 |

Clearly individual supervision is the preferred model and group and team supervision have yet to be extensively used. These results are particularly important in the light of current debate on new approaches to agency-based practice learning and discussion on the use of differing methods of supervision in the recent Scottish Executive paper 'Confidence in Practice Learning (2004)'.

Table 10

| Model / method | % Use | % Found useful |
|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Simulation/role-play | 64 | 56 |
| Process recording | 94 | 66 |
| Videoining | 16 | 36 |
| Shadowing | 98 | 84 |
| n = | 137 | 137 |

In respect of methods, respondents were asked whether they used a range of practice teaching methods including simulation/role-play, process recording, videoing and shadowing. Table 10 also shows that process recording (94%) and shadowing (98%) were most used, although shadowing was found to be more useful (84%). By contrast, videoing was used infrequently, although 64% of respondents used simulation of role-play.

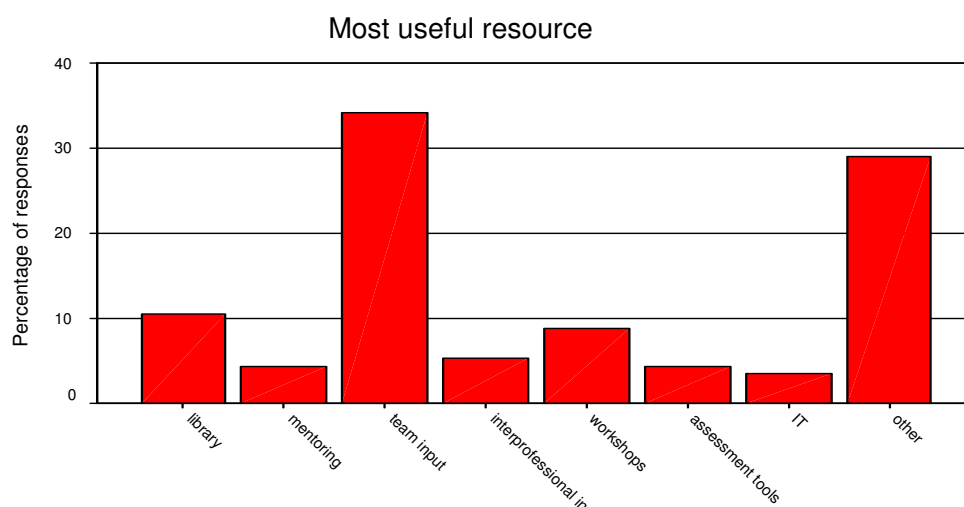
Respondents were also given the opportunity to indicate what other methods and models they used within their practice teaching. A summary of these included direct observation, reflective diary / log, use of exercises to promote learning (SCOPT toolkit); mind maps; research presentations by student and experiential exercises.

Clearly these results indicate that a wide range of models/methods are used by practice teachers. Further investigation is needed in this area in the light of requirements for greater integration of knowledge, theory and practice and a greater emphasis on skills training for the new degree (this requirement has particular implications for the use of simulation, role-play and videoing).

3.5 Learning resources

Respondents were asked what resources they had access to, and what were the most useful. The most valued resource was team input, which was selected by 34%. Respondents also valued other resources. Table 11 illustrates the relevant usefulness of learning resources.

Table 11



The range of resources available also varied both by respondent and geographical area. For example, there was greater access to workshops in the West (n=29) than in the North and South East (both n=20). Mentoring was available as a resource to fewer respondents in the South East (n=10), compared to the North (n=19) and West (n=23).

A number of respondents (29%) also mentioned other resources including their own papers and materials built up over a period of time, a network of contacts and practice teachers meeting. Time was also seen as a valuable resource.

The identification of team input as the most useful resource is highly significant in terms of considering differing approaches to practice learning. This ties in closely with the findings in relation to responses as to what helps in the process of providing high quality practice learning opportunities.

3.6 What hinders/helps in providing practice learning?

In addition to looking at available learning resources, respondents were also asked to consider what factors hindered or helped the process of providing sufficient high quality learning opportunities. Organisational systems, the availability of resources and collaborative working were suggested as possibly helping or hindering learning opportunities. The responses are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

| | Hinders placement provision % | Helps placement provision % |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Organisational systems | 45 | 81 |
| Resources available | 47 | 85 |
| Collaborative working | 22 | 91 |

Organisational systems

The quantitative results initially offer a confusing picture with 55% of respondents reporting that organisational systems do not hinder, 45% stating that they do hinder and 81% stating that organisational systems either currently do or potentially could help. This may in part be due to differing interpretations of the meaning which respondents attached to the term organisational systems.

Resources available

Again these results should be viewed along with the qualitative evidence offered to provide further explanation. The emphasis will be on considering the detail of available resources which hinders and available resources which help or could potentially help.

Collaborative working

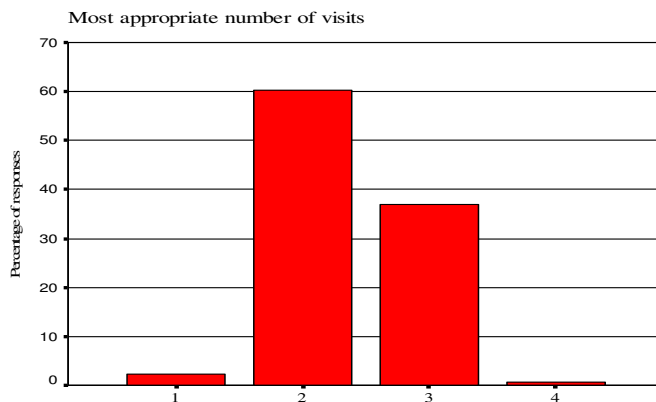
The results for collaborative working offer a differing and encouraging picture of current practice with just over 22% of respondents citing problems in this area but 78% stating this does not hinder the process.

Overwhelmingly 91% of respondents believe this to be an area which currently or potentially helps in the process. Again, these results require further discussion particularly in terms of the differing areas of collaborative working highlighted by practice teachers.

Working with universities

The issue of how many visits should be made by tutors in the course of a placement produced a mixed response. Table 13 shows the responses to this question, and it is clear that either two (60%) or three (37%) visits are preferred.

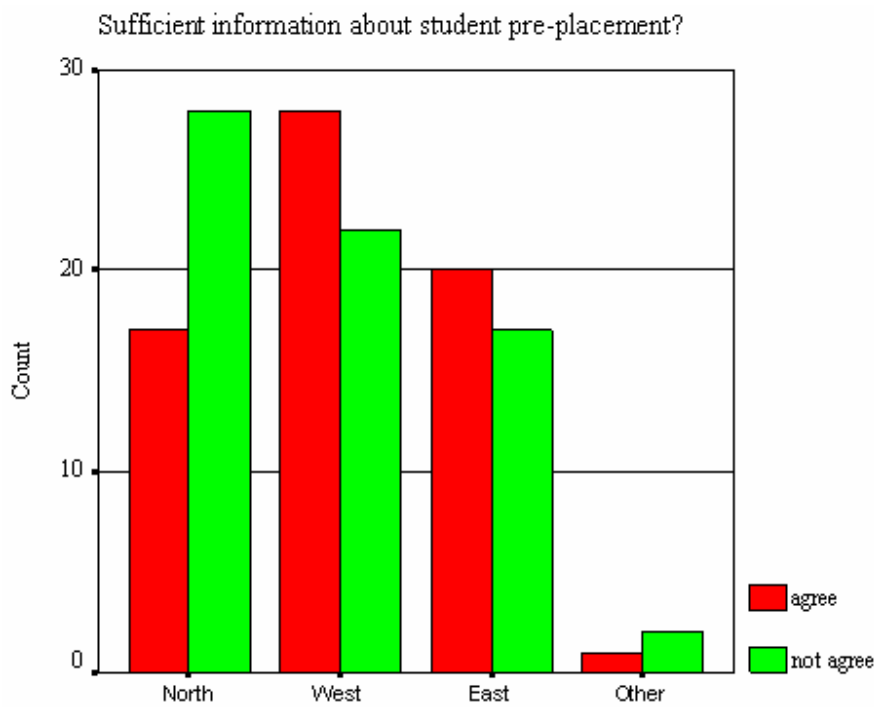
Table 13



However, it should be noted that of those respondents who stated that two visits were the most appropriate, a quarter qualified their response by adding that further visits should be undertaken if necessary, for example, if there were questions about the placement, if the student was having difficulties or to offer support in rural areas.

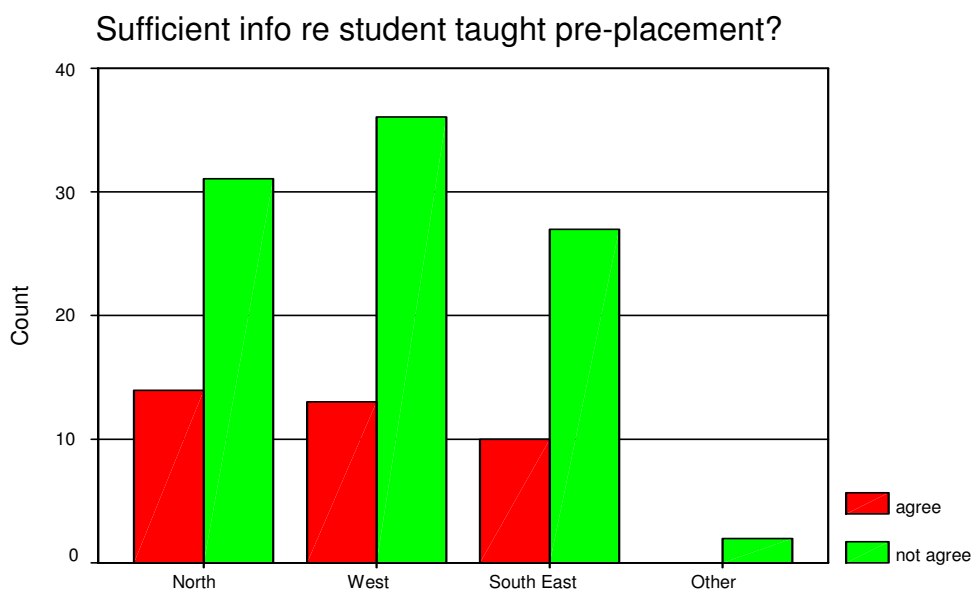
As well as considering tutor visits, respondents were asked to comment on whether they received sufficient information about students prior to a placement. Respondents were equally split on this issue with 49% agreeing and 51% not agreeing. However, when responses were looked at by geographical area it was found that the greatest dissatisfaction with the amount of information on students was highest in the North where 28% did not agree with only 17% agreeing. This contrasts with a more positive response from the other areas. The responses are shown in Table 14.

Table 14



When respondents were further asked if they received sufficient information about what a student has been taught prior to a placement, a more negative response result emerged. Only 28% of respondents agreed with this statement, with the majority not in agreement. When satisfaction with what students had been taught pre-placement was broken down by geographical area, all areas showed high levels of dissatisfaction as is illustrated in Table 15.

Table 15



Although there were high levels of dissatisfaction in all areas concerning information about what students had been taught, tutor visits were generally found to be productive with 80% of respondents agreeing with this statement.

Similarly, there was agreement that closer links with local universities would be welcome. University input by creating practice teacher support groups, workshops on practice learning issues and practice issues along with research workshops on research/evidence-based workshops were also welcomed as can be seen in Table 16.

Table 16

| Statement | % Agree |
|--|----------------|
| More contact with local university | 61 |
| University based practice teacher support groups | 76 |
| University workshops on practice learning issues | 87 |
| University workshops on practice issues | 81 |
| University workshops on research/evidence based practice | 88 |
| N = | 137 |

Although these responses are largely favourable, it should be noted that a significant number of respondents qualified their agreement on university support groups and

workshops as described in Table 16, by adding a proviso that such developments should be carried out jointly with practice teachers and not by universities alone.

Qualitative Findings

Around 75% of (approximately 100) practice teachers who completed the questionnaire chose to add extra comments about what hinders and what helps in the provision of high quality practice learning opportunities. In this section we focus on their qualitative responses to these two questions in order to try and gain more detailed information relating both to the supply and quality of practice learning opportunities.

The timescales allowed meant the follow-up interviews were limited to telephone contact with 10 practice teachers. The choice of follow-up was made on the basis of the nature of comments made and on the basis of geographical spread to reflect the distribution of the questionnaire. It included practice teachers operating in the voluntary and statutory sector. Further discussion therefore took place with individuals from Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, East Ayrshire, North and South Lanarkshire.

1 Organisational Issues

The qualitative evidence from written comments and follow up discussion helped to identify significant factors which were considered important by practice teachers in terms of organisational aspects which are enabling and those which hinder the process.

These factors may be grouped under the emerging themes of:

- organisational commitment (or lack of)
- learning culture (or lack of)

The largest single factor identified by the respondents as affecting the provision of practice learning opportunities was a combination of lack of time and staff in relation to managing workload. Almost 50% of respondents commented that the lack of organisational commitment, the lack of a learning culture and the lack of workload relief hindered the provision of adequate numbers of high quality placements.

Follow up discussion with practice teachers confirmed that a lack of workload relief prevented many from offering placement. This was seen as closely related to the problem that placement provision appeared to be low on the agenda of operational management.

‘We need to educate operational managers.’

‘Practice teachers need workload relief.’

The lack of, 'organisational commitment' and a 'learning culture' were considered as major factors in hindering the process.

'We need a change of mindset'

'There needs to be cultural changes'

Practice teachers felt that practice teaching and placements for students needed not only to be higher on the agenda of operational management but also part of a wider ongoing learning culture within organisations.

Discussions also suggest that a 'lack of a learning culture' is closely linked to the value placed on individual practice teachers and practice teaching as an activity. Several respondents felt that practice teachers should be respected and appreciated more. The best way of doing this was seen as offering 'workload relief' and 'valuing the skills of practice teaching'. Interestingly the question of financial reward did not figure highly either within written comments or in discussions.

If a lack of organisational commitment currently hinders, it is also clear that the opposite i.e. organisational commitment to students and practice teaching along with the existence of a learning culture currently does help and is viewed by many as a change which would help in the future. Some 50% of respondents cited these areas as currently helping or potentially helping in the process. Further discussion offered a range of view in these areas and give clear indications of factors which enable the process.

'Having students is important. Managers take account of workloads. There's an acceptance that its part of the job. Support for practice teachers, is good with quarterly workshop. I feel valued.' (*Practice Teacher South East*)

'Our area service manager is proactive in Practice Teaching and having students. My caseload is protected. There's a commitment to students – it's part of the culture of the organisation.' (*Practice Teacher West*)

The existence of a 'learning culture' was clearly seen as an important factor in helping the process. Two further examples are offered:-

'Quarriers is a learning organisation where value is placed on staff and students. There's a culture of learning. The commitment to students comes through at all levels of the organisation.' (*Practice Teacher West*)

'Practice learning need to be seen as integral to the development of practice and the responsibility of all. We are trying to raise the profile of practice teaching through workshops / forums and monthly updates. We are trying to create a culture of a learning organisation.' (*Practice Teacher West*)

The results offer clear indicators that organisational commitment at differing levels to practice learning / practice teaching and the 'creation of a learning culture' are viewed as very important within the process of providing practice learning opportunities. This ties in closely with discussion in the Scottish Executive paper 'Confidence in Practice Learning (2004)'.

Further investigation in this area is needed particularly in terms of factors which are positively encouraging practice learning within some agencies. Other organisational aspects which specifically hinder the process were identified by a small number of respondents as: the demands of organisational change; and of placement timings, which need to be spread out through the year.

2 Access to Resources

IT facilities

10% of respondents viewed this as problematic and the issue was raised by Practice Teachers in both urban and rural settings. The impact of a lack of IT facilities was felt to be significant both in terms of administrative duties but also in terms of access to the Internet.

Access to library/books/up to date material

A small number (5%) of practice teachers cited this as problematic. It was felt this reinforced an inequality of access to up-to-date reading materials for some students and therefore disadvantaged them.

Lack of space

This represented the most cited resource issue in terms of hindering the process. Approximately 20% of respondents felt this was problematic.

'Students need access to a desk, computer, telephone –
it shows we value them.' (*Practice Teacher West*)

It is interesting to note here that in follow-up discussions, the question of finding space for students is being 'tackled creatively'. In several areas with 'student base' accommodation being found for students from which they then pick up work from a range of teams.

These results indicate the need to give consideration to resource issues particularly concerning where and how students are accommodated. Lack of access to IT facilities would also seem to be contributing to a potentially unequal situation which may create disadvantages for some students.

3 Collaborative Working

Collaborative working within teams

The phrase 'team input' was used by approximately 25% of respondents in their written comments on what helps. Further discussions highlighted the importance placed by practice teachers on team involvement and teams 'owning students':

'My colleagues/team are really important when I have a student. There is not a sole reliance on the Practice Teacher.' (*Practice Teacher South East*)

These results indicate current beneficial involvement of teams within practice learning situations. Given the emphasis of team involvement and ownership within the Scottish Executive paper 'Confidence in Practice Learning 2004' this area requires further investigation.

Collaborative working across sectors and disciplines

These two distinct areas were highlighted by a number of respondents in terms of their importance in the process of providing practice learning opportunities.

1. A number of practice teachers wrote about the need to 'develop working across sectors'. Further discussion showed this referred to the need to be flexible in providing **learning packages** between settings in the voluntary and statutory sectors. It was considered important to have systems in place to allow this to happen with more ease.

One Practice Teacher within the voluntary sector also spoke of the need to develop flexibility within sectors in terms of providing learning packages.

'We need to move away from one link worker and one Practice Teacher. This requires a change in mindset.' (*Practice Teacher North*)

2. The importance of developing learning opportunities for students across disciplines was seen as extremely important. Written comments on this area were made by approximately 33% of respondents.

'Collaborative working is exciting and stimulating'

'Inter-agency working is very important for student learning'

'Working with other professions broadens understanding'

These results indicate a clear commitment to working across disciplines, the importance of this for student learning and critically the recognition of the need to develop such learning opportunities.

Conclusion

Our aim was to carry out a practice audit of current and recent arrangements for the provision of agency-based learning opportunities and summarise best practice issues and indicators. Given the tight timescales and the return rates of the postal questionnaire, we cannot claim this audit represents a comprehensive account of agency-based practice learning in Scotland. It provides a snapshot of current arrangements from which we have highlighted a number of issues. Taking into account the limitations, we believe the findings have a certain validity in terms of offering best practice indicators for the future development of agency-based practice learning.

The findings show current practice to be based on a one to one student/practice teacher relationship either with or without link worker involvement. Individual supervision is the most used model of supervision while the predominant educational approaches used are adult learning, reflective and evidence based practice. Process recording and shadowing were the most used methods within practice teaching.

The findings of the audit showed there is a number of problem areas. In terms of supply issues findings showed insufficient numbers of placements along with a number of practice teacher award holders who were not offering placements. Lack of organisational commitment to practice teaching and learning was reported as problematic by a large number of respondents. In particular lack of time was highlighted. Lack of space and of access to IT facilities also caused problems. Issues were also raised in relation to communication between HEIs, service providers and practice teachers.

The following areas emerged as providing possible indicators for the future:

Factors relating to organisational commitment and 'learning culture' clearly influence both supply and quality issues. Closely linked to these are the issues of workload relief and the value placed on practice teaching and practice learning. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence shows that these local authority departments and voluntary organisations that presently display organisational commitment and are creating a learning culture are making a positive impact on the provision of agency-based practice learning. Further exploration is required to gain detailed information on how these agencies have moved to become such positive examples of learning organisations. These findings need to be disseminated across a wide audience to influence both policy and practice.

In terms of approaches within practice learning, team input was a crucial resource and approaches to team involvement require developing and evaluating. In considering differing approaches to practice learning, group supervision remains little used. Different approaches to supervision including group supervision and team involvement need to be explored.

Commitment to the development of collaborative practice across the voluntary and statutory sectors and across disciplines was highly valued. Respondents recognised that the creation of learning packages across settings offers high quality learning opportunities.

Finally HEIs need to consider with agencies and practice teachers how information on students and course content can be better shared.

The findings of the audit should be examined in conjunction with the literature review on agency-based practice learning where similar key themes occur.

References

Price Waterhouse Cooper, (2002). *Review of DipSW Practice Placement Provision*, SWSI

Scottish Executive, (2004). *Confidence in Practice Learning*. SWSI

Scottish Social Services Council, (2003). *Practice Learning: Old Problems, New Opportunities*. Conference proceedings. Dundee.

Appendix: Sample Practice Audit Questionnaire

Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education

SERVICE PROVIDERS' AUDIT

Learning for Effective and Ethical Practice (LEEP) is one of three research projects funded by the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education. The other two will focus on e-learning (the Knowledge Transfer project) and issues concerning Assessment. Our first task in the LEEP project is to carry out an audit of existing practice. This audit is divided into the three sections of the LEEP project:

Section A: Agency-based Practice Learning Opportunities (The Robert Gordon University)

Section B: Integration of Learning for Practice (The University of Edinburgh)

Section C: Inter-professional Learning (The University of Dundee)

Contact Details

Name:

Post Held:

Employing Agency:

Workplace Address:

Tel. No:

E-mail:

Are you willing to provide further details about information you have provided for us, possibly through face to face interview or telephone follow-up?

Yes

No

Is there anyone in your network whom you think we should contact to find out their views?

Name:

Tel. No:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Section A: Agency-based Practice Learning Opportunities

This section focuses on the structure, scale and resources currently in use to facilitate practice learning opportunities. Each question provides you with a range of response. You may choose **more** than one response where appropriate.

- Q1 Who in your agency has responsibility for findings placements?**
- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| <i>Designated placement co-ordinator</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Training officer</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Senior manager (Please specify precise title)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Operational manager (Please specify specific title)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Other (please specify)</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Q2 How does the responsible person link into the HEI?**

- Q3 How does the responsible person find and secure placements?**
- | | Yes | <i>No</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| By e-mail | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By telephone call | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By general letter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| By personal contact | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | | | |

- Q4 Who does the responsible person address their request to?**
- | | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Seniors | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Team leaders | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Operational managers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Individual practice teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Individual practitioners | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | | | |

- Q5 How many placements did you offer this calendar year (Jan – Dec 2003)?**

Q6 How many accredited practice teachers do you have in your agency?

Q7 How many practitioners have undertaken practice teaching this year (Jan - Dec 2003) in your agency?

Q8 How many of these practitioners are accredited practice teachers?

Q9 How many link workers we involved in providing student placements this year (Jan - Dec 2003)?

Q10 How many placements did you deliver in the last year (Jan - Dec 2003) in the following areas of practice? Please give numbers.

- Criminal Justice
- Child Care / Protection
- Care Management / Older People
- Mental Health
- Learning Disabilities
- Addiction
- Other (Please specify)

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

Q11 If there is a placement request shortfall, is it followed up by contact with the following people?

| | Yes | <i>No</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Seniors | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Team Leaders | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Operational managers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Directors / Assistant directors | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Individual practice teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| HEIs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (Please specify) | | | |

Q12 How would this contact be made?

| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| E-mail | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Telephone call | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| General letter | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Personal contact | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | | | |

Q13 Have gaps been identified in your agency's provision of placements?

| | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Yes</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>No</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q14 If yes, please specify which settings the gaps are in (e.g. residential, day care etc)

Q15 If yes please specify which areas of practice the gap is in (e.g. criminal justice, child care, community care)

Q16 Please indicate what learning resources are available for students and practice teachers in your agency?

| | <i>Students</i> | <i>Practice Teachers</i> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Library | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mentoring | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Team input | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Inter-professional input | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Workshops | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conferences | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Assessment tools (if available please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| IT (if available please specify what) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

Other (please specify)

Q17 What hinders the process of providing sufficient high quality learning opportunities? If you respond 'yes' please explain why in each case.

| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Organizational systems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Resources available | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Collaborative working | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered yes to any please explain why:

Q18 What helps the process of providing sufficient high quality learning opportunities? If you respond 'yes' please explain why in each case.

| | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Organizational systems | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Resources available | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Collaborative working | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered yes to any please explain why:

Q19 If you are a National Voluntary organization, who in your agency has responsibility for placements? If not, please go to question 21.

- Designated placement coordinator
- Training officer
- Senior manager (please specify precise title)
- Operational manager (please specify precise title)
- Other (please specify)

Q20 Are placement offers managed locally or nationally?

- Locally
- Nationally

Q21 If your organization is not national is there a designated person with responsibility for placement organization in you agency?

Yes
No

Q22 If yes, please specify position in the organization:

Q23 If no, how are placements organized in your agency (please explain):

Q24 How many Universities does you agency work with as part of the placement finding process? If none, please state none.

Q25 How would you rate to effectiveness of the University's contribution to the collaborative relationships underpinning the placement finding process?

Highly Effective *Effective* *Neither Effective nor Ineffective* *Ineffective* *Highly Ineffective*

Q26 What do you find helpful about the University's contribution to the placement finding process?

Q24 What do you find unhelpful about the University's contribution to the placement finding process?

Section B: Integration of Learning for Practice

This section considers approaches used to promote integration of learning for practice, and how this might be improved. Integration of learning for practice means the process by which students successfully bring together their learning (from university, field and personal lives) so that they operate as effective and ethical practitioners. We are not necessarily expecting detailed responses at this stage, more broad brush general descriptions which we can follow up later.

Q25 How satisfied are you at present that students do successfully integrate learning for practice?

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Very satisfied</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Not very satisfied</i> | <i>Dissatisfied</i> | <i>No comment</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q26 What educational approaches does your programme use to encourage students to integrate learning for practice? Please give examples?

Q27

Are there any learning resources specifically targeted at this?

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If so what are they?

Q28 Do you use any learning models to promote integration of learning for practice?

Yes

No

Don't Know

If so what are they?

Q29 Do you use any other methods to encourage this?

Yes

No

Don't Know

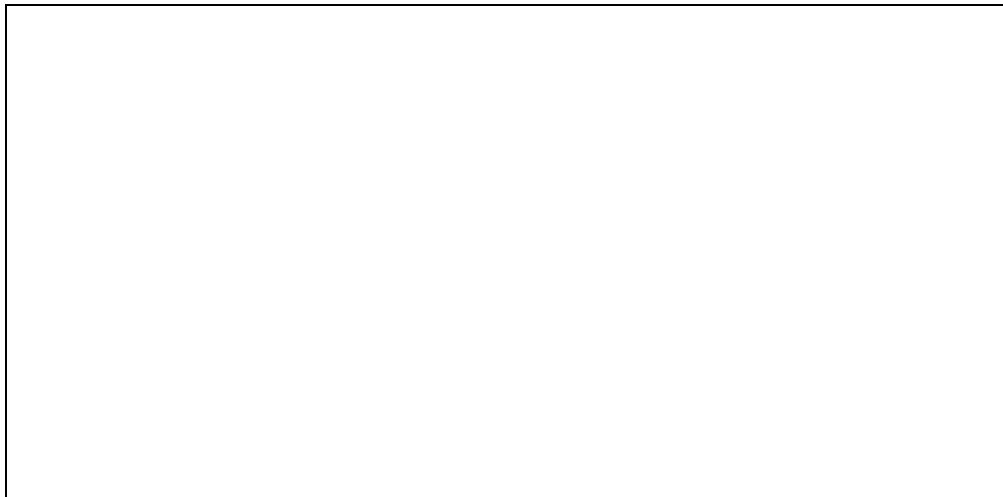
If so what are they?

Q30 What, in your experience, facilitates integration of learning for practice?

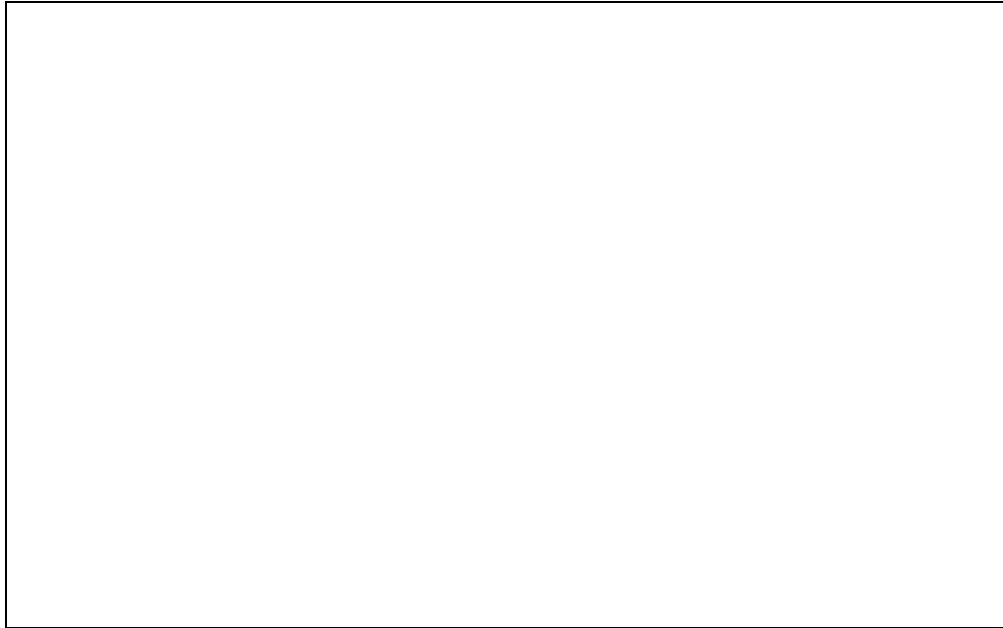
Q31 What have been the obstacles to integration of learning for practice?



Q32 How might integration of learning for practice be improved in the future?



Q33 **Any other comments about integration of learning for practice?**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the respondent to provide their comments on the integration of learning for practice.

Section C: Inter-professional Learning

This section seeks to build up a picture of existing and potential practice in relation to Inter-professional learning. For these purposes we mean an opportunity for social work students or staff to train or learn together with students or staff from different professional backgrounds. The sample responses are a guide to the fact that we are not necessarily looking for detailed responses at this stage, more broad brush general descriptions which we can follow up in due course.

Q34 How satisfied are you at present that students have sufficient opportunities for inter-professional learning?

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Very satisfied</i> | <i>Satisfied</i> | <i>Not very satisfied</i> | <i>Dissatisfied</i> | <i>No comment</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q35 Please provide brief details of any examples of inter-professional learning available to your students. We are interested in as many examples as possible of where inter-professional learning may be taking place.

Sample responses: *in our undergraduate SW programme, Year 1, we provide 2 core modules which are multi-disciplinary and jointly taught across SW, Education and Community Education Departments*

Q36 What, in your experience, has facilitated such opportunities?

Sample responses: *Jointly written modules with school of nursing. Curriculum overlap, timing of placements, size of student cohort, commitment of staff.*

Q37 If you have experienced particular difficulties in providing or accessing these opportunities, please give details below.

Sample responses: *resource issues, difficulties in timing of curricula, lack of placements in innovative settings, staff disinterested or lack of enthusiasm.*

Q38 Please provide any general Evaluation outcomes for the learning you have described.

Sample responses: *Training was evaluated as 'enjoyable' but with no impact on practice. The experience was reported by participants to have changed professional attitudes e.g. in respect to assessing risk.*

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.