

***PRACTICE EDUCATION PLACEMENTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE***

***SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR***

***OF THE WESTERN CAPE METROPOLE:***

***AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION***

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

## ***ABSTRACT***

Finding practice education placements for undergraduate social work students is becoming increasingly difficult in the Western Cape Metropolis, because many welfare agencies have either closed down or do not have the capacity to accommodate students for field placement. As a result of this situation, this research was undertaken with the aim to investigate the feasibility of the corporate sector as a field placement for undergraduate social work students.

By using the corporate sector as a field placement an opportunity can be created whereby the university and the corporate sector could establish a workable partnership, with mutual benefits for each. The corporate sector can benefit by services offered by the students in the form of case-group and community work that can be rendered to the employees. The university will benefit because a new option for student placements will become available to them.

The domain of social work in the corporate sector was explored by defining occupational social work; the nature of service rendering on micro, meso and macro levels and discussing occupational social work in the 21st century.

Field placements of undergraduate students in the corporate sector were examined in order to establish what the theoretical background for field placements in a corporate setting ought to be. To this end, the nature and purpose; formats; settings and key role players in field placements were explored. Social work methods in social work *per se* and *occupational* social work in general were investigated.

An investigation was also made into the management of the field placement programme for undergraduate social work students in the corporate sector. The following facets were explored: the requirements of the department of social work at the University of the Western Cape for fourth year students as well as the requirements for field placements in the corporate sector, in order to establish the suitability of the corporate sector for field placements.

Existing literature and empirical findings were used to collect data for this study. Exploratory and descriptive research designs were applied in this study. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews and conclusions and recommendations were based on the findings of the study.

## ***OPSOMMING***

Dit word al hoe moeiliker om praktykonderrigplasings vir voorgraadse maatskaplike werk studente in die Wes-Kaapse Metropool te vind, aangesien baie welsynsagentskappe òf gesluit het òf nie die vermoë het om studente in posisies vir praktykonderrigplasings te akkommodeer nie. As 'n gevolg van hierdie situasie is hierdie navorsing onderneem met die doel om vas te stel of menslike hulpbron personeel binne die korporatiewe sektor gewillig sal wees om voorgraadse studente vir praktykonderrig te akkommodeer.

Deur die korporatiewe sektor vir praktykonderrigplasings te gebruik, kan 'n geleentheid geskep word waardeur die universiteit en die korporatiewe sektor 'n uitvoerbare vennootskap, met wedersydse voordele vir albei, tot stand kan bring. Die korporatiewe sektor kan voordeel trek uit die dienste wat deur die studente aangebied word, soos gevalle-, groep- en gemeenskapswerk wat aan die werknemers gebied kan word. Die universiteit se voordeel sal daarin lê dat nuwe opsies vir praktykonderrigplasings vir die studente beskikbaar word.

Die sfeer van maatskaplike werk in die korporatiewe sektor is ondersoek deur beroepsmaatskaplike werk en die aard van dienslewering op mikro-, meso- en makrovlakke te definieer, en deur die aard van beroepsmaatskaplike werk in die 21ste eeu te bespreek.

Praktykonderrigplasings van voorgraadse studente in die korporatiewe sektor is ondersoek om te bepaal wat die teoretiese agtergrond vir praktykonderrigplasings in die korporatiewe omgewing behoort te wees. Vir hierdie doel is die aard en doel, formate, omgewings en sleutel rolspelers in praktykonderrigplasings verken. Maatskaplike werkmodes in maatskaplike werk *per se* en *beroepsmaatskaplike* werk in die algemeen is ondersoek.

'n Onderzoek is ook gedoen na die bestuur van die praktykonderrigplasingsprogram vir voorgraadse maatskaplike werkstudente in die korporatiewe sektor. Die volgende fasette is verken: die vereistes wat die Departement Maatskaplike Werk van die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland aan vierdejaarstudente stel, sowel as die vereistes vir praktykonderrigplasings in die korporatiewe sektor, met die doel om die gewilligheid van die korporatiewe sektor vir praktykonderrigplasings te bepaal.

Bestaande literatuur en empiriese bevindings is gebruik om data vir hierdie studie te versamel. Verkennende en beskrywende navorsingsontwerpe is in hierdie studie benut. Deur middel van vraelyste en onderhoude is data versamel en afleidings en aanbevelings op grond van die bevindinge van die ondersoek is gemaak.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

In all professions, learning has a theoretical and practical component. In the social work curriculum, the balance between theory and practice is crucial, because the absence of one component will result in the student failing that particular year of study. During a normal academic year, theoretical exposure is available by means of lectures in the classroom. For practical experience, the University relies on outside agencies where students are placed in the field. Royse, Dhooper and Rompf (1996:1) reason that social work students, as professionals in the making, have to attend classes to learn the principles, practice values and ethical behaviour, a body of specialised knowledge and the scientific basis for practice. A practice education placement provides the student with the opportunity to apply what they have learnt in the classroom to real situations. To become a social work professional, a student therefore undergoes formal learning and gains practical experience. The above-mentioned authors furthermore claim that practicums or internships are not unique to social work, but are common to most of the helping professions.

It is to this end that the Social Work Department at the University of the Western Cape, has had a standard arrangement with both private and state organisations in the Cape Peninsula. For the past two decades practice education placements were arranged at hospitals, children's homes, schools of industry, reformatories, prisons, state and private welfare offices, as well as other organisations such as SHAWCO, CAFDA, Diakonale Dienste, TB Care Associations, Old Age Homes and HIV/Aids Centres on an annual basis. To a lesser extent students were also placed in the



corporate sector. These placements correlate closely with placements arranged by other Universities.

Fifty-eight percent of the above-mentioned agencies could not accommodate students during 1999 due to cuts in budgets, retrenchment of social workers and other staff members, lack of office space, closing down of facilities and the influx of students from other faculties and/or other academic and tertiary institutions. A major contributory factor to the plight of many of these organisations is the restructuring of the welfare budget and the transformation of the welfare system, which obviously impacted on all traditional social services. The developmental focus of social welfare, as advocated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (Government Gazette, 1997), caught many organisations off-guard and unprepared and to a great extent created resistance to change. Organisations found themselves in various stages of transformation, and accommodating students was often seen as an added burden.

In view of the above facts, finding practice education placements for third year undergraduate social work students of the University of Western Cape was extremely difficult in 1999, despite the fact that the student numbers have decreased during the last three years, from 93 in January 1997, 86 in 1998 to 62 in 1999.

Considering that "...a practical and a theoretical component **together** constitute the social work curriculum...", (Hoffman, 1990:3) the magnitude of this problem becomes evident, because it is impossible to qualify as a social worker without practice education. According to Wilson (1981:6), the field instruction component of the curriculum is designed to help students apply and integrate theoretical concepts learned in the classroom. The absence of the practical component or field instruction will therefore rob students of the opportunity to test their capabilities to deal with reality and to render a meaningful service to people. It is to this end that the corporate sector needs to be explored as an alternative avenue.

Rankin (1992:309) indicated that the corporate sector is not fully utilised for student placements and that this area should be researched. The corporate sector is not entirely new as an option for practice education placement, but is not fully utilised by universities. Tracing records of previous placements at UWC, the researcher found that students were in fact placed at Foschini, Spoornet and banking institutions, but no substantial evidence of the nature of these placements could be found, which confirms Rankin's finding that very little is written about what happens in occupational social work (Rankin, 1992:306). In Rankin's (1992:2-3) opinion:

- industrial social work in a profit and non-profit making organisation has not been researched thoroughly in South Africa
- lack of research could lead to stagnation in the development of this field of practice
- there could be implications for the training of social work students for careers in industry, because only competent and well trained social workers would be respected there
- use should be made of the corporate sector for purposes of practice education placement (Rankin, 1992:309).

Services in the corporate sector focus on a more specialised field, namely occupational social work, which is defined as "...that field of practice in which social workers attend to the human and social needs of employees in the work milieu by designing and executing appropriate interventions to ensure healthier individuals and environments." (Googins & Godfrey, 1985:398). From the definition, it becomes apparent that there is a difference in the client systems, which is now the employees: the work milieu replaces the home, school or other traditional settings, and appropriate interventions have to be applied to bring about change. Additional

knowledge and skills are thus required from the occupational social worker/student to render adequate services. Apart from a social work frame of reference, the social worker has to be knowledgeable in the work policies, acts and mission and vision of the company, in order to comply with their requirements. These factors could also impact on the present field practice requirements of the university and need to be investigated. Rankin (1992:13 ) is of the opinion that the term industrial social work is often used interchangeably with occupational social work. He further argues that industrial social work is to be understood as occupational social work practised in employing organisations in the private sector, selling a product or service for profit. The employment of social workers in industry is not a new phenomenon. In earlier years companies such as Escom, Sasol, Iscor and, more recently, Telkom, Koeberg Power Station, Foschini, SpoorNet and M-Web have employed social workers. Social workers either practice as specialists in industrial or occupational social work or they are engaged in employee assistant programmes, human resources or industrial relations fields. The versatility of the social work profession becomes clear and, with some adaptations to the present curriculum, social work students could make inroads into industry and the private sector. This research will benefit both the university and the private sector in that a new partnership will be established. New placement possibilities in the private sector will become available to all universities selling a product or service for profit.

The corporate sector will benefit from the research because they will obtain free information in the field of occupational social work. Their involvement with regard to social responsibility and the Employment Assistance Programme will be enhanced. Utilisation of students to drive their projects will increase their manpower and the communities will ultimately benefit from these services.

The social work profession, especially the field of occupational social work will benefit because the value of their services will be “sold” in the corporate sector. Successful student placement might lead to permanent employment for more social workers.

This research is a determined effort to find more placement opportunities for undergraduate students.

## **1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH**

The aim of the research was to investigate the corporate sector's point of view on practice education.

In order to obtain the aim of the research the objectives were:

1. To explain the domain and nature of social work (occupational social work) in the corporate sector
2. To describe the nature and management of practice education for undergraduate social work students
3. To determine the willingness of the human resources personnel to accommodate undergraduate students for practice education in the corporate sector.

## **1.3 DEMARCATION OF THE RESEARCH AREA**

This research was done in the Cape Town Metropole and on the West Coast of the Western Cape Province because it was the most accessible to the researcher. The choice of this area was also due to the fact that the undergraduate social work

student at the University of the Western Cape are resident within close proximity to these areas.

## **1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

For the purpose of this investigation a literature and empirical study were undertaken.

### **1.4.1 Literature Study**

Grinnell and Williams (1990:54) defines literature review as an in-depth study of existing research articles that pertain to the topic that is being studied. An extensive literature review on student placements and industrial/occupational social work was undertaken. Relevant information was gained from both South African and international books, articles and journals available at the libraries of the Universities of Stellenbosch and the Western Cape. Information from other universities was accessed by means of the electronic media and microfiche.

### **1.4.2 Empirical Study**

In this study the respondents were either in full or part-time employment in companies such as the Road Accident Fund, Cape Town; Engen Petroleum, Cape Town; the South African Post Office, Cape Town; Pick 'n Pay Head Office, Cape Town; Woolworths, Cape Town; Centre for Human Development, Cape Town; Renaissance Dynamics, Roggebaai; Path Care, Roggebaai; House of Monatic, Salt River; Foschini Group, Parow East; Gabriel SA, Retreat; Escom, Bellville; Fishing and Mining Industry, Vredenburg; Sea Harvest, Saldanha and Koeberg Nuclear

Power Station, Melkbosstrand. Two social work practitioners in private practice also were among the respondents.

To achieve the aim and objectives of this research an exploratory study was done. In the opinion of Babbie (1998:90) the exploratory research can be conducted when a researcher is examining a new interest and wishes to obtain a better understanding of the subject at hand.

Based on information gained from Grinnell and Williams (1990:139-140), the exploratory and descriptive research designs were applied in this study. Grinnell and Williams (1990) as well as Arkava and Lane (1983:191) argue that the exploratory research design is appropriate when little is known about the field of study. As more knowledge becomes available, the same study can be termed descriptive.

A non-probability sampling method was used to select an availability sample. Grinnell and Williams (1990:125) maintain that in non-probability sampling, not all the people in the population have the same probability of being included in the sample. They furthermore argue that for each one of them, the probability of inclusion is unknown. According to Grinnell and Williams (1990:125) availability is the simplest of the four non-probability sampling procedures and it involves the first people who make themselves available to the researcher.

Data was collected through interviews. These interviews involved face to face encounters with respondents as suggested by Arkava and Lane (1983:171) and Babbie and Mouton (2001:249). An interview schedule and interview guide were used to conduct the interview. According to Forcese and Stephen (1973:170-171), the interview schedule and the questionnaire are very similar in that both consist of precisely designated questions. With the interview guide, the interviewer has more discretion in that he/she can probe more and thereby get more detailed information.

The interview indeed offered the researcher the opportunity to probe more and clarify certain aspects with regard to student placements that did not come across clearly in the questionnaire.

## **1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The following limitations in the study were experienced:

1. No records of placements with companies were found, although the respondents recalled having had contact with students.
2. Due to lack of authority, most of the respondents were indecisive in their responses.
3. Due to the small size of the sample the generalisation of the findings were limited.
4. Difficulties were experienced to obtain recent and relevant literature within the field of study.

## **1.6 DESIGN OF THE INVESTIGATION**

This report consists of six chapters.

In *Chapter One* the introduction to the study is presented.

*Chapter Two* describes the domain of social work in the corporate sector.

*Chapter Three* explains practice education placement in social work with specific focus on occupational social work.

*Chapter Four* focuses on the management of the field practice programme for undergraduate social work students in the corporate sector.

*Chapter Five* is a presentation of the empirical data.

In *Chapter Six*, the conclusions are provided and recommendations are made.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE DOMAIN OF SOCIAL WORK IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

All major studies done in South Africa and elsewhere, bear witness to the fact that practice education placement needs, in the field of occupational social work, are overwhelming and warrant further research (Hoffer, 1989; Du Plessis, 1991, 1995, 1999; Woods & Maentja, 1999).

Socio-political and economic developments in South Africa in the mid-nineties did not only affect the lives of the whole nation, but also had a rippling effect on the educational institutions in general, and social work practice education placement in particular. The researcher had first hand experience when, in a search for practice education placements in 1999, 2000 and 2001, she found that agencies previously committed to accommodate students had either closed down or could not accommodate students any longer, due to staff reductions. These changes were brought about by the government's transformation of the welfare services (White Paper, 1996).

With traditional welfare agencies closing down and placement possibilities becoming fewer, it is now critical for schools of social work in South Africa to utilise the corporate sector as a placement option. Involving the corporate sector means embarking in a specialised field of social work, namely industrial or occupational social work.



According to Woods and Maentja (1996:112), people, institutions and organisations, are creating and responding to new societal circumstances, such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP, 1994). They expressed a concern with regard to issues that schools of social work should be addressing, if they wish to equip students to work within profit driven companies. Their study, published in 1996, entailed an investigation to gain a greater understanding of present-day practice in the corporate world and to make recommendations for social work education based on empirical findings. An obvious avenue to explore would be practice education placement of students in this field.

In this chapter, occupational social work will be defined. Features of this domain, as well as the nature of service rendering on micro, meso and macro levels will be explored. Occupational social work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be discussed.

## **2.2 DEFINITIONS OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK**

Googins and Godfrey (1987:4) and Terblanche (1989:241) perceive occupational social work as a growing specialised field. This fact is confirmed by Woods and Maentja (1996:112) when they refer to occupational social work as an established part of South African social work practice, and estimate that 520 practitioners in the occupational field were employed by August 1995. According to several knowledgeable authors in this field, such as Ozawa (1980); Googins and Godfrey (1987); McKendrick (1990:214) and Du Plessis (1990:246), the development of occupational social work and that of employee assistance programmes cannot be separated. It would appear that certain tangent planes exist, which implies that development in the one component would also influence development in the other.

Definitions of industrial social work, occupational social work and employee assistance programmes will be discussed in order to obtain a clearer understanding of these areas and to consider the placement of students for placement in this field.

### **2.2.1 Industrial social work/Occupational social work**

Godfrey and Googins (1987:3-5) prefer to avoid the term 'industrial social work', because they argue that it is a term derived from the European practice of social work in industry. Since social workers function in a *post-industrial* or *information* society, human services in the workplace or occupational social work seems to be more appropriate. They propose occupational social work to be a field of practice in which social workers attend to the human and social needs of the work community, by designing and executing appropriate interventions to ensure healthier individuals and environments.

Neikrug and Katan (1981) made a distinction between *social work in industry* as opposed to *industrial social work*. *Social work in industry* refers to social services as rendered in an industrial setting whilst *industrial social work* refers to a specialised field in social work suitable for an industrial setting.

Spiegel (1974), referring to the recipient of the social workers' services in the work place, talks about an employee-as-person, versus person as employee. An employee-as-person outlines the employee in his/her non-work role as mother, father, brother, sister or community member. A person-as-employee portrays the work role as most important, for example, a stressed manager or sexually harassed female worker.

Definitions from The New Dictionary for Social Work (1995:33); Lombard (1977:274) and Terblanche (1988:34), describe occupational social work as social work within the work situation, where the employee, as an individual member of a

group and the community, is assisted to function better. These definitions imply that social work methods are applied to stimulate the worker to maximum performance at work and to develop their potential and self-actualisation.

From the given definitions, it is evident that occupational social work is about extending professional assistance to the employee, to enable him/her to function better, be it at work or at home (Perlman, 1982:90).

In order to assist the employees, social work methods such as casework, group work and community work are applied. Social work students placed in the corporate sector will, with their theoretical knowledge on these methods, be able to do their practice education placement in the corporate sector.

### **2.2.2 Definitions of employee assistance programmes**

According to Googins and Godfrey (1987:102), consensus on a definition for employee assistance programmes could not yet be reached due to the wide variety of programme types. They cite Walsh (1982:495), who is of the opinion that employee assistance programmes as a generic entity can be defined as a set of company policies or procedures for identifying or responding to personal or emotional problems of employees, which interfere directly with job performance.

Terblanche (1988:242) found that a variety of terms are used in overseas literature to describe employee assistance programmes as practised in South Africa and he cites a number of sources in this regard. Wierch (1974:14) states the Hazelden Foundation describes employee assistance programmes as a labour and management control system. It is designed for early identification of employee problems, which might impair job performance, and motivate employees to receive assistance to resolve the

problem. This definition implies that the employee assistance programme is applied in the interest of the employer with specific focus on job performance.

Martin (1976:1) considers employee assistance programmes as an employee-employer benefit package that is designed to identify, motivate and refer, at an early stage, those employees who develop personal and medical problems that contribute to unacceptable patterns of job performance. More emphasis is placed on the employee as a person in the work situation.

Akabas (1995:1781) give a variety of different types of programmes that could be identified when exploring employee assistance programmes. They refer to employee assistance programmes of the *alcoholism only* variety, which usually refer to the worker with a drinking problem who, through constructive coercion, is motivated to accept assistance. The *broad-brush* approach perceives alcoholism as one of the many personal problems which may interfere with work performance. Assistance on a voluntary basis is emphasised.

The Standards for Employee Assistance Programmes in South Africa (1999:5) was compiled by the South African Chapter of Employee Assistance Professional Association (EAPA-SA). They define an EAP as follows: "... *an employee assistance programme is a work sight based programme designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns, but not limited to; health, marital, family financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal concerns which may adversely affect employee job performance...*". (More information is available in appendix "B").

This definition contains elements of all aspects of employee assistance programmes as described by the previously mentioned authors and, in a nutshell, aptly gives a clear picture of this model of occupational social work.

From these definitions, it is quite evident that the aims of occupational social work and those of employee assistance programmes coincide.

### **2.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK**

According to Ozawa (1980:46), the aims of the programmes of social service rendering in the workplace are the same as those ascribed to occupational social work. He lists it as increasing productivity, promoting stability in the workforce, improving the general welfare of workers and strengthening the relationship between employers, employees and unions.

It is the ideal that both employee and employer benefit from the services of an occupational social worker's intervention (Ozawa, 1980:47; Straussner, 1990:13).

To the employer's benefit, it would entail the occupational social workers:

- identifying and eradicating negative relationships, poor work circumstances and unacceptable group formation and factors which might retard the work performance of the employees;
- attending to any other industrial and individual factors that might result in workers resigning from work. Industrial factors refer to management style and working conditions, while individual factors are personal circumstances such as financial, family, or domestic circumstances;
- combating absenteeism, by extending services to assist with issues such as personal or social problems;
- Serving in an advisory capacity to management and informing them about deviant tendencies or prevalent factors which might lead to reduction in

general achievement, productivity and dissatisfaction among workers, in order to ensure timely rectification.

The services provided by an occupational social worker address all spheres of possible problems that might arise at the workplace and can serve to the benefit of both the employer and employee, as suggested by (Ozawa, 1980; Fernstein & Brown, 1982; Gould & Smith, 1988; Masi, 1982). The researcher shares the opinion of Rankin (1991:176), that the roles, skills and methods of social work is used for service rendering and suggests that a student who is empowered with the knowledge of social work theory, could, with the assistance of the social worker, use the workplace as a practice education placement.

#### **2.4 THE DIVERSITY OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK**

When comparing available literature on occupational social work, it is clear that occupational social work is a very disparate field. In accordance with the findings of Iversen (1998:551), the employee assistance programme model is used by occupational social workers to address a range of problems in the workplace. Reference is made to different authors such as Yamanti (1998), who identified employee services for personal or relational problems; Hanson (1993), who emphasised substance abuse; Murdrick (1991), who focused on disability and Lewis (1990), who highlighted work site health and safety. Corporate job relocation was the concern of Anderson and Stark (1988).

Knowledge of several issues such as diversity, sexual harassment and AIDS were provided by means of training offered by occupational social workers. The motivation for this type of training did not result from management's concern for the workers but rather as an attempt to exempt themselves from legal liability. These activities abroad coincide with services rendered in South Africa. The diversity of

occupational social work is aptly confirmed by McKendrick (1990:243), when he claims that occupational social work can be tailor-made to suit each employing organisation. A wide range of services in which experience can be gained is offered to the student who is placed in the corporate sector. When the possibility of using the corporate sector for practice education placement is considered, the areas in which the social workers are utilised should be explored in order to adequately prepare the student before hand.

## **2.5 AREAS OF SERVICE RENDERING**

The area of service rendering through occupational social work has come a long way since its early beginnings during 1920 (McKendrick, 1990:280). Factors that gave rise to the establishment of employee assistance programmes in South Africa, stem from a need to find alternative methods to combat poor work performance and a feeling of internal and external social responsibility as compelled by the socio-political climate and the inability of the formal welfare structure to accommodate the different cultural groups. McKendrick (1990:280) listed the following examples of occupational social work as it occurred in its early stages of development: health education programmes (alcohol, drugs, tuberculosis, AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases), research into absenteeism, retirement preparation programmes, corporate social responsibility, policy formulation, involvement in creating community projects, involvement in assessing requests for donations, assertiveness training groups, stress management groups, groups focussing on communication skills, lifestyle education groups, policy development on AIDS, groups for apprentices, research on nutritional needs of employees, practical assistance and counselling for bereaved families, groups for recovering alcoholics, training of informal helpers in counselling skills and retrenchment counselling. Most of these services are still rendered in the workplace and are as essential now as it was then.

Since the late 1990s, banks, factories, insurance companies, police stations, defence force units, retail distributors, computer companies, cement operations, publishing houses and mines have become reliant on social work services. Findings of Wood & Maentja (1996:112) show that 520 practitioners were active in the field of occupational social work countrywide in August 1995.

A survey done by Du Plessis (1996) bears witness of the fact that the South African National Defence Force employed 153 social workers, of which 35 practitioners served the South African Police Services. Practitioners in the South African Police Services increased to over two hundred by 1996. Many social workers were employed in the mines, but the numbers decreased when these services were contracted out to employee assistance programme vendors and consultants. Despite their ascribed job titles, these professionals still function as occupational social workers.

Du Plessis (1996) found that social workers filled positions in training, organisational development or human resource management in the corporate sector. Many non-social work positions were occupied by social workers in marketing or public affairs, but the identification with their profession of origin remained. There has also been a rapid increase of employee assistance programme contractors who are either social workers in private or group practice or within a specialist division of a welfare agency. Many occupational social workers were also found within the framework of employee assistance programmes.

The diversity of occupational social work is also evident in the ages of the practitioners, qualifications, background, experience, length of service, professional identification, to whom they report and number of employees they serve.



Since services and not products are at stake here, worker and organisational needs determine the work that is done. This may vary from one workplace to the next, and result in a range of similar or different social work services being offered. Du Plessis (1999) analysed descriptions of occupational social work practice as presented by Straussner (1982), Akabas and Kurzman (1982), and Gogins and Godfrey (1987) and came to the conclusion that some social work services are described by the method used, such as counselling, group work, and resource development. In other instances, issues such as retirement, alcohol abuse or safety determine the services required. Social work services can also be outlined by roles, such as advocate, advisor, trainer, educator, broker and consultant, which are played by the social worker. Lastly the dimension of client groups involved, e.g., women, apprentices, and single parents or divorcing employees, also provides an indication of welfare services needed. When considering the wide range and combinations of methods, issues, roles and client groups involved, an understanding of the variety of ways in which needs could be addressed in the workplace becomes clearer (Du Plessis, 1999:24-25). Mor Barak *et al.* (1993), referring to the role diversity of occupational social workers, claim that the development of a unifying vision of occupational social work practice and a co-ordinated and integrated curriculum that reflects this vision, is required.

From this information, it is evident that students can gain experience and knowledge from various programmes in the corporate sector. Where student placements were previously restricted to welfare and health organisation, a variety of exciting opportunities are now available in the corporate world.

## **2.6 MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ROLES OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS**

Googins and Godfrey (1987:5-7) and Mor Barak *et al.* (1993:63) point out some major activities that would constitute the job description of the social worker in the corporate sector, depending on the settings (be it union opposed to corporate), functions (counselling versus policy development) and level of intervention (macro versus micro). They differentiate between counselling programmes, multi-service programmes, social and community change programmes and personnel/human resource. These activities will be discussed and the applicable social work roles will be indicated.

### **2.6.1 Counselling programmes**

Counselling programmes form an integral part of service rendering. It used to be issue orientated, usually alcohol related. Counselling was used as a primary method to build relationships and for contract setting between the service provider and the workplace. Roles, very broadly, would entail those of advocate, enabler, advisor and educator (Akabas & Kurzman, 1982:202-203; Googins & Godfrey, 1987:5-7).

Whilst an undergraduate social work student might not be professionally equipped to manage counselling problems on their own, they can learn by means of observing rather than participating.

### **2.6.2 Multi-service programmes**

Multi-service programmes include counselling with groups and individuals, referrals and follow-up, outreach and crisis intervention (Akabas & Kurzman, 1982:201; Googins & Godfrey (1987:6). Programmes are developed to address problems such

as substance abuse, stress, divorce/separation, education and support, retirement counselling and health promotion. HIV/Aids in the nineties will affect the health status of employees and caseload of the social worker. Consultation is offered to management and /or unions with regard to employee consensus and needs, organisational and group dynamics, policy input and environmental sensing. Research is done on demographics of service users, comparative treatment effectiveness, recidivism, employee/system attitudes, work and the family, stress factors, support and prevention and effects of rapid change at the workplace. Training and Education include management training, substance abuse, stress awareness and communication. The social worker's roles here could be interpreted as consultant, trainer, broker, advocate and mediator (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:8; Yamatani, 1988:35).

The student who lacks the specialised knowledge to intervene directly can assist under strict supervision of the agency social worker and perform smaller tasks in the treatment programme. This offers an ideal opportunity to the student to observe social work roles.

### **2.6.3 Social and community change programmes**

Affirmative action, community relations and corporate responsibility programmes resort under social and community change programmes in which occupational social workers are actively involved (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:7; Marais, 1993:2-15). A discussion of these social and community change programmes follows:

### **2.6.3.1 *Affirmative Action***

Affirmative action is defined by Wallace and Wallace (1987:273) as the policy by which special consideration is given to a member of a group that has suffered discrimination in the past and is therefore considered as unable to compete for the rewards of society, such as education and jobs. After 1994, affirmative action was liberally applied in the South African workforce, to bring about equity. The roles of social workers included administrative training, recruiting, policy development, research and advocacy (Rothman, 1982:192-193; Googins & Godfrey, 1987:7).

Akabus and Kurzman (1982:140-141) have identified a need for further research on the social and personal impact of affirmative programmes for women, minorities and the disabled at workplaces. This is a task that could be assigned to a student, since professionals in the corporate sector do not always have the time to conduct research.

### **2.6.3.2 *Community relations***

Since companies operate within the community, they see themselves as citizens of these communities. The community as host, labour pool and neighbour, has an interest in the corporation and it is therefore critical that a relationship of mutual respect is established between business and the community (Akabus & Kurzman, 1982:189; Googins & Godfrey, 1987:8). Business decisions are no longer made from pure economical or technological vantage points, but social, political, ethical and cultural factors are considered. Should businesses thus fail to meet their obligation towards society, it will be hampered in performing its primary mission efficiently. The field of community relations is well suited for social workers, as this is not a foreign area for them. In this capacity, social workers will be involved in activities such as assessing plant-community problems, developing programmes that

help the organisation to understand the community better and liaising with minority communities (Akabas & Kurzman, 1982:180-181; Perlman, 1982:193; Googins & Godfrey, 1987:8).

Community work is a compulsory method of training in the final year of social work and a practice education placement in the corporate sector, where community relations are pursued, would provide a valuable opportunity to a student to apply his/her theoretical knowledge in practice.

### ***2.6.3.3 Corporate social responsibility***

Social responsibility departments were established in many large companies due to the growing awareness of the interdependence between corporations and the larger society. Social workers with their training and value orientation fit well into this position. The nature of activities in this area entail establishing and maintaining corporate sponsored programmes, working with local communities on joint partnerships in housing, schools, employment training and economic development (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:8; Mor Barak, 1993:71-72).

Rankin (1991:175) identifies a list of tasks that people with community work skills can assist with in the corporate sector: (1) ability to locate and work with community leaders; (2) knowledge of community organisations and their functions in the communities; (3) ability to evaluate and analyse budgets and requests for contributions from community groups and organisations; and (4) ability to conduct a community needs assessment. All of the aforementioned tasks are quite manageable and within a final year student's capability. These tasks are also part of the practicum requirements and could be part of a student's duties if he/she is placed within the corporate sector.

Assisting the corporate sector in involving its members in civic and community groups is another task that could be executed by a social worker with a student who assists.

#### **2.6.3.4 *Personnel/Human resources***

Human resources departments in the corporate sector is another avenue which has opened up job opportunities for social workers. This is attributed to the fact that the workforce has become so complex because of the mix of values, needs and expectations in environments with finite resources and increasing opportunities. Social workers occupy job positions such as organisational development specialists, benefits and compensation administrators, project managers, educational specialists, trainers, communication specialists, personnel administrators and relocation specialists. These are not traditional social work roles but are essential in the present workforce, where the human resources management departments are now concerned with motivational and interpersonal relations (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:9; Googins & Davidson, 1993:483).

As specialised knowledge is required for functioning in human resources, this is therefore not advised for student placements. This section in the corporate sector, however, plays an integral part in the placement of students, as the application for practice education placement from the university will be lodged here and all arrangements with regard to a practice education placement will be made here.

Googins and Godfrey (1987:84-100), after interviewing several occupational social workers in different work settings, identified various positions occupied by them. Ranging from the traditional to the lesser known, they listed employee assistance manager, union social services director, affirmative action specialist, personnel manager, director of employee development and training, urban social affairs specialist, human resources generalist and marketing specialist.

The presence of a social worker in the workplace offers, to the advantaged, social work roles and skills such as a psycho-social understanding of individuals in relation to the environment; relationship building and contract establishment; use of the self as a tool; an ability to listen with a *third ear* (i.e. well developed diagnostic and assessment skills) and process problem solving. Woods and Maentja (1996:113) assert that occupational social workers are employed by profit-making enterprises, in which they work and have to reconcile social work values and methods to corporate philosophy and culture. They conclude that the person-in-environment transaction, which is of central concern to occupational social work, is that between people and their place of work. Maiden (1987:506) is of the opinion that there are very few real differences that separate occupational social work from the traditional areas of social work.

The researcher agrees with Maiden because many of the skills and roles that are used by the social worker can be applied by the student in casework, which is a social work method with which the student at fourth year level is well conversant with.

## **2.7 NATURE OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE RENDERING IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.7.1 Ecological perspective**

Marais (1993:2-9) cites several authorities on occupational social work (Winkelpack, 1984; Googins & Godfrey, 1987; Gould & Smith, 1988; Balgopal, 1989; Du Plessis, 1991; Rankin, 1992), who all support the use of the ecological approach as a framework for social work service delivery in the corporate sector. This approach provides a framework within which the occupational social worker

can expand his/her intervention from a micro to a macro level. According to Marais (1993), the individuals or employees interact with their immediate environment, which is the employers' environment.

Du Plessis (1999:26-30) suggested that there is a continuum of practice from micro to macro intervention in social work. Intervening with individuals at the one end and organisational intervention at the other had extensive influence on the teaching and practice of occupational social work in South Africa. Bargal (2000:139-141) refers to a wide range of activities entered into by social workers, and she organises their activities along two axes. She makes a distinction between a horizontal axis, which represents prevention, and a vertical axis, which represents a unit of intervention. These services could be further divided into micro, meso and macro levels, which, in general social work terms, would boil down to case, group and community work and development.

### **2.7.2 Micro level**

On the micro level, the unit of intervention would be an individual or a family (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:5). According to Bargal (2000) the type of intervention could be primary, secondary or tertiary. Primary intervention is preparation for individual and family transitional states (divorce, relocation, retirement and terminal illness). Secondary intervention refers to individual treatment during emotional stress, the crisis of illness, marital difficulties, work accidents; referral of clients and advocacy with community social services as well as individual treatment of clients with chronic problems. Tertiary intervention pertains to follow-up of employees during physical rehabilitation or after work accidents. Follow-up of former alcoholic and drug abusers who return to work is also included here. Straussner (1990:8-9) states that the employee services model is applied at this level where various physical, mental, familial and social problems, which either directly, or indirectly



relate to the role of workers at the workplace, are addressed. He alludes to the fact that most occupational social workers function at this level in the traditional social work roles such as a counsellor, mediator, advocate and broker. Rankin (1991:115-116) suggests that the industrial social worker can use the problem solving approach or general method of social work practice to direct and plan the professional activities on the micro level.

If a student is placed in the corporate sector, his/her casework could be selected from the micro level. A student will be able to deal with cases, that are not too complicated and make the social worker available for more demanding cases. The skills and roles mentioned are also not new to the students and they should be able to function satisfactorily.

### **2.7.3 Meso level**

The group is the unit of intervention on the meso level (Garvin, 1987; Mor Barak, 1993:63). Rankin (1991:160) asserts that the social worker must look for opportunities to use group skills for purposes of organisational intervention. Primary intervention includes health and mental education, group counselling for special populations (young mothers, single parents etc.,) as well as group counselling for retirees. The establishment of self-help groups to deal with crises (widows and divorcees) form part of secondary intervention. To resource a person for self-help groups at the workplace, in a form of tertiary intervention (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:6; Marais, 1993:2-16). Marais (1993:2-14) identifies the following group services that are found in the workplace:

- marriage counselling for employers and employees
- groups for dependants on chemicals
- single parents
- training in small groups for supervisors

- team or project management
- mediation for employers and employees in terms of sick leave
- preparation for retirement
- organisational development, like team building
- trans-cultural programmes
- post-traumatic programmes, after mine accidents or bank robberies
- influencing of company policy or procedure in terms of maternity leave, flexi-hours, restructuring.

With additional support and training, a student will be able to take charge of most of the above-mentioned groups.

#### **2.7.4 Macro level**

On the macro level the unit of intervention is the organisation and, as in social work practice, the community (Cox, Erlich, Rothman & Tropman, 1987; Fernstein & Brown, 1982:9). Primary intervention occurs by means of identification, selection and training of lay agents to assist the social worker, education and training for management and supervisors in human relation skills, as well as development of programmes for special groups, day care, periodic medical check ups and screening and retirements. Secondary intervention involves mediation in departments' crises; mediation between workers and supervisors; consultation for supervisors and managers regarding employees' needs and problems; and consultation regarding programme management (day care, retirement). Follow-up for department units or groups which have undergone crises (job accidents, mergers, personnel changes) and initiation of rehabilitation projects to meet needs of disabled employees as a group, resort under tertiary intervention.

### **2.7.5 Situation in practice**

South African studies conducted by Rankin (1991) and Du Plessis (1991) show that casework is still the dominant method applied in occupational social work, inferring that intervention (mainly) occurs at the micro level. Du Plessis (1999:28-30), in more recent studies, found that social workers acknowledged that functioning at micro level was not the most effective way of service rendering and that a larger group could be reached on the meso and macro levels. Du Plessis (1999:30) found that occupational social workers equipped themselves with specialist knowledge and skills, by means of formally or informally furthering their studies, by making contact with other social workers occupied in the workplace, thereby enabling themselves to meet the usual challenges and reaching out for creative responses in service delivery. This assertive effort by occupational social workers to meet present-day challenges is very encouraging and will hopefully enhance service delivery on meso and macro level.

After comparing the South African situation with that of the USA, Du Plessis (1991:58) found that the USA was more successful than South Africa in functioning on the macro level. The USA made a major impact with their lunchtime “brown bag” lecture, which addressed varied issues such as stress management and post traumatic stress disorder through their programmes. The Members Assistance Programme (MAP) and Customers Assistance Programmes (CAP) are also very widely applied in the USA. Some of these programmes have been implemented in South Africa, for example at banks, after bank robberies, and mines, after mining accidents. Trans-cultural programmes were offered to employees and their families to enable them to cope with changes in post 1994 South Africa.

If companies are prepared to invest in the training of students to present these programmes, they will be able to draw on manpower at lower or no cost, and offer a valuable service to their work-force (Gustavson & Balgopal, 1991:87-89).

## 2.8 OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

Iversen (1998) gives a new perspective to occupational social work when she criticises the profession and claims that nothing or very little is done to address the employment needs of the poor. She claims that, although social work traditionally focused its service on the economically disadvantaged, occupational social work has no involvement in *welfare for work* or *unemployment and job training programmes*. She further states that occupational social work mostly busies itself with employed people in work organisations, overlooking the needs of unemployed people in work-enhancement programmes.

Iversen (1998) concurs with Ozawa (1980) and Lewis (1997), who believe that the social work profession fails to address the occupational needs of the disadvantaged. They argue that occupational social workers should use the specialised knowledge gained in the workplace and apply it in welfare work and other work-programme settings. They assert that *this occupational practitioner would enact multiple work specific roles concurrently, at multiple system levels*. Although the emphasis of occupational social work practice is now placed on the work related needs, the needs of unemployed and new employees; of the under-employed; the dislocated; working poor people; as well as the needs of those that are comfortably employed could be addressed or enhanced.

The researcher does not see how any company will buy into this concept because they are profit driven. It is perhaps a project that the university can undertake in partnership with social services or non-governmental organisations to empower the

masses of unemployed people in the Western Cape. This venture would create a very challenging and stimulating practice education placement.

### **2.8.1 Work specific role definitions**

Iversen (1998), in an attempt to reformulate occupational social work, had to define multiple work-focused roles. Like earlier occupational social work scholars, she also emphasised social and interpersonal change functions. Although the same levels are focused upon as in generic social work, the work programme is the specific practice domain. With regard to skills, a broader range of employment-specific practice skills at multiple levels of intervention is emphasised. Within this context, titles such as job developer, job coach, employment advisor, retention support worker, and job placement advisor could be given to practitioners in work programmes, but the author chooses to use the more general title of *occupational social worker* to emphasise the substance of the reformulation. Provision should be made for a student to augment his/her basic knowledge with the mentioned specialised knowledge.

### **2.8.2 Work-focused roles**

Iversen (1998) distinguished several roles and skills that could be applied at the different levels (micro, meso, macro) by the occupational social worker. The client is referred to as the *work* programme participant. These roles and skills coincide with those applied in traditional social work, but is used in a *work*-focused setting. As most of these roles and skills are known entities to the student, it can be applied in the corporate sector.

### ***2.8.2.1 Work-focused assessment, brief counselling and referral***

On the micro level, work-focused assessment; brief counselling and referral would be applied when dealing with personal and family issues. Occupational social workers in a work-focused assessment role would, like in the traditional examination of family and interpersonal dynamics, conduct a contextualised assessment of the meaning of work and employment dynamics with each work programme participant (Perlman, 1982:114). When doing an assessment, the occupational social worker would ascertain to which degree personal and family matters, such as substance abuse, health and mental health, and needs of children and other members, have an effect on work attitudes and experience. Differences that present itself in these areas among workers, their co-workers and employees could be dealt with by means of brief counselling referral. The final year student's academic curriculum entails most of the mentioned aspects and he/she will be able to offer assistance to the workers.

### ***2.8.2.2 Work-focused advocacy***

The work-focused advocacy role could be applied on all three levels (micro, meso and macro) because it helps to improve organisational structure and resource management for individuals, groups and organisations, who in this instance would be poor and dislocated workers. As suggested by Googins and Davidson (1993), the occupational social worker could improve the impact of their attempts by joining hands with corporate counterparts. Work-focused advocacy could address prevalent discrimination against workers and bring about hiring mechanisms such as informal recruitment channels to alleviate the anxiety that goes with face-to-face interviews of poor and dislocated workers. Work-focused advocacy could be applied to bring about a change from welfare to work, when businesses are motivated to take advantage of tax breaks by employing unemployed and working/poor clients. Since

Vigilante (1993) reported that work issues related to women are neglected, gender-related policies can also be examined. Factors usually impacting negatively on workers, such as inferior child care, transport problems, unreasonable working hours and insufficient wages, could be investigated by occupational practitioners and reported at policy level to be corrected. Knowledge of work-focused advocacy is not included in the student's curriculum and will have to be offered as specialised knowledge by either the corporate sector or the university.

### ***2.8.2.3 Work-focused programme development***

By enforcing work-focused development, the occupational social worker functions at a macro level. Community-wide prevention and improvement efforts in the form of career enrichment and mentorship activities at high schools, skills development centres and local social service organisations are promoted. These efforts would be an advantage to youth, businessmen and community groups (Iversen, 1998). With the student's knowledge of community work and community development, he/she is adequately equipped to function at macro level in the corporate sector.

### ***2.8.2.4 Work-focused social activist***

The occupational practitioner in this role could initiate and support policy changes that are much needed among poor workers. Appropriate stakeholders could be targeted to promote employment-enhancing policy changes. These efforts could be beneficial to unemployed people not suitable for the full labour market, those in need of on the job training opportunities and others who could be utilised in time-limited community services employment programmes, as recommended by Savner and Greenberg (1997). Skills used by work-programme activists in this regard would be testifying, lobbying, and coalition-building (Janson, 1990). Such activism would be directed at local professional organisations, government task forces on job

creation and workforce development. Although students may have limited knowledge in this regard, they could do research on various relevant aspects and assist with administrative tasks. As an observer, the student can gain first-hand information that is sometimes better than merely reading about it.

#### **2.8.2.5 *Concurrent multi-level practice***

Iversen (1998) maintains that it is possible for individual practitioners to engage in the above mentioned roles concurrently at all three levels (micro, meso and macro). The occupational practitioner would therefore, in each role, compile and apply information about the work-related needs of the clients at all levels of practice to bring about improvement. Exposure to the concurrent multi-level practice will help the student to grasp how theory and practice are integrated.

Iversen's new perspective to occupational social work emphasises that the current roles and skills of the occupational social worker be re-examined and re-evaluated. He advocates that adjustments be made which will include the unemployed. Previously this might have been a minority group, but they now, certainly in South Africa, are becoming a force to be reckoned with. This state of affairs poses the question, whether the universities, non-governmental organisations and government departments should not join hands in addressing these issues. Du Plessis (1994:48) also raised a concern about the inclusion of the subject of *work* and *non-work* in the social work curriculum. This is a very valid concern since many family problems stem from these phenomena.

The university should perhaps re-write their curriculum to make the necessary adjustments whereby students are fitted out with the relevant knowledge and skills that can be applied to make a difference in the various communities and ultimately in the whole country. Areas such as skills training for the unemployed come to



mind, in which students could be effectively utilised. The corporate sector could embark upon such projects as part of their social responsibility action in the community. As an extra bonus, new opportunities for student practice education placement will also be created.

## **2.9 CONCLUSION**

Having explored the domain of social work in the corporate sector, it is apparent that there are more similarities than differences between social work in the work place and social work in the traditional welfare setting where students are usually placed. With the necessary liaison and adjustment the corporate sector could offer a challenging practice education placement area to students.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **PRACTICE EDUCATION PLACEMENT IN SOCIAL WORK WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS ON OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK (PLACEMENT IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR)**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Practice education placement of undergraduate students is widely researched and volumes of books, theses and articles have been written on this subject (Wilson, 1981; Rothman, 2000; Siporin, 1982; Cassidy, 1990; Urbanowski and Dwyer, 1988; Fourie, 1982; Botha, 1976; Knoetze, 1985; Von Pressentin, 1993; Mouton, 1991). According to these sources, it is an accepted fact that field work is an essential ingredient that normally constitutes fifty percent of the social work curriculum. Much research has been done in various fields of social work in an attempt to produce workable and student friendly guides for field work education. Recorded material on placements in the corporate sector are hardly available, which complicates efforts to evaluate these placements. In this chapter, the nature and purpose of practice education placements; significance of practice education placements; practice education placement formats; practice education placement settings; key role players in the practice education placement setting and social work methods in social work *per se* and occupational social work in general, will be examined in order to establish what the theoretical background for practice education placements in a corporate setting ought to be.

#### **3.2 NATURE AND PURPOSE OF FIELD PRACTICE EDUCATION**

Field practice education is often referred to as field instruction. Bogo and Vayda (1987:1) claim that neither an academic course alone nor apprenticeships on their

own could constitute a degree in social work. This view coincides with that of other authors who believe that equal theoretical and practical components are required for a social work curriculum (Hoffman, 1990:3; McKendrick, 1980:223; Urbanowski & Dwyer, 1988:1).

When practice education placement in the corporate sector is considered, undergraduate students will experience a disadvantage, since courses in the specialised field of occupational social work are not offered at this level at most training institutions in South Africa. Students will therefore only be equipped with the basic social work methodology that is required for the traditional placements in governmental, child and family agency settings. The corporate sector is a totally different environment and a specialised frame of reference with regard to certain matters such as policies, personnel components, resources, employee assistance programmes and the nature of professional service delivery is essential. This specialised frame of reference is not only new to a student, but even a qualified social worker or an academic entering the field of occupational social work for the first time, might be quite ignorant on the subject (Gould, 1984:37).

McKendrick (1990:223-224) identified three relevant issues in field instruction which are crucial for developing social work manpower: the availability of field instruction opportunities and the extent to which they can be co-ordinated with campus based teaching and learning; the time which is available for field instruction; the extent to which students are provided with supportive facilities that enhance their ability to learn in the field. It is one of the aims of this study to establish the availability of field instruction opportunities in the corporate sector and the extent to which it can be co-ordinated with campus-based teaching and learning. The time available will be determined by the time frame indicated in the third/fourth year practical guide of the University of the Western Cape. The availability of support

personnel (employee assistance programme co-ordinators and human resource managers) with their available specialised knowledge, will be explored in this study.

### **3.3 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FIELD PRACTICE PLACEMENT**

Bogo and Vayda (1987:1-20); Gitterman and Bargal (1996); Urbanowski and Dwyer (1988:2-3); Wilson (1981:6); and Hoffman (1990:3) describe field instruction as a unique area of social work practice, that is applied through an interactive process between the university and the practice education placement agency. They furthermore assert that an institution which provides social work education, should also offer a practice education placement component. The authors are of the opinion that field instruction is a unique approach to professional education of social workers which demands thoughtful preparation. According to their reasoning, academic courses alone, or an apprenticeship, are not sufficient to qualify for a degree in social work. Involving the corporate sector as a practice education placement component in this instance, would indeed be a challenge for the university and detailed preparation would be required.

Jenkins and Sheafor (1982:14-15) and Thomlison, Rogers, Collins and Grinnell (1996:10) argue that a practice education placement is more than an apprenticeship, because it is not expected of a student to do job shadowing in the social work field to gain practical experience. They contend that practice education placements are carefully designed to facilitate the student's learning in order that he/she will think and act as a professional social worker. They oppose the idea of apprenticeships, since apprentices learn by observing and copying their masters. The danger herein exists that the master could be incompetent, and incorrect examples might be copied. Apprentices are simply trained to do a job and not to think about it. Social workers have to think critically about their own work, as well as the work going on around them. They have to make use of their own strengths and abilities (Cassidy,

1982:199; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:11). Due to the complexity of the corporate sector, a combination of apprenticing and sufficient knowledge of the placement would be essential to equip the student to cope with this setting.

Shardlow and Doel (1996:3-4) conceded that learning about how to do social work, requires that students spend a period of time in a social work agency. With the corporate sector as placement, it is a foregone conclusion that the student will need even more time than is usually required to adapt and to gain knowledge on the day-to-day functioning of the corporate sector.

According to Rothman (2000:4) and Shardlow and Doel (1996), practice education placement offers many unique features as a context for learning. They refer to the fact that students have access to people who use social work services. This opportunity helps them to learn about good practice. In the corporate sector, the student will be exposed to a similar setting, where they will have several clients with different needs or problems that will have to be addressed by the student. Shardlow and Doel (1996) and Rothman (2000:4) also refer to the highly individualised learning opportunities created for the student, which are made available during placements. In the corporate sector, the student will very likely be under the supervision of an occupational social worker who will attend to the student's learning needs.

The aforementioned authors (Bogo and Vayda, 1987; Urbanowski and Dwyer, 1988; Wilson, 1981; Hoffman, 1990; Jenkins *et al.*, 1982; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996; Cassidy, 1982; Shardlow & Doel, 1996) emphasised other interesting factors pertaining to student placements, which are very relevant and applicable to this study. They observe that learning for a student on placement, does not happen by osmosis and that effort and planning for a successful learning experience is required from students and practice teachers (supervision agency support). It is the researcher's

opinion that a student who is placed in the corporate sector will have so much more to learn because of the uniqueness of the placement. Since the agency analysis of the corporate sector would differ vastly from that of a welfare organisation, the agency supervisor's task in explaining and clarifying this, would be more taxing and complicated.

Alluding to time spent and experience gained, Shardlow and Doel (1996) refer to a survey by Davies (1984), which found that students viewed the placements as the most enjoyable part of the social work course. They also described it as the most useful element of the social work course. It was furthermore suggested that students' enthusiasm for placements could be maximised through methods of learning that promote effective skills development, and the acquisition of skills and knowledge for social work practice. They concur that a variety of learning methods and a range of different experiences can be generated during the practice education. Shardlow and Doel (1996:5) posed a challenge to teachers and students to work together and create a series of learning experiences that engage students to promote their learning during placements. They alluded to Bond *et al.* (1993:6), who defined experience as a meaningful encounter, and not just an observation, a passive undergoing of something, but an active engagement with the environment.

When investigating the possibility of students in the corporate sector realising the suggestions by the aforementioned authors would be crucial. When students can combine their learning experiences with active engagement, the placement will be memorable and as Rankin (1991) suggests, the student may even seriously consider pursuing a career in the corporate sector.

### 3.4 CLARIFYING FIELD PRACTICE EDUCATION

It is important to have a clear understanding of what social work field practice education, which is often referred to as practice education placement, entails, especially if a student has to be placed in a setting such as the corporate sector. In a nutshell, Rothman (2000:4); Hoffman (1990:3-4); Thomlison *et al.*, (1996:xii) concedes that practice education placement has three simple goals: Firstly, to ensure that the practice education placement is a learning experience, and a working experience; secondly, to link the classroom learning with the practice education placement learning; and thirdly, to promote partnerships between all parties in practice education placement learning. The first goal could easily be confused in the corporate sector where work and production is of the essence. Those professionals responsible for the students should be forewarned that the students are there for the benefit of learning and not to be abused for cheap labour. Although the environment may differ from the traditional placement at a welfare organisation, the student can also apply knowledge that was gained in the classroom, in the corporate sector. The type of partnership in the corporate sector will be different in that the student will be dealing with human resource staff, employee assistance programme members, management and the occupational social worker. Quite often the social worker might even hold a different position or rank such as employee assistance co-ordinator, human resource manager and consultant (Du Plessis, 1999:24-25).

Thomlison *et al.* (1996:5-10) describe field practice education by way of practice education placement format; practice education placement tutorials; practice education placement settings; practice education placement processes and practice education placement phases. The researcher will use the same format, while attempting to clarify field practice education with specific reference to the corporate sector.

### **3.4.1 Practice education placement formats**

Wilson (1981:8-9); Pettes (1979:29-30); Thomlison *et al.* (1996:7) and Cassidy (1982:203-204) make a distinction between a block placement and a concurrent format. With the block placement, the student is based at the agency for a successive number of days or weeks. With the concurrent placement, the student goes to the practice education placement setting for part of the week and attends classes on campus for part of the week. In both practice education placement formats, the student spends the same number of hours in the practice education placement setting.

Thomlison *et al.*, (1996) concur with Wilson (1981:8-9) with regard to the usefulness of block placements, in their comparison between the two types of placement. Both formats could be useful for placement in the corporate sector. In the case of block placement, there is the advantage that the student is with the corporate sector for a longer period, which allows him/her to learn and absorb more and get used to the work environment. The concurrent placement can be useful in instances where a specific social work method is taught in class and applied during the placement.

#### **3.4.1.1 Block placement**

According to Pettes (1979), Wilson (1981), and Hamilton and Else (1983:24-27), the students take no formal courses when engaged in a block placement and report to the agency for a full week. The university and agency usually determine the hours jointly. Special field integration seminars might be taken concurrently with the block placement, decreasing the student's actual hours in the field. Many field instructors and students, who were exposed to both this and the concurrent placement, prefer the block plan. The block plan offers an opportunity for students to be placed away



from the school. It permits the students to become fully involved in the practice education placement experience. Since they do not attend classes they are available to attend staff meetings and carry out readings and special assignments linked with the placement without the pressures of classroom work. In the block placement they can partake in long-and short-term activities and, since they are there everyday, they will not miss any unexpected developments. With their undivided attention focussed on the practical aspect only, the students are able to learn much faster and more intensively. Apart from the advantages, this placement, unfortunately also holds disadvantages, which need to be dealt with, when this option is considered. Students may find it difficult to connect practice and theory during their absence from the classroom. If the theoretical classes precede the placement, students may forget what they have learnt (Wilson, 1981:8). To combat this problem, students should perhaps be given an assignment to read relevant theory that will coincide with what they are doing during the placement, and also have regular contact with the tutor, as suggested by Danbury (1986:7) and Cassidy (1982:204).

For student placements in the corporate sector, the block placement would be ideal because the students will be working in this setting for a longer period at a time and therefore get used to the work environment, the workers and the personnel.

The tutorial sessions could be used to reinforce and refresh the theoretical knowledge and augment the students' knowledge of the corporate sector as a practical setting (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:194-195).

#### **3.4.1.2 *Concurrent placement***

In this type of placement the student takes a few theoretical courses alongside their practice education placement. This means that the students attend classes on campus and do field education at the agency during the same week. The hours and days

usually differ from school to school and are negotiated with the agency (Hoffman, 1990:30; Gilpin, 1963:13-14).

The great advantage of the concurrent plan is that the students are exposed to the classroom theory on a weekly basis and have an opportunity to apply their knowledge almost immediately. Danbury (1986:7) agrees that the integration of theory with practice is facilitated by concurrent placements. Experiences in the field can be shared in the classroom, since students will be able to commute from the classroom to the field. Students do not work in isolation as in block placements, because they see their classmates regularly and share their learning experiences. Concurrent placements usually go on longer than block placements, which gives the field supervisor an opportunity to get to know the student better.

Students in concurrent placements are under pressure during test or exam times and do not give full attention to their practice education placement. On the days when the student is not at the agency, the field supervisor has to take charge of the student's cases. This can be a source of frustration for the supervisor, the student, and the client and impacts negatively on the student's learning experience (Wilson, 1981:9; Cassidy, 1982:203-205).

The concurrent placement in the corporate sector could be useful when it is used in preparation for block placements. The student could then be exposed to the practice education placement setting once a week and acquire more theoretical knowledge on campus on the other days. Allocation of cases should perhaps be done at this juncture.

### **3.4.1.3 *Student units***

Where three or more students are placed together in the same agency, work closely together and share the same resources, including supervision, it is called a unit (Conklin & Borecki, in Schnek, Bart & Glassman, 1991:122; Hamilton & Else, 1983:41). Several opportunities are created for students (Bruner, 1968) when they are placed in field units. Students can transfer knowledge among each other. A different structure of learning is presented away from individual tutorial experiences with a mentor. Students gain a professional identity and the benefit of a support group within the unit. An opportunity exists for students to integrate classroom learning with field practice experience. The students benefit from the relationship with other professionals in the agency in which the unit is housed.

Kindelsperger and Cassidy (1966:18-21) claim that units offer an important opportunity for field learning at a different level to the familiar tutorial method. They identify the criteria which should be in place for the general structure and environments of student unit centres. They imply that geography is a factor when locating a centre, but that more than one locale can be used for the site. The student placed in the unit should be exposed to a variety of clients with various problems. It is furthermore recommended that all social work methods be used and that students should also gain experience in home visiting.

### **3.4.2 Practice education placement tutorials**

Practice education placement tutorials are also referred to as integrative practice seminars or field seminars (Rothman, 2000:53; Wilson, 1981:280). The purpose of these tutorials, is to ensure that practice education placement and classroom courses are integrated. It is aimed at helping students to build theory from practice, apply

theory to practice and transfer and generalise their learning through exploration, reflection and application. The practice education placement liaison, practice education placement instructor, or an instructor in the social work programme could facilitate tutorials. The tutorials could take place on campus or at the practice education placement setting, as long as students are helped to grasp what they are experiencing, integrate practice issues with theory and become effective social work practitioners. Students are allowed to discuss their practice experiences with their classmates to achieve integration of knowledge. Proper preparation by means of reading, reflection, and discussion is critical (Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:6-7).

Practice education placement tutorials could bridge the gap that exist in terms of the specialised field of occupational social work and the corporate sector, if it could be made available to students placed in this setting (Wilson, 1981; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996). These practice education placement tutorials should involve a joint effort between the university and the corporate sector. A group of students should be involved, as it would not be feasible to spend so much manpower on one student.

### **3.4.3 Field practice settings**

Wilson (1981:16-17); Hamilton and Else (1983:32) and Thomlison *et al.* (1996:8) concur that social workers function in many different settings. This may mean working with specific problem areas such as substance abuse, parenting, homelessness, or encounters with the criminal justice system. Social workers often work with groups who have common needs or problems such as anger management, self-help, and problems with foster parents. Families need assistance in the form of family support or family preservation programmes. Social workers are very active in communities such as welfare reform community relations network and advocacy groups.

The authors managed to depict the different methods in social work namely, case, group and community work and the problems found in communities. All of these problems, surface in the workplace or corporate sector, because workers' problems influence their capacity to work. Students placed in the corporate sector, will be able to apply the methods of social work taught in the classroom and in practice. Yamatani (1988:35) identifies types of problems experienced by workers in the corporate sector, among others, as job frustration, stress, drug or alcohol dependency, emotional and marital problems. Barak and Bargal (2000:8) refer to problems prevalent in the workplace in the twenty-first century, such as discrimination against lesbians and gays, as well as HIV issues.

#### **3.4.4 Field practice process**

People who go by various titles, usually arrange the placement of students. These titles vary through practice education placement director, field director, practice education placement co-ordinator and field co-ordinator (Wilson, 1981:18-19; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:8-9; Rothman, 2000:43-45). For purposes of this study, the person that does the practice education placement, will be the field practice co-ordinator. The tasks of this official as indicated by the aforementioned authors, coincide with those at the local universities, namely to ensure that there are enough field practice settings to accommodate all of the social work students. A variety of field practice settings should be available to afford a meaningful choice and a real learning experience. The field practice co-ordinator has to try, to the best of his/her ability, to match each student with a suitable placement where the social work staff will have the time, the interest, the knowledge and the skills to provide the student with a good learning environment (Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:9). When placing students in the corporate sector, the field practice co-ordinator will have to be very selective and make sure that the student is a suitable candidate with a keen interest in this field. This is necessary because of the difference of this setting, opposed to the

welfare organisations. It will be expected of the student to acquire comprehensive knowledge and information regarding the organisational structure and day-to-day functioning of the corporate sector (Googins, 1987:193).

### 3.4.5 Field practice phases

In the opinion of Hoffman (1990:53-54), Thomlison *et al.* (1996:9); Rothman (2000:36-39), the field practice experience consists of four field practice phases. The **first phase** is the matching of the student with a practice education placement setting. Here, the student should be able to grasp the purpose, and intent of a practice education placement setting within the context of the social work program (Siporin, 1982:186-187; Thomlison *et al.* 1996:9). A student chosen to do practice education placement in the corporate sector in this phase, should already be knowledgeable about the type of placement and how it differs from other placements. He/she will use the placement to meet the requirements of the social work program.

In the **second phase** the student should get to know the practice education placement instructor, and get settled into the setting. A meaningful learning environment should be created and educational expectations need to be in place (Urbanowski & Dwyer, 1988:76-77; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:9). During this phase the student in the corporate sector should know when, where and to whom to report and who the agency supervisors and the rest of the team members in human resources and management are. The student needs to know the duties, clients and methods of social work to be applied.

The **third phase** is about progressing and performing and executing tasks and activities. Weekly supervision and other educational support structures that are available, such as practice education placement tutorials, should be utilised by the student. By doing this the student will be engaging in meaningful learning which

will enable him/her to examine and evaluate his/her work (Rothman, 2000:47; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:10). The student in the corporate sector, will face the reality of his/her placement at this stage, because he/she will have clients to deal on the one hand and apply theoretical knowledge as a student, and he/she will be, working with the staff component, as a colleague, and the expectations that goes with it, in terms of work policies, etc., on the other hand.

The **fourth phase** marks the end of the placement and the students are expected to summarise their practical experience (Rothman, 2000:115-118; Wilson, 1981:164). The student and field practice co-ordinator should make timely arrangements with regard to clients who were assigned to the student. Knowledge gained during the practice education placement should be channelled to guide the student in terms of further placements or career choice. Evaluations, which might be mid-term or final year, also take place during this phase, depending on the programme. By evaluating the student's practice education placement, the quality of the practical experience is assessed, which is beneficial to current students at an agency, as well as for those who will be placed in future (Siporin, 1982:187; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:10).

Since student placements in the corporate sector do not happen as often as it does in the welfare organisations, it is crucial that thorough and regular evaluation should be undertaken. These outcomes could be recorded and, if possible, be published in order to raise awareness and promote placements of this nature. Experience and knowledge gained could be shared among universities and the corporate sector to make further placements easier and more student friendly (Rankin, 1991:306-309).

### **3.5 KEY ROLE PLAYERS IN THE PRACTICE EDUCATION PLACEMENT SETTING**

Hoffman (1990:53-55), Thomlison *et al.*, (1996:12) and Rothman (2000:8-11), identify various people who are involved in the learning experience of the field practice setting. These people include the classmates; the programme field practice director; the field practice instructor; the field practice liaison person; the field practice tutorial teacher; professionals in other settings; other agency personnel; the student. For purposes of this study, the names of the role players will be adapted to avoid confusion. The field practice director will be called the practice education placement co-ordinator; the field practice instructor will be referred to as the field supervisor.

#### **3.5.1 The classmates**

For Thomlison *et al.* (1996) classmates are a diverse group. They come from a variety of ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. Rothman (2000:53) also alludes to *other students*, meaning those students who are placed at the same agency, with whom the student has to share office space and other facilities such as the telephone or the car. These might be social work students or students from other faculties altogether. Whilst the author encourages good relationships between students, he cautions that the principle of confidentiality should always be maintained by the social work student.

In this research, classmates are those students who are members of the supervision and tutorial groups, student units in the corporate sector and those attending the theoretical classes on campus. Classmates are able to share their anxieties and uncertainties, as well as positive learning experiences. Classmates create an



atmosphere in which it is permissible to share the good and bad of their placements (Judah, 1982:144-145).

### **3.5.2 Field practice director/field practice co-ordinator**

The overall co-ordination and administration of the field practice component of the social work programme is the responsibility of the field practice co-ordinator. The field practice co-ordinator is responsible for matching the student with the field practice setting and other role players involved. Other responsibilities include selecting and appointing field practice teachers; introducing students and field practice teachers to their respective roles and requirements of the university; approving the workload assigned to the student by the field practice teacher and educating the field practice teacher in the methodology of practice teaching. (Hoffman, 1990; 53-54; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:13; Rothman, 2000:13).

It will be the responsibility of the practice education placement co-ordinator to liaise and negotiate with the corporate sector to create a practice education placement for a social work student. He/she will also be the contact person between the university and the corporate sector.

### **3.5.3 Practice education placement instructor/field supervisor**

Urbanowski and Dwyer (1988:7-8, 37); Hoffman (1990:53-54); Thomlison *et al.* (1996:13) and Rothman (2000:8) assert that the practice education placement instructor would be a professional social worker, employed by the agency where the practice education placement setting is located. This person will be communicating with the social work programme via a field practice liaison; assigning tasks to students and evaluating them perform various functions. The possibility of more than one practice education placement instructor is suggested due to the multiple

nature of their tasks, Further expectations are to ensure that practice education placement standards are met; students skills, qualities and potential are matched with services provided by the setting; interests of clients are protected; and a smooth working relationship is ensured between students and other staff in the field practice setting. This information correlates with Danbury (1986:24) who claims that the supervisor carries a dual responsibility, namely to the agency and the educational institution using this agency for practice education placement.

In the corporate sector, one or a combination of staff members could execute the duties of the field supervisor. The obvious person would be the occupational social worker, or in the absence of one, an employee assistance programme member or staff member from human resources could suffice.

#### **3.5.4 Field practice liaison/campus supervisor**

The field practice liaison officer (campus supervisor) serves as a link between the field practice instructor (field supervisor) and the social work programme. This person is engaged in ongoing discussions with the field practice instructor and is also responsible for the final grading of the student. Other tasks, inter alia, involve solving of problems, enhancing learning and supporting the student and field practice instructor (Hoffman, 1990:53; Rothman, 2000:13; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:13-14). The campus supervisor would work closely with the occupational social worker or any other relevant staff member who would be the appointed field supervisor in the corporate sector.

#### **3.5.5 Field practice/tutorial teacher**

The field practice teacher helps to integrate the practice education placement experience with the rest of the social work curriculum and to develop the student as

a professional person in order to link all the pieces together. These functions could be separated, with the field practice liaison doing the linking and the field practice tutorial doing the integration. It could also be combined, with the one person responsible for both functions (Hoffman, 1990; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:14; Rothman, 2000:25). The field supervisor, in the corporate sector, and the campus supervisor and/or practice education placement co-ordinator could take joint responsibility to serve as the practice education placement tutorial teacher, because the campus staff and student will rely heavily on the field supervisor to guide them on issues unique to a placement in the corporate sector.

### **3.5.6 The student**

The student is the central figure in all the communication, bridge building and problem solving. It is the student whose learning experience, future and professional life is at stake. The practice education placement setting affords the student the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge, to do actual social work practice in a purposeful way (Sheafor & Jenkins, 1982:146; Urbanowski & Dwyer, 1988:12-13; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:14). It is imperative that the student knows what the major functions at the field practice setting are. This will enable him/her to fit his/her own activities into the broader frame of the profession. The types, goals, structures and dynamics of field practice settings are all different. The student should be able to examine his/her role within the field practice setting and establish the relationship of the agency within the social service delivery systems and society in general. After doing this, the student will be able to determine whether he/she wants to be a social worker, why and what kind of social worker he/she wants to be (Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:14-15). Danbury (1986:27-28) explains that the change of role into that of a social work student automatically creates anxiety. These anxieties can be lessened if the supervisor immediately informs the student what to do. Gustavson and Balgopal, (1991:87-88), concluded that students wishing to enter the corporate sector should

be prepared to intervene at all levels of the organisation. They should be able to assume several roles such as advocate, trainer and programme developer, in addition to direct service roles. They affirm that the nature of the work in a post-industrial society requires occupational social workers to possess multiple skills.

### **3.5.7 Professionals in other settings**

Rothman (2000:52) refers to other professionals such as teachers, psychologists and community planners in the practice education placement with whom students may have dealings, be it professional or social, and reminds the students that information about the client may only be shared with the client's permission.

In the corporate sector, other professionals such as human resources managers and employee assistance programme co-ordinators play a significant role because they are responsible for providing the student with additional knowledge about the company, as suggested by Googins and Godfrey (1987).

### **3.5.8 Other agency personnel**

Rothman (2000:52) refers to non-professional staff such as receptionists, administrative assistants, and para-professionals, who are employed by agencies. She suggests that these people may be involved with the agencies' clients and programmes and therefore be part of a treatment team. She advises that the students should draw on their expertise and knowledge, to help them to gain complete understanding of a client or a problem. This is a valuable resource for a student placed in the corporate sector who will have to make use of all available forms of information to get to know the practice education placement setting.

All the key role players mentioned are essential and play an integral part in the placement of the student.

### **3.6 SOCIAL WORK METHODS**

Sheafor *et al.* (1994); and Thomlison *et al.* (1996:11) confirm that the social work profession exists to provide humane and effective social services to individuals, groups, committees and societies so that people's social functioning may be enhanced and their quality of life improved. In social work, social services are rendered by means of social work methods. It therefore stands to reason that a major part of the social work curriculum is aimed at offering instruction in the different methods, namely casework, group work, community work and development (McKendrick, 1980:220). The different social work methods will now be defined and the researcher will attempt to contextualise it in terms of placement in the corporate sector.

#### **3.6.1 Casework**

Casework, according to Sheafor and Jenkins (1982:146), Johnson (1989) and Hepworth and Larson (1994:20-21), is a direct form of practice on a micro level. In casework the focus is on assisting individuals, couples or families to cope with different types of problems which might hamper their social functioning.

In former years, casework used to be the predominant social work method. McKendrick (1980:308) showed that social work methodology comprised the bulk of field instruction in South Africa. Whilst casework will always be an essential method in social work, it is by no means the most effective method for addressing the escalating needs of poor communities in South Africa (White Paper, 1996). In the opinion of Du Plessis (1987:27), casework is applied in the corporate sector

when dealing with the troubled employee. A troubled employee is a worker whose personal problems impact negatively on his work performance.

She further states that workers' problems often stem from three inter-related areas of living, namely life transitions, environmental pressures and interpersonal processes. Marriage, promotion, retirement and loss of a spouse are examples of life transitions where people require changes in self-image, perceptions, feelings, goals and ways of using environmental resources. Mergers, shift-work, unsafe working conditions, lack of appropriate transport arrangements and child-care facilities are examples of environmental pressures. Racial tension at the workplace, grievances and conflict between supervisors and subordinates are further common examples of interpersonal processes.

The social worker in the corporate sector would ideally intervene in the context of an employee assistance programme which, inter alia, entail constructive confrontation, confidential counselling, accompanying employees to resources, counselling families where appropriate, after-care and follow up (Googins & Godfrey, 1987:84; Du Plessis, 1996:113; Maentja, 1999:26-30). Linking employees with the correct resources is an important skill that should be mastered in this setting.

In view of the given facts, it is evident that the type of problems and clients dealt with in the corporate sector range from simple, to highly complex. It is therefore imperative that very careful planning should go into selecting the student for placement and allocating suitable cases that would match the capability and competencies of the student. The researcher concurs with Wilson (1981:26) who argues that the student should be well informed about, and suitable for the placement.

### 3.6.2 Group work

Toseland and Rivas (1975:1-12); and Garvin (1987) claim that group work as a method, is used by several helping professionals. They explain that treatment groups are mostly used by nurses, psychologists, counsellors, psychiatrists, teachers, clergy and others. Task group methods are utilised by managers, supervisors, administrators, staff development specialists, politicians and community organisations to carry out their job functions or the mandates of their organisations. Toseland and Rivas (1975:12) further define group work as: “goal directed activity with small groups of people aimed at meeting socio-emotional needs and accomplishing tasks. This activity is directed to individual members of a group and to the group as a whole within a system of service delivery”. Components of this definition are supported by other authorities on group work such as Douglas, (1976); Glasser, Sarri and Vinter (1974) as well as Davies (1975).

In the corporate sector, human relations professionals use organisational development, to make the workplace more humanistically orientated (Fernstein & Brown, 1982:18). The small groups process is the principal method used to bring about desired change. Groups of people are seen as the essential component in all organisations. Different types of groups are required in the corporate sector, such as sensitivity training groups; encounter groups; social groups and T-groups. Senior social work students, assisted by employee assistance group members, will be able to conduct group work in the corporate sector. Students can make a valuable contribution and also acquire knowledge in terms of team building, inter group problem solving confrontations; assessments, goal setting, planning, data collection, problem identification; evaluation and analysing feedback (Fernstein & Brown, 1982:18-19).

### 3.6.3 Community work

Community work is a social work method (based on a scientific process) which is directed towards achieving one or more of the following objectives: (1) to satisfy the broad needs of the community and to create and maintain a balance between the needs and the resources in the community; (2) to provide the community with the opportunity to exploit its strengths and potential (knowledge and skills); (3) to effect change in the community, in group relations and the distribution of decision-making powers (Dunham, 1970; Barclay, 1982; Lombard, 1982; Gray, 1996).

In order to define community development, opinions of several authors such as Ferrinho (1980); Lombard (1991:118); Rothman (1997:5) and Potgieter (1998:244) were explored. It can be concluded that community development is a process designed to create conditions of economic and social progress for the whole community with its active participation and the fullest possible reliance on the community's initiative. When comparing the definition of community work and community development, it is understandable why Dunham (1997:175) asked whether they are the same thing, whether they are different but related or whether in fact they are completely separate concepts. Furthermore, Lombard (1991:119) pointed out that community work is concerned with enabling people to enjoy a positive and abundant lifestyle, it professes to have faith in humanity and in communal living. There is also a mutual common belief in people's right to self-determination and ability to help themselves.

Lombard (1991) and Sanders (1975) believe that the community's involvement, along with the necessary support from the private and government sectors, can result in the community improving and managing their own living conditions in all areas of development. In this regard, the corporate sector clearly has a contribution to make on a macro level in the form of social responsibility.



Since the focus of this study is on the corporate sector, it is essential to peruse the definition of occupational social work. Googins and Godfrey (1987:5) refer to occupational social work as a field of practice in which social workers attend to the human needs of the work community by designing and executing appropriate interventions to ensure healthier individuals and environments. From this definition, it is understood that social work services are offered at the workplace on behalf of employees, families and the total employment system (Smith & Gould, 1993:9).

Community work and community development in the corporate sector refer to those services rendered on a macro level, such as the EAP which is described as a new occupational benefit designed to enhance overall social functioning of employees and their families (Kurzman, 1993:35). Community in this context would include the work community as well as the broader community in which the employees live, or the area from where the corporate sector operates. Examples of collective issues identified by social workers are: developing school holiday programmes for employees' children; arranging additional transport for employees; planning recreation programmes for housing projects. Empowerment of minority groups or wives of employees would also fall within its ambit (Du Plessis, 1987:27). According to Lindblom (1995:97), occupational social workers have an input in matters such as developing policy related to hiring of personnel, establishing training seminars and educational programmes and serving as consultants to management on specific needs of workers.

The corporate sector discharges their corporate social responsibility by means of community involvement, social planning activities and by conducting social impact assessments focussing on the quality of life in a given community or region. Community involvement includes participation in the funding of community resources; support of employee-volunteer activity and loaning of personnel and making funds available through philanthropically gifts and grants. Examples of

social planning activities occur when the corporation acts as a viable unit within the community, participates in establishing and altering policies and procedures, etc. (Fernstein & Brown, 1982:22).

The researcher agrees with Gustavson and Balgopal's (1991:87) recommendation that students should be prepared to intervene at all levels of organisations to assume various roles such as advocate trainer and programme developer, in addition to direct service roles.

An undergraduate social work student could quite comfortably be placed in any of the projects given above and apply the different approaches as identified by Rothman (2000); Lombard (1992:121); Midgley (1995); and Gray (1996), namely community action, social action, community organisation, social planning and community development. The corporate sector would benefit, since they would be the recipients of free manpower in exchange for a student placement.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

Gauging from the literature on practical education in social work, it is evident that such a placement in the corporate sector is possible. There are certain prerequisites however, that have to be in place to ensure a successful placement. It is of extreme importance for the university to co-ordinate the placement and see to it that all the role players such as the practice education placement co-ordinator, field supervisor, campus supervisor, tutorial teacher and students have clarity on all aspects of the placement and their specific roles. Very crucial is the willingness and preparedness of both the university and corporate sector to work in close collaboration with each other to ensure regular contact and direct communication. With a mutual quest for success and a joint venture to gain optimal benefit from the placement, it will be beneficial to the university, the corporate sector, and the student.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE MANAGEMENT OF PRACTICE EDUCATION PLACEMENTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The success of a placement in the corporate sector will depend fully on the management of the practice education programme. It is therefore imperative that thorough and careful planning should be done prior to the actual placement. Hoffer (1989:213) realised the importance of the input of both the professional educators and social work practitioners in the workplace. He concluded that they form a valuable information resource pool. He suggests that resources of “town” and “gown” should be assembled in order to produce the educational ingredients for competent practice in the workplace. By placing students in the corporate sector, these educational ingredients can be shared and documented and thereby produce better equipped social workers. Gustavsson (1991:88) supports this idea and advises that social work academia and the employee assistance programme practitioners should work together to improve the overall quality of life of workers at both organisational and individual levels. The opinions of these authors urge schools of social work and the corporate sector to join forces. Utilising the corporate sector for practice education placement is a very logical and lucrative starting point.

In this chapter, the researcher will explore the requirements of the Department of Social Work at the University of the Western Cape, for the fourth year undergraduate students, as well as the requirements for practice education placements in the corporate sector, in order to establish the suitability of the

corporate sector for practice education placement. Models of practice education placement and employee assistance programmes will be discussed and scrutinised so that the most appropriate models for practice education placement in the corporate sector can be found. Lastly, student supervision will be studied, with the intention of matching it with a practice education placement in the corporate sector.

## **4.2 Practice education placement models**

Several models have been identified by authors such as Rothman and Jones (1971); Shafer (1982); Bogo and Vayda (1987); Hoffman (1990) and Danbury (1994). Models applicable to student placement in the corporate sector will be selected and discussed hereafter.

### **4.2.1 Apprenticeship model**

Education for social work began with apprenticeship training, according to Jenkins and Sheafor (1982:14-15) and Bogo and Vayda (1987:20), who claim that this model focuses on learning through doing. The student observes a professional at work and thereby gains knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Shafer (1982:218) explains that the field instructor serves as a model for the student. Observation may take place during an interview by means of a one-way mirror or videotape. This model is often used in combination with other models to avoid students destroying their own initiative and curiosity by becoming passive observers. This model can be applied when a student is allocated a practice education placement in the corporate sector, because the student will not have the expertise to work in such a specialised field and can certainly learn by means of observation. The function of the social worker would be to guide the student by suggesting, directing and coaching, as advised by Bogo and Vayda (1987:20).

### **4.2.2 Role system model**

The transactional nature of the relationship between student and field instructor is focused on the role system model.

For Ford and Jones (1987) and Bogo and Vayda (1987:22-23) the basis for the relationship between the student and the field supervisor lies more in shared recognition of the expertise and competence of both the learner and the teacher. Respect, openness, collaboration and an expectation of active involvement in planning, implementing and evaluating learning and progress in the field are indicated as the ideal learning climate. The communication of positive and negative feedback is essential to provide the ongoing data necessary to modify the learning environment and practice behaviour. By means of ongoing negotiations, the role expectations of the student and field supervisor are agreed upon. Formal or informal contracts are used to formulate the structure and process of the educational and service components of field instruction.

This model will benefit the student /supervisor relationship in the corporate sector because it will promote a climate conducive to learning and to the professional growth of both parties.

### **4.2.3 Academic model**

The student's cognitive development, focusing primarily on knowing and understanding the professional knowledge base, is emphasised by this model. The academic model is aimed at providing examples of the theory learned in the academic setting. After a student has obtained theoretical knowledge, it is expected of the field supervisor to facilitate "an experience where the students test out their knowledge" (Jenkins, 1962:15-16). Although the field supervisor is informed of the

content of the course, the facility representative bears the greater educational responsibility for the integration of theory and practice. A professional knowledge base is used to direct professional responses (Sheafor & Jenkins, 1982:15-16; Bogo & Vayda, 1987:23).

In a practice education placement at the corporate sector, the campus supervisor will be the person responsible for the academic input, whilst the agency supervisor will impart knowledge pertaining to the placement.

#### **4.2.4 The traditional model**

This model was named by Rothman and Jones (1971) and Rothman (1977), and actually describes the American practice model. However, it is a model widely used by most English-speaking countries Shafer (1982:218-219); Hoffman, (1990:7-8) refers to this model as the tutorial model.

According to this model, the student attends academic classes concurrently with the practice education placement. A field supervisor at the agency is responsible for the student's supervision, which takes place on a weekly basis. Both educational and administrative components are attended to (Hoffman, 1990:8).

Shafer (1982:219) states that students are prepared for the practice by direct service experience. Students are given partial responsibility for a few cases, families, groups and a community work project. Shafer (1982:219) maintains that the student's development of analytical, interactional and technical skills is enhanced by their practical experience. The importance of recording, which can be done by means of process or summary reports or audio or video recordings, is pointed out by Ford and Jones (1987:90-91). The student needs to present his/her work to his/her supervisor for discussion and evaluation of his/her performance. The university provides

assistance to the field supervisors by means of orientation programmes, conferences, workshops and contracts through a university liaison person who is a regular member of the faculty (Hoffman, 1990:8). Most of the elements pointed out in this model, are applicable to the undergraduate programme of the social work students at the University of the Western Cape.

In the corporate sector, specialist knowledge about the placement will be provided by the applicable specialist, who may or may not be the social worker, as mentioned by Hoffman (1990:8).

#### **4.2.5 The articulated model**

With this model, Bogo and Vayda (1987:23-24) explain that the student must become “fully aware of what is involved in the act, know why that intervention is selected and be prepared to determine how the necessary helping techniques should be performed. Beyond that, the art of the students individual practice style takes over”. They cite Sheafor and Jenkins (1982:17-18) who argue for planned linkages between academics and the field content, wherein the curriculum is carefully sequenced. As the authors rightfully point out, all agencies would prefer this model, because their assumption is that the student will have adequate knowledge to function productively. This is, however, a very costly exercise, as the agency will have to fork out the capital and manpower to provide the required knowledge. In the corporate sector, the Human Resource manager, EAP co-coordinator or social worker will have to take on the task to ensure that a student can function optimally in the placement.

#### **4.2.6 Competency based model**

Pilcher (1982:63) describes competence in practice as an overall goal of social work competence and claims that the level of confidence expected in the graduate is sufficient for responsible professional practice. In this model, the learning objectives are defined in specific, observable, behavioural terms, the learning activities and teaching modules are designed to ensure mastery of those skills, and evaluation, measures are developed for use in assessing student learning in relation to the original objectives (Bogo & Vayda, 1987:24-25).

The competency level of a student to be placed in the corporate sector will only meet the university objectives for practice education placements, because it does not include specialised areas such as occupational social work. The corporate sector will have to accept the responsibility of providing specialised knowledge.

### **4.3 MODELS OF OCCUPATIONAL SOCIAL WORK**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

In occupational social work, the employee assistance programme is the model used most widely by social workers in the corporate sector. According to various authors, such as Killian (1981), Ozawa (1980), Googins (1987), Du Plessis (1992), and Mor Barak (2000), there are several EAP models that can be applied according to the needs and characteristics of an organisation. The corporate sector can even decide on a combination of models to suit the needs of the company and the employees Starker, (1989:19-24). The models most suitable for the practice education placement of an undergraduate social work student in the corporate sector will now be discussed.



### **4.3.2 The "on-site" treatment model**

According to this model, the organisation has its own multi-disciplinary team, consisting of social workers, psychologists, doctors and nurses who are available to offer counselling services to employees and their families Starker (1989:19-24). This model is expensive for companies to maintain and they are moving away from it. Although this model is not feasible and cost effective for the corporate sector, it does offer a suitable practice education placement for an undergraduate social work student. Killian (1981:170) refers to the management/welfare agency model, which is very similar to this model.

### **4.3.3 The "off-site" model**

This model makes provision for employees to be referred to community resources for assistance. The organisation's EAP co-coordinator would diagnose the initial problem and refer the employee to the relevant resources. The EAP co-coordinator may assist with follow-up and after care services. The success of this model depends on the availability of the resources, and organisations often opt for a combination of the "on- and off-site" models Starker (1989:19-24). With the assistance of a professional, a student will be able to deal with follow-up and after care services. Similar to this model, Killian (1981) describes the union model, according to which services are provided from private, off-site or union -funded centres, which offer a wide range of mental health and educational services.

### **4.3.4 The contract model**

Organisations implementing this model may contract with a welfare agency, a professional or a group of professionals in private practice to provide employees or their families with counselling (Killian, 1981:175; Starker, 1989:19-24).

The suitability of this model for practice education placement will depend on the willingness and attitude of the private practitioner involved. Taking on a student would be very risky and private practitioners may be reluctant, since their time, income and reputations are at stake.

#### **4.3.5 The consortium model**

Smaller organisations, which are not able to employ a full-time EAP co-coordinator, often make use of this model. In this instance, a group of organisations in close proximity team up and create their own employee assistance programme Starker (1989:19-24). Once again, practice education placements will depend on the willingness of the individuals involved. Social workers in full time employment are more willing to take on students, if their employers agree, than are private practitioners.

The “on-site” and “off-site” models will be the most suitable for practice education placements. The contract and consortium models are not suitable, because of the flexible working hours and the fact that the social worker could be employed by various companies.

#### **4.4 PRACTICE EDUCATION PLACEMENT OBJECTIVES**

Practice education placement objectives and procedures are developed by schools of social work and compiled in a practice education placement or practical manual. According to Hoffman (1990:38-39), practical course outlines are also referred to as *field instruction manuals/guides*. The manual usually expresses a variety of practice models, with a range of client groups, target systems or projects (Urbanowski & Dwyer, 1988:11-12; Siporin, 1982:187-189; Bogo & Vayda, 1987:17).

Since the researcher is a part-time contractual employee of the Department of Social Work at the University of the Western Cape, this university's practice education placement requirements for the fourth year undergraduate students, as specified in the *Guide for Practice Education 2001*, will be used.

#### 4.4.1 Objectives of practical training

According to the guide for Practice Education (2001:1-2), "...*the long-term objective of the practice education programme in the fourth year is to continue preparing and to round off students for competent practice as entry-level social workers.*" (refer Appendix I)

The following objectives for casework, group work and community work will be focused on:

##### ***Casework***

##### ***The student should acquire and demonstrate: -***

- ◆ the ability to function within the structure of the agency in respect of casework
- ◆ knowledge of and use of intervention strategies, such as short-and long-term casework, crisis intervention and family counselling
- ◆ the ability to develop social work skills for effective practice in various client systems
- ◆ the ability to develop skills and written communication in respect of casework
- ◆ acquire knowledge and have differential use of intervention strategies, such as short-and long-term casework, crisis intervention and family counselling.
- ◆ the ability to develop social work skills for effective practice in various client systems
- ◆ the ability to develop own professional functioning through the effective use of supervision

**Figure 4.1: Casework requirements** (Practice Education Guide, University of the Western Cape, 2001 [refer Appendix I])

***Group work******The student should acquire and demonstrate:-***

- ◆ the ability to function within the structure of the agency in respect of group work the ability to form a group
- ◆ knowledge of and use of appropriate theoretical knowledge and illustrate its relevance to a group
- ◆ knowledge of and use of interventionist skills in the group work process
- ◆ the ability to develop skills in oral and written communication in respect of group work
- ◆ the ability to develop own professional functioning through the effective use of supervision

**Figure 4.2: Group work requirements** (Practice Education Guide, University of the Western Cape, 2001 [refer Appendix I])

***Community Work******The student should acquire and demonstrate:-***

- ◆ the ability to function within the structure of the agency in respect of community work
- ◆ the ability to model the community work project systematically, to assess needs, formulate goals, select appropriate interventionist strategy, implement plans, evaluate the results and make recommendations
- ◆ the knowledge of and use of social work skills for effective practice in community work
- ◆ the ability to develop skills in written communication in respect of community work
- ◆ the ability to develop own professional functioning through the effective use of supervision

**Figure 4.3: Community work requirements** (Practice Education Guide, University of the Western Cape, 2001 [refer Appendix I])

For students to reach these objectives, as presented in Figure 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3, the practical training programme also includes the following components:

- A four-day (32 hours per week) placement, at a social service agency, from May to August during which a community work project and either case work or group work will be undertaken.
- A community work planning report plus two individual evaluations of practical work, one per semester.
- Continuous weekly recording for the duration of the placement at agencies during the second and third terms.
- Continuous weekly supervision for the duration of the placement at the agencies and a final composite report on the practical work.

The elements of the different models or models which have been discussed are found in these objectives, as well as more than one model of field teaching, as pointed out by Shafer (1982:217).

The objective of these field practice programmes are in line with Thomlison *et al.* (1996:10), who opined that practice education placements are carefully designed to facilitate the student's learning in order for him to think and act as a professional social worker. The requirement that students spend 32 hours per week at an agency coincides with the view of Shardlow and Doel (1996:3-4), who maintained that learning about how to do social work requires that the student spends a period of time at a social work agency.

Most of the required objectives in the Guide for Practice Education 2001 can be met by a practice education placement within the corporate sector. Googins and Godfrey (1987:189) cite the results of a study by Viret and Jones (1981:19-20) on social services and work, according to which practitioners illustrated their competency by listing their primary use of traditional social work methods. *Case work* entailed diagnosis, motivational interviewing, assessment, brief therapy, crisis intervention, information and referral and case management. *Group work* included task-oriented

groups, training seminars in specific areas (e.g. stress management, time management, health promotion and behavioural modification) training in communication for new supervisors, on the job training, orientation of new employees and basic adult education courses for handicapped or non-English speaking workers. *Community organisation*, according to Googins *et al.* (1987:189), encompasses resource development through community directories for information and referral; the building of formal and informal support systems and networks within unions and industries; planning and administering programmes (e.g. record keeping, budgeting, staffing); policy development both for specific programmes and general organisations; the provision of human resource management and needs assessment and evaluation.

Most of the objectives presented in the Practice Education Guide (2001), are also stipulated by Hamilton and Else (1983:17), who say that the field component and global educational programme have a common goal to produce effective social workers whose practice reflects the knowledge, skills and values of the profession. These authors are of the opinion that practice education placement makes two distinct contributions. Firstly, it offers students the opportunity to test, integrate and incorporate the behavioural repertoire, knowledge, skills and values studied in the classroom. Secondly, it facilitates new learning that can only happen in the field, which can then be analysed in the classroom to confirm, refute or modify existing theory and method.

The content of the Practice Education Guide (2001) meets the requirements of a guide as set out by Hoffman (1990:39), Botha (2000) and Wilson (1981), and serves the purpose of preparing a teaching-learning track for the student and practice teacher to follow.

As indicated in Chapter Three, it is evident that most social work methods can be applied in the corporate sector.

#### **4.5 REQUIREMENTS FOR PRACTICE EDUCATION PLACEMENTS IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR**

In order to attain the objectives of the practice education programmes, certain requirements should be met. Root (2000:23), citing Dane and Simon (1991), refers to the corporate sector as a “host” organisation, meaning that the mission and decision making are defined and dominated by people who are not social workers (Rothman, 2000:6). As such, it is to be understood that a student and even a qualified social worker will need additional knowledge on employee assistance programmes, economics, business and industrial relations. To this end, authorities on occupational social work, such as Hoffer (1989:221) and Akabas and Kurzman (1982) all agree on the elements of knowledge proposed by Googins and Godfrey (1987:188-193).

##### **4.5.1 Class-based and field education**

Googins and Godfrey (1987:188) propose an educational model for occupational social work in terms of class-based education and field education. They state that the educational requirements to meet the needs of the workplace (corporate sector) can be divided into skills and knowledge areas. With regard to skills, Googins and Godfrey (1990:189) allude to the broadness of the skill base of social workers, due to the fact that they are equipped with clinical, consulting, administrative, evaluative and a multitude of other professional skills. The knowledge areas suggested by Googins and Godfrey (1990:191), which an aspiring occupational social worker would be expected to obtain, pertain to work and work organisations and knowledge pertinent to the practice and programmes of occupational social work. Hoffer (1989:221) supports this idea and suggests that the study of the world of work

should be included in the curriculum for all social work students. Woods and Maentja (1996:121) and Ramphal (1994:342) concur with Hoffer (1989), and are convinced that a knowledge of work and work organisations would benefit all graduates who work in a set-up where the relationship between people and their workplace cannot be overlooked. Googins and Godfrey (1987) identified elements of the curriculum, related to work and work organisations and elements of the curriculum, related to occupational social work, which will be discussed shortly.

#### **4.5.2 Elements of the curriculum related to work and work organisations**

Googins and Godfrey (1987:191), as well as Hoffer (1989:221), argue that work and work organisations are unknown areas to most social workers. From their point of view, a curriculum therefore should include essential information and theories on the nature and function of work, work culture, types of work organisations, the dynamics of boundaries of work environments and the meaning of work from psychological, sociological and cultural, perspectives. Many authors, such as McCarthy and Steck (1990) and Mor Borak (2000:5) along with Googins and Godfrey (1987:191), strongly advise that additional knowledge on economics, labour management, unionist and collective bargaining, organisational theory and analysis, values and corporate responsibilities and community relations should be obtained when entering the corporate sector. As these are 'foreign' concepts in social work and not part of the curriculum under discussion, they will be clarified briefly.

##### ***Economics:***

Googins and Godfrey (1987:191) maintain that social workers that have chosen to practice in work organisations should have sound knowledge of micro and political economics.



***Labour – management:***

The authors mentioned above state that although labour management differs from organisation to organisation, it is vital that the social worker in the workplace should be aware of how complex, yet crucial, it is to understand the employee–employer relationship. Some organisations may have strongly established unions, whilst others have only the most informal format of labour organisation.

***Unionisation and collective bargaining:***

Googins and Godfrey (1987) states that these two are closely related to labour management. They suggest that students should have an understanding of the history of unions and organisations and of their major roles and functions in the workplace. Knowledge of the collective bargaining process is also considered essential.

***Organisational theory and analysis:***

The student should understand the complexity and have knowledge of the structure, theory and function of the organisation in which social workers operate, which could be the personnel, human resources, employee relations or medical department. The student should be equipped with a framework and tools to enable him to analyse the organisation Googins and Godfrey (1987:192).

***Values:***

Googins and Godfrey (1987:192) and Hoffer (1989:220) pointed out that although all curricula are established on a major core of values, ethics and confidentiality, and although social workers are aware of this when they enter the work organisation, these issues are defined, perceived and acted on quite differently in different work organisations. Woods and Maentja (1996:121) hold the opinion that it is not sufficient for schools of social work to only teach values. Students need to be equipped with assertive skills to consistently represent social work in other spheres, such as management.

***Corporate social responsibility and community relations:***

Googins and Godfrey (1987:192) and Gustavson and Balgopal (1991:87) opined that these two areas are of importance to both corporations and social workers. Companies are realising that there is a symbolic relationship between themselves and the communities in which they operate. Social workers by their training, are furnished with an interest in and the values to assist in these two areas. It is logical that they should be exposed to literature in this regard by means of the curriculum.

**4.5.3 Elements of the curriculum relating to occupational social work**

Some of the major components of the curriculum that prepare social workers for the workplace are occupational social welfare, programme types and roles, alcohol and drug abuse, programme development and special employee populations. As these components have been discussed in chapter three, they will not be repeated here. The researcher concurs with Googins and Godfrey (1987:189-190) when they state that the skills required in these areas are very extensive and that it would be unrealistic to expect that a student should have such a broad knowledge base. These additional requirements, however, portray the reality of practice. Creating means whereby the broad range of skills can be obtained is part of the challenge of developing the corporate sector for a practice education placement.

**4.5.4 What a student should know about the corporate sector as a practice education placement**

Googins and Godfrey (1987:193) and Hoffer (1989:216) emphasise the fact that the work environment is different and unknown. The student acquires knowledge by means of experimental-based learning offered by the practice education placement. The practice education placement will be in the business industry or a union, and

ideally a trained social worker will offer supervision. The student will function within the micro and/or macro level, and will spend a few days a week in the practice education placement.

The student should also obtain essential knowledge of the work environment, even though this is difficult and the student is time bound because of the limited period of the placement. Googins and Godfrey (1987:195) explain that a student is usually more concerned about being able to counsel the employee or be involved in employee assistance programme activities. However, the nature and dynamics of the environment form an essential context that should also be incorporated into the student's understanding of work- based practice to ensure effective service to the client.

#### **4.5.5 How to gain additional knowledge in the corporate sector**

Gustavson and Balgopal (1991:86) suggest that offering a multi-disciplinary programme can augment student-training needs in occupational social work. Students could do these programmes at business schools. Mor Barak and Poverny (1993:68) suggest class assignments, or tutorials on subjects such as social policy in the world of work and human behaviour in an industrial society. The authors, realising that this knowledge is too complex to grasp within the limited time frame of the student's internship, provides a series of questions that will help to indicate the parameters and guide the learning process.

**Questions that will help to indicate the parameters and guide the learning process:**

- ◆ *What is the history of the corporation (union)?*
- ◆ *How is it arranged organisationally?*
- ◆ *What are its goals?*
- ◆ *How do the major components relate to one another?*
- ◆ *What is the corporate culture?*
- ◆ *What issues are presently of primary concern to the organisation?*
- ◆ *What are the formal arrangements for employees to represent their issues?*
- ◆ *How good are labour-management relations?*
- ◆ *How do the human service functions relate to the organisation?*
- ◆ *What is the state of the art of human resource or personnel in this organisation?*
- ◆ *Does the company have a strategic plan, and if so, what are its future plans?*

**Figure 4.4: Questions to help and guide students in the learning process**  
(Googins & Godfrey, 1987:193)

The aspects mentioned above are definitely not included in the current social work curriculum. It is therefore essential that the student should be assisted to obtain knowledge and information in this regard.

***How to help a student to gain additional knowledge:***

Googins and Godfrey (1987:194-195), Rankin (1991:306) and Maiden (1987) also found that information on employee assistance programmes is not written up sufficiently. Googins *et al.* (1987:194-195) suggest that the student gains additional information by attending departmental representation and open employee meetings regularly. Informal visits to employees in the cafeteria and tours of company operations will also broaden the student's knowledge.

Googins and Godfrey (1987:193) and Gustavson and Balgopal (1991:86) give some suggestions on how this additional knowledge, as identified previously, can be transmitted to students who aspire to do their practice education placement in the corporate sector. These can include the following:

- The university can offer separate and specialised courses.
- Additional material can be integrated into existing courses.
- The university can offer mini courses (a one, two or three day course) and non-credit seminars.

The university and the corporate sector should decide on how the student should acquire additional knowledge. Both parties should be involved, because both can make valuable contributions.

Woods and Maentja (1966:122) are of the opinion that graduates with a generic training in social work, who are employed in the business world, should receive on the job training. This can also be applied to students.

Hoffer (1989:221-222) recommends that additional knowledge could be incorporated into the curriculum or be imported by offering separate courses. He also suggests that specialised knowledge on work be reinforced by experiences linked to work.

#### **4.6 SUPERVISION**

During the placement in the occupational setting, the student will need regular supervision to ensure that the requirements of the placement will be met.

The New Dictionary of Social Work (1995:64) defines supervision as a "...process whereby the supervisor performs educational, supportive and administrative

functions in order to promote efficient and professional rendering of services...”. A “supervisor”, according to the same source, is defined as a “social worker to which authority has been delegated to co-ordinate, promote and evaluate the professional service rendering of social workers, through the process of supervision”. In her analysis of these definitions, Botha (2000:11) concludes that supervision is a learning process that occurs within a specific reciprocal relationship between a supervisor and a social worker and during which knowledge is developed. She points out that the aim of supervision is to integrate academic theory with the practice of social work, acquire more knowledge, enhance personal insight, deal with own personal feelings and achieve effective functioning as a social worker in general and as an official of a specific institution in particular.

Danbury (1994:87) cites the definition of supervision as: “*superintending the execution or performance of work of a person*”. Towle, in Younghusband (1968:47), says that supervision is an administrative process in the conduct of which staff development is a major concern and in which the supervisor has three functions, namely, administration, teaching and helping. Rothman (2000:44) claims that a student’s relationship with the field supervisor at the agency is of the utmost importance. The field instructor teaches, guides, evaluates and advocates on the student’s behalf and offers an immediate opportunity for the student to become professionally competent. A positive and satisfactory relationship between the student and the field instructor is encouraged as this promotes overall student satisfaction with fieldwork.

Supervision is a very important task and responsibility of the field educator, who, for purposes of this study, will be called the campus and agency supervisor, as they are referred to in the Field Practice Guide (2001) of the University of the Western Cape. Several authors, namely Botha (1976), Fourie (1982), Kadushin (1985), Blake and Peterman (1985), Bogo and Vayda (1987), Gitterman *et al.* (1996) and Hoffman

(1990), have alluded to the importance of the supervisor's function in directing and giving guidance to the undergraduate students in order to develop their professional skills to the full. It is therefore advised that social workers who supervise students, should have a minimum of two years' working experience (Hoffer, 1989:213).

Googins and Godfrey (1987:195) claim that supervising social work students is a component of the field internship that, in most instances, determines the overall effectiveness and quality of the educational experience. They point out that the supervisors are faced by challenges such as structuring the learning process, choosing meaningful tasks, fitting students with appropriate tasks according to their personal educational goals and needs, and ensuring constant monitoring and feedback. These major challenges link up with the opinions of Botha (1985:24), Kadushin (1985:40), Hoffman (1990:20) and Botha (2000:11).

Hoffer (1989:222) states that prior to entering the corporate sector a student needs to be screened carefully to ensure that he/she is personally and professionally mature. In the same vein, this researcher wants to add, that equally careful screening should be applied to ensure that a suitable supervisor is found for the student in the corporate sector, because a perfect match is imperative for maximum learning and growth to take place. The researcher affirms the sentiment of Mouton (1991:84) who stressed the fact that the staff involved with the student should have a genuine interest in being involved in a student's practice education placement.

With reference to supervision, the University of the Western Cape's Guide for Practice Education, Course 401 (2001:5-6) stipulates the following:

*As students have already experienced in their first three years of study, one of the most essential and valuable learning components of the social work practicum is weekly supervision of students by experienced supervisors. The opportunity is created for a meaningful educational and supportive relationship to develop between supervisors and students. It is important that students view this relationship as a partnership, take responsibility for their own learning and realise that they will gain to the extent that they contribute. Although accepting constructive criticism without becoming defensive may be difficult, striving to improve the ability to use supervision maturely will enhance personal and professional growth significantly.*

**Figure 4.5: Supervision (Practice Education Guide, 2001 [refer Appendix I])**

The following roles are to be undertaken by the university and agency supervisors in the partnership of supervising the student:

***Responsibility of the university supervisor:***

- ◆ *enter into an Educational Contract with the student and the agency supervisor that identifies the student's learning objectives, practice and supervisory expectations and evaluation criteria*
- ◆ *liaise between the agency and the Dept of Social Work*
- ◆ *provide weekly supervision sessions at the university to address the student's learning needs and provide ongoing feedback (both written and oral) throughout the placement*
- ◆ *assist the students with preparation for both the mid-year and final evaluations*

***Responsibility of the agency supervisor***

- ◆ *introduce students to the agency and its programmes through an orientation of its functioning*
- ◆ *familiarise students with the clientele, the community and its resources where the student will be working*
- ◆ *provide weekly supervision sessions to assist students in directing their learning experiences*
- ◆ *assist students with specialised knowledge and skills relevant to the setting*
- ◆ *maintain contact with the Dept of Social Work through the university supervisor, and the field practice co-ordinator*

***Responsibility of the student:***

- ◆ *submit reports punctually, as reports form the basis of supervision (especially with the university supervisor)*
- ◆ *punctually attend, be well prepared for and take active part in supervision*
- ◆ *consult the course co-ordinator should any difficulties arise*

**Figure 4.6: Responsibilities of role players in practice education placements (Practice Education Guide, 2001 [refer Appendix I])**

The responsibilities as set out in this guide adhere to what authors such as Hoffman (1990:46,53-56); Danbury (1994:40-43), Thomlison *et al.* (1996:13-14) and Botha



(2000:9-11) describe in connection with supervision in practice education placements.

#### **4.6.1 Types of supervision**

For Pettes (1979:7) and Rothman (2000:45), supervision comes in many forms. They mention the *classical relationship*, where the student and field supervisor are in the same agency. A professional at another agency could also arrange supervision. Both options could prevail in the corporate sector, depending on where the supervisor would be based.

##### ***Group supervision:***

Brown and Bourne (1996:144) defined group supervision as the use of the group setting to implement part or all of the responsibilities of supervision. Bogo and Vayda (1987:69) describe the *group supervision* method whereby supervision is offered to a group of students. Students benefit tremendously from this, because they hear of other students' experiences in other settings. They are encouraged to express their fears and uncertainties, they discover that their peers have the same fears and feelings and they can give and receive feedback whereby they can master new behaviours.

A student unit in a corporate placement will derive great benefits from this form of supervision. Students in a traditional practice education placement will gain information from those in the corporate sector, which they would not otherwise have been exposed to.

##### ***Individual supervision:***

Rothman (2000:45) concludes that the chosen arrangement with regard to supervision as chosen by the worker or practice setting does not matter, but that the essence of the work done under supervision remains the same. It is advised that individual supervision should happen on a fortnightly basis to prevent a student

from getting lost in the group. Botha (1976:184-185) suggests that individual supervision be offered once a week, depending on the circumstances within the organisation. This researcher agrees with this suggestion for placement in the corporate sector. It is the opinion of Bradey (93:18) that the supervisor should obtain a clearer idea of each individual student's performance when it comes to evaluation. The author claims that students will opt for individual supervision if they have a choice.

When comparing group supervision, with individual supervision, Bradey (1993:18) cautions that it is very tempting to rather choose group supervision, because it is quicker and easier. The author warns that whilst group supervision has its advantages, such as group dynamics and students learning from and supporting each other, this should not replace individual supervision. Individual supervision on and off campus is an absolute necessity for students placed in the corporate sector, due to the complexity and the diversity of the placement. The one-on-one contact with the supervisor will give the student the opportunity to express his/her anxieties and ignorance, without having to consider the opinion or criticism of the group.

A student placed in the corporate sector will benefit from individual and group supervision and should be given the opportunity to participate in both.

#### **4.6.2 Professional supervisory relationship**

Botha (2000:6) and Rothman (2000:44-45) stress the fact that ongoing, regular supervision is the basic characteristic of the social work profession. They identify the following functions of supervision within the professional relationship between the student and the field supervisor:

- it provides a resource for discussion, consultation and reflection
- it provides a way to share the load with another responsible professional

- it provides a safe place to explore and examine their own professional functioning.

Within the student-field supervisor relationship the student will begin to assume the role of a professional worker and to practice skills and techniques as well as becoming more self-aware and learning aspects of assessment. By observing and listening to the field supervisor, the student will learn and experience the impact of the value base of the profession in practice, including their ethical responsibility to social justice (Pettes, 1979:67-68; Hamilton & Else, 1983:40-41; Rothman, 2000:46).

It can be concluded that the function of supervision is to create a learning environment that is safe and where the student feels secure to give and receive feedback on his/her practice education placement.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

There are many commonalities between the expectations of practice education placements in the corporate sector and what is taught by the University of the Western Cape. The models, objectives, methods and supervision responsibilities are compatible. The differences are found mostly in the knowledge requirements of the corporate sector. As discussed, the additional knowledge regarding the occupational social work setting can be required by the means suggested by various authors in this field. Practice education placements in the corporate sector are possible, provided that all parties involved are prepared to commit themselves totally and have the required knowledge.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **PRACTICE EDUCATION PLACEMENTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR IN THE WESTERN CAPE METROPOLE**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The possibility of practice education placements of undergraduate students in the corporate sector need to be explored. It was suggested by Rankin (1991:309) that universities should make greater use of industries for the purposes of practice education placements, because he found it to be an under-utilised possibility for practice education placements. He claimed that the development of this area of social work practice, would be stimulated by using it for a practice education placement and that the industry could be made aware of the potential value of social work to handle the problems of employees. This study was done to establish the willingness of the corporate sector to accommodate undergraduate social work students for practice education placements.

### **5.2 PLACE OF STUDY**

This research was conducted mainly in the Western Cape Metropole and as far as the West Coast. Respondents involved in this study were either in full or part-time employment, as employee assistance professionals. The respondents represented the following companies: Centre for Human Development, Cape Town; Road Accident Fund, Cape Town; Engen Petroleum, Cape Town; SA Post Office, Cape Town; Eskom, Bellville; Foschini Group, Parow-East; Renaissance Dynamix, Roggebaai; Pick 'n Pay Head Office, Cape Town; Woolworths Head Office, Cape Town; Path

Care, Roggebaai; House of Monastic, Salt River; Sea Harvest, Saldanha and Gabriel's, Retreat. Social workers in private practice who render contract services to the corporate sector were also included in this study.

### **5.3 THE EMPIRICAL STUDY**

To achieve the aim and objectives of this research an exploratory study was done. In the opinion of Babbie (1998:90) the exploratory research can be conducted when a researcher is examining a new interest and wishes to obtain a better understanding of the subject at hand.

Based on information gained from Grinnell and Williams (1990:139-140), the exploratory and descriptive research designs were applied in this study. Grinnell and Williams (1990) as well as Arkava and Lane (1983:191) argue that the exploratory research design is appropriate when little is known about the field of study. As more knowledge becomes available, the same study can be termed descriptive.

A non-probability sampling method was used to select an availability sample. Grinnell and Williams (1990:125) maintain that in non-probability sampling, not all the people in the population have the same probability of being included in the sample. They furthermore argue that for each one of them, the probability of inclusion is unknown. According to Grinnell and Williams (1990:125) availability is the simplest of the four non-probability sampling procedures and it involves the first people who make themselves available to the researcher.

Data was collected through interviews. These interviews involved face to face encounters with respondents as suggested by Arkava and Lane (1983:171) and Babbie and Mouton (2001:249). An interview schedule and interview guide were used to conduct the interview. According to Forcese and Stephen (1973:170-171),

the interview schedule and the questionnaire are very similar in that both consist of precisely designated questions. With the interview guide, the interviewer has more discretion in that he/she can probe more and thereby get more detailed information. The interview indeed offered the researcher the opportunity to probe more and clarify certain aspects with regard to student placements that did not come across clearly in the questionnaire.

This was mainly a quantitative study in which the study population consisted of 16 employee assistance professionals who were either full or part-time employees of the companies mentioned previously. Of the 20 questionnaires that were sent by land and e-mail, 16 were completed and returned to the researcher.

Six of the 16 respondents who completed the questionnaires were selected to be interviewed in greater depth by the researcher (refer to Figure 5.5) and (Appendix C to H). Respondents were chosen for the following reasons:

- they had a positive attitude towards practice education placement, although some indicated that they were unable to accommodate students for practice education placement.
- they were experienced employee assistance professionals and practitioners in the corporate sector and could share their expertise.
- five of the respondents were social workers.
- one of the five social workers was r in private practice.
- one respondent was a nursing professional.

The selection of the respondents took place according to specific characteristics, as well as their willingness to participate. This is called the *availability sampling method* (Grinnell & Williams, 1990:125).

The contents of the questionnaire (refer Appendix A) and the interview schedule (refer Appendix B), were based on the aims and objectives of the study as set out in

Chapter One as well as on the content of the literature study as presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 of this report.

The views expressed by the respondents were in most cases those of the professionals as individuals and not necessarily the view of the companies for which they work. Although some of the respondents obtained permission from their company to complete the questionnaire, they had no authority to make any final decisions with regard to the practice education placement of students. Respondents in private practice responded in both their private capacity and that of a contractual employee of the company.

The respondent's views on several aspects of practice education placements in the corporate sector and knowledge base expected of students, when placed in the corporate sector as well as their views on supervision of a student placed in the corporate sector, were summarised in Figure 5.5 and are also reflected in the findings of the empirical studies.

The respondents had no qualms about providing their personal details, but for the purposes of this study these will be handled in confidence. The researcher will make the results of this study available to the respondents to encourage participation in future research and to promote practice education placements in the corporate sector.

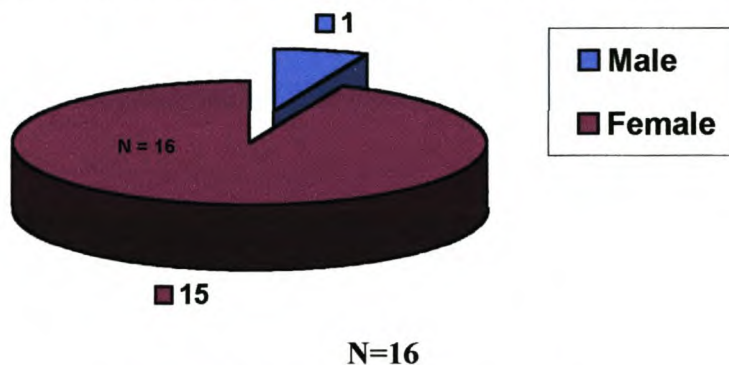
#### **5.4 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH**

Data was collected by means of a questionnaire, in which both open and closed-ended questions were used. The results of the study will be discussed in the same sequence as presented in the questionnaire. The responses and findings will be depicted by means of tables and figures. The researcher also obtained qualitative data from six of the respondents, who were willing to participate by means of

interview schedules and personal interviews. These will be presented in Figure 5.1 and in a descriptive manner.

#### 5.4.1 Gender of the respondents

Fifteen of the respondents were female and one was male, which indicates that respondents of this study were mainly females. These findings correspond with the prediction of Mor-Barak and Poverny (1993:68), who stated in reference to the changing workforce that women would outnumber men by the year 2000.

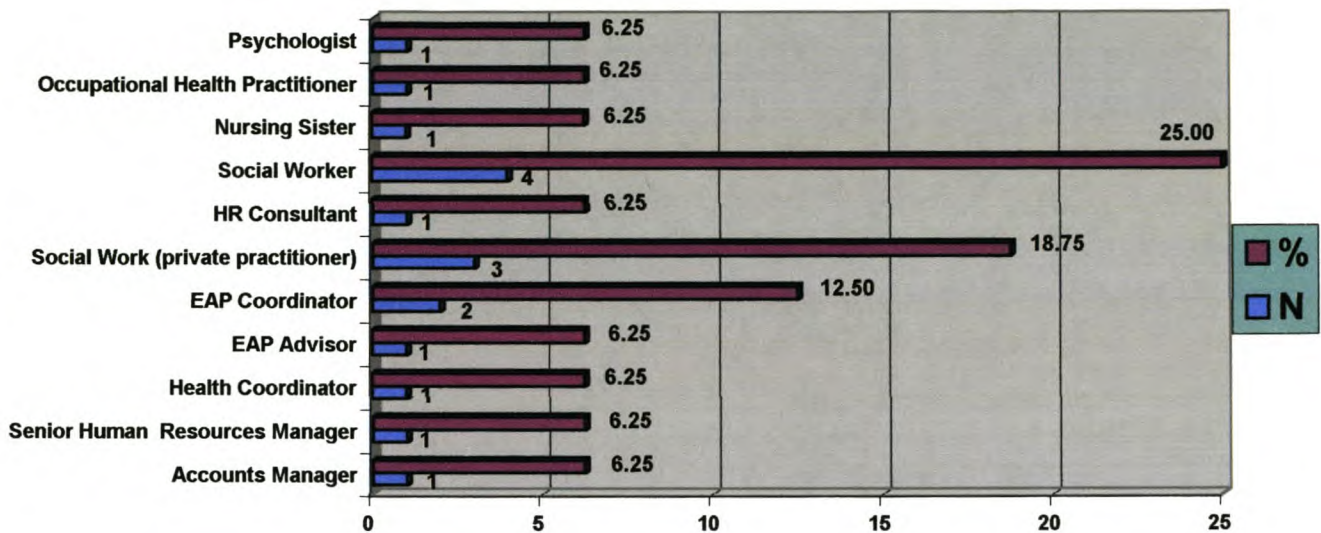


**Figure 5.1: Gender of respondents**

#### 5.4.2 Position of respondents in the corporate sector

The respondents occupied various positions in the corporate sector. This fact has been confirmed by various overseas authors such as Akabus and Kurzman (1982:180), and Googins and Godfrey (1987:9), as well as by South African authors such as Du Plessis (1990) and Rankin (1991:75). The researcher wanted to find out which positions were occupied by the human resources personnel in the corporate sector of the Western Cape Metropole who were willing to be involved in the study. Figure 5.2 below reflects the positions occupied by the respondents in selected companies in the corporate sector of the Western Cape Metropole.





**Figure 5.2: Position of social workers employed in the corporate sector**

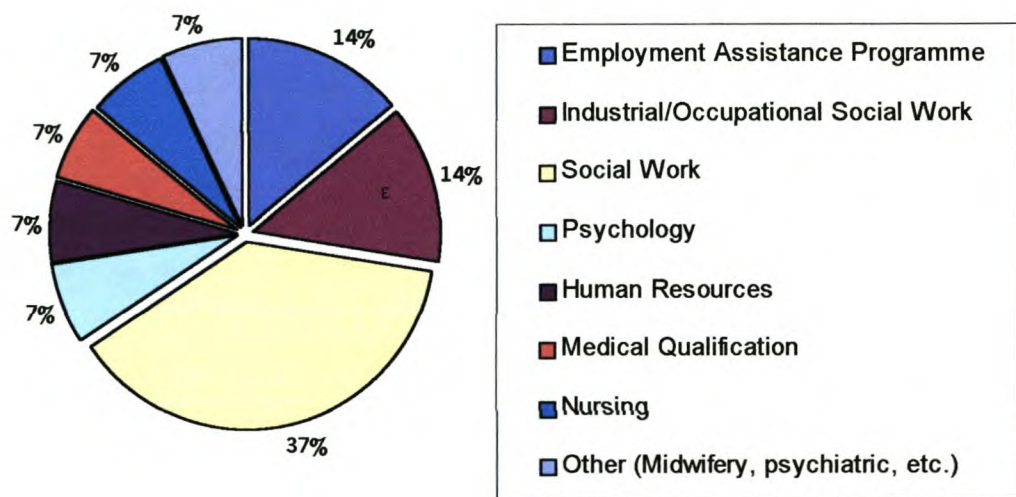
The findings in Figure 5.2 indicate that four respondents (25%) function as social employees. Other positions filled by the respondents are: two (12,5%) - Employee Assistance Program Co-ordinators; two (12,5%) - Social Work Private practitioners; two respondents were nursing professionals who also served as Employee Assistance Program co-ordinators; one (6,25%) - Accounts Manager; one (6,25%) - Human Resources Consultant, and one (6,25%) respondent was a psychologist.

This information indicates that, social employees in the Western Cape Metropole, are employed in various positions in the corporate sector, as suggested by the above mentioned authors.

### 5.4.3 Qualifications of respondents

The Standards Committee of the Employee Assistance Professional Association – South Africa (1999:6) refers to an employee assistance program professional and an employee assistance program practitioner. The employee assistance program

professional is a professionally trained person performing employee assistance program-related tasks i.e. therapy, counselling, marketing and evaluating. The employee assistance program practitioner is not necessarily a professionally-trained person performing employee assistance program-specific related tasks i.e. referral liaison and training. The qualifications of the respondents have been investigated to establish under which category they resort.



**Figure 5.3. Qualifications of Respondents**

\*Respondents with more than one qualification

Figure 5.3 reflects that 11 (68.75%) respondents have basic social work qualifications. Four respondents (25%) specialised in occupational social work and four (25%) had done an additional course in an employee assistance programme. Two respondents (12,5%) had medical qualifications, two (12,5%) had nursing qualifications and two (12,5%) respondents were qualified in either mid-wifery or psychiatry and functioned as employee assistance program practitioners.

By virtue of their qualifications it can be concluded that 11 (68.75%) of the respondents could be termed as employee assistance program professionals and five

(31,25%) as employee assistance program practitioners, as mentioned by the Standards Committee of Employee Assistance Professional Association - South Africa, (1999:6).

#### **5.4.4 Respondents with social work and/or employee assistance programme qualifications**

In accordance with the findings of Iversen (1998:551), the employee assistance program model is used by occupational social employees to address a range of problems in the workplace. This statement could be interpreted to imply that employee assistance program knowledge is essential in order to resolve the problems of workers. The researcher wanted to establish whether all social employees functioning as employee assistance program practitioners indeed acquired additional specialised employee assistance program knowledge.

**Table 5.1**  
**Nature of qualifications**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
BA (Social Work)	5	31.25
BA (Hons. Social Work)	3	18.75
PHD (Social Work)	1	6.25
MA (Social Work)	2	12.50
Employee Assistance Program	2	12.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**N = 16**

*Table 5.1* shows that only two (12,5%) respondents had additional employee assistance program qualifications. It can therefore be concluded that specialised employee assistance program knowledge, though very useful, is not regarded as essential to address the social problems of employees when social workers are employed.

### 5.4.5 Years of employment

It is required that social employees who act as student supervisors in field practice placements should have a minimum of two years' work experience (Wilson, 1981:13). The researcher enquired about the respondents' years of employment to see if they would qualify to serve as student supervisors.

The findings in Figure 5.4 indicate that four (25%) of the respondents have three years of working experience. Two (12,5%) respondents have five years, whilst ten (62,5%) have more than five years working experience. In terms of years of employment, all of the respondents would qualify to be supervisors for social work undergraduate students, according to the requirements as set down by Wilson (1981)

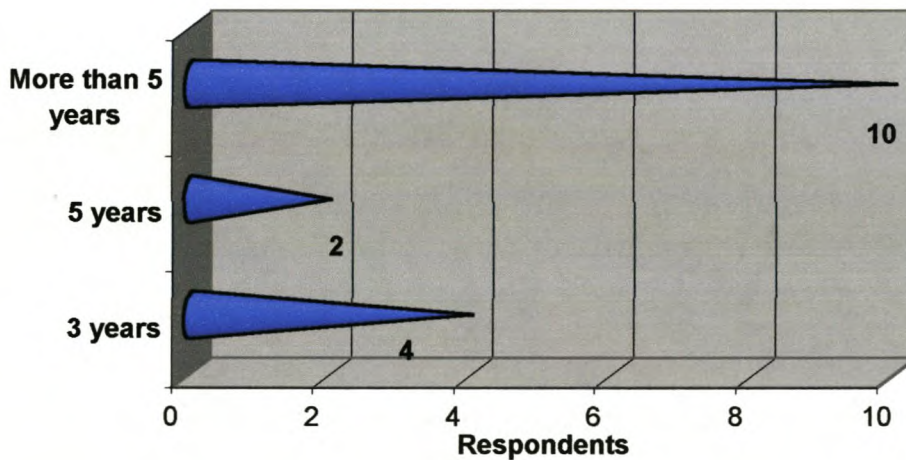


Figure 5.4: Years of employment

#### 5.4.6 Accommodation of students for practice education placements

Hoffer (1989:213) recognised that both the professional educators and the social work practitioners presently employed in the workplace formed a valuable information pool. The information pool refers to a group of professionals with valuable information. It is for this reason that the researcher needed to know how many of the respondents previously had accommodated students in their companies for practical experience.

**Table 5.2**  
**Accommodation of students for practice education placements**

	N	%
Yes	6	37,50
No	9	56,25
Uncertain	1	6,25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100,00</b>

N = 16

Table 5.2 reflects that six (37,5%) of the respondents' companies had previously accommodated students for practical training. Five (56,25%) had never had students and one (6,25%) did not know whether their company had previously had students. This evidence shows that social work practitioners in the corporate sector did not form part of the valuable information pool referred to by Hoffer (1989:213).

#### 5.4.7 Supervision of social work students

Gustavsson and Balgopal (1991:88) stated that students need to be exposed to the realities of practice in the organisation to which the student is allocated for practice

education placement. The host organisation in this instance is the corporate sector. By finding out whether the professionals in the corporate sector supervised social work students, the researcher wished to establish to which extent students were being exposed to the realities of the social problems experienced by employees in the workplace.

**Table 5.3**  
**Supervision of social work students**

	N	%
Yes	2	12,50
No	10	62,50
Uncertain	4	25,00
<b>TOTAL</b>	16	100,00

**N = 16**

The findings in *Table 5.3* indicate that ten (62,5%) of the respondents had not been involved in the supervision of social work students; four (25%) of the respondents were not sure whether the students they had accommodated before were social work students and two (12,5%) of the respondents were involved in the supervision of social work students. It is evident, very few social work professionals in the corporate sector were involved with social work practice education placements. It can be concluded that students are not exposed to the reality of social problems of employees in the workplace as suggested by Gustavson and Balgopal (1991:88).

#### **5.4.8 Reasons for not accommodating social work students**

Bradey (1991:5-6) quoted various reasons why social employees did not want to accommodate students for a practice education placement, such as: "I'm too busy; I'm a practitioner not a teacher; I'll never have enough for them to do; I'm out of

touch". The researcher wanted to determine the reasons why social employees in the corporate sector did not accommodate students in fieldwork placements. Urbanowski and Dwyer (1988:4) quote constraints within the agency, such as agency history, size, stage of development, specialisation, financial support, nature of task required and agency roles in different programmes, as the reason for their unwillingness to accommodate students.

**Table 5.4**  
**Reasons for not accommodating social work students**

Reason	N
No request received	8
No accommodation available	1
No manpower – lack of capacity in terms of knowledge, supervision	2
Not an appropriate placement	5
Unwillingness of management	0
Lack of time	3
Work too difficult for student	1
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>19</b>

N=16

\*Respondents could give more than one reason

Table 5.4 reflects the reasons why social employees in the corporate sector were not accommodating social work students in practice education placements. Half of the respondents (50%) received no requests to accommodate students. Five (31,25%) stated that their company was not an appropriate placement. Three (18,75%) claimed lack of time as a reason. Two (12,5%) had no manpower or felt lack of capacity in terms of knowledge or supervision. One (6,25%) thought the work would be too difficult for a student. The respondents used the same reasons and more. It is significant that half of the respondents were not approached by universities, confirming that the corporate sector is not utilised effectively by universities for the practice education placement of students. Other reasons given, such as a lack of funding and financial constraints, correspond with those given by Bradey (1991:5-6).

#### 5.4.9 Commitment of companies that are willing to accommodate students in practice education placements

Selig (1982:130) suggested that a strong commitment to the educational process is a necessity at all levels within an agency. He argued that top-level management, including governing boards and administrative staff, needed to develop policies that support and encourage the training of social employees. This researcher wanted to find out how committed companies were to the educational process.

**Table 5.5**

**Commitment of Companies who are willing to accommodate students for practice education placements**

	N	%
Yes	5	31,25
No	3	18,75
Uncertain	8	50,00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100,00</b>

**N = 16**

Table 5.5 shows that eight (50%) respondents were not sure whether their companies/employers would agree to accommodate students; five (31,25%) respondents indicated their willingness to accommodate students in practice education placements, subject to the company's approval. Three (18,75%) respondents were not willing to accommodate students for practice education placements.

After exploring this topic further, respondents A, B, C, D, E and F, indicated that practice education placements were a necessity (refer to Figure 5 5 and Appendices C- H):



Respondent A: “I think it is a great idea. It gives students an exposure as well as the company they’re working in...”.

Respondent B: “ I think it’s necessary. I think it’s good for the students to get experience in the real world...”

It can be concluded that most of the respondents, although some were uncertain, had a commitment to the educational process as suggested by Selig (1982:130).

#### **5.4.10 An interview schedule**

Six respondents' views, on various aspects of practice education placement, knowledge base and supervision of students (refer to Figure 5.5 below).

Six of the 16 respondents, who completed the questionnaires, were selected to be interviewed in more depth by the researcher (refer to Figure 5.5) and (Appendix B).

Respondents were chosen for the following reasons:

- they had a positive attitude toward practice education placement although some indicated that they were unable to accommodate students for practice education placement;
- they were experienced employee assistance professionals and practitioners in the corporate sector and could share their expertise;
- five of the respondents were social employees;
- one of the five respondents was a social worker in private practice;
- one respondent was a nursing professional.

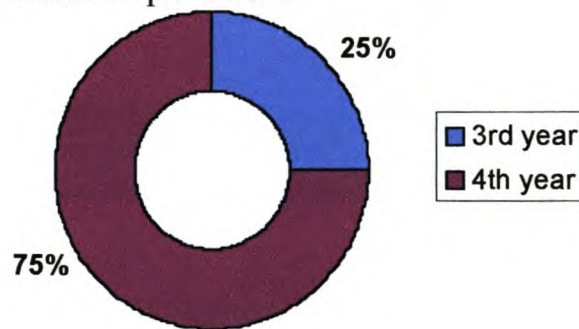
The selection of the respondents happened according to specific characteristics as well as their willingness to participate. This is called the *purposive sampling method* (Dooley, 1995:136).

Resp	Views on Practice education placement	Views on Knowledge Base	Views on Supervision
A	Good idea. Exposure to student. Uncertain – accommodating student. Types of problems: alcohol and drug abuse. Marital problems. S/w methods: Casework and research. EAP model: “off site”	EAP as additional knowledge. Human resource personnel or social worker to provide additional knowledge on corporate sector	EAP practitioner provide supervision (nurse/psychologist) create learning environment. Opportunity to grow. Weekly supervision.
B	Practice education placement necessary. Experience real world. Corporate sector suitable practice education placement. Uncertain accommodating student. Types of problems: family and marital problems. S/w methods: Case/group and community work. EAP model: “on-site”	EAP as additional knowledge. EAP practitioner to provide knowledge on company.	EAP practitioner or qualified person should supervise. Supervisor to focus on practical issue.
C	Practice education placement good idea. Company not suitable for placement. Types of problems: alcohol and drug abuse; marital problems; applications for pension and grants. S/w methods: casework. EAP mode; “on-site”	Brief therapy as additional knowledge. Trauma counselling and knowledge about community resources. University and social worker to provide additional knowledge.	EAP team: Social worker, occupational nurse or psychologist to provide supervision. Supervision on weekly basis.
D	Practice education placement excellent idea. Company suitable for placement. Types of problems: family and marital; alcohol and drugs; financial issues; lack of parenting skills; work and interpersonal problems. S/w methods: all methods except community work. EAP model: “on and off-site”	EAP and broad business knowledge. EAP practitioner to provide specialised knowledge. Students could sit in at meetings to gain business knowledge.	EAP practitioner and university staff. Supervision on weekly basis.
E	Good to expose students to practice education placement. Uncertain about accommodating students. Types of problems: psycho-social; stress; alcohol dependence; HIV/Aids S/w methods: Case, group and research. EAP model: “on-site” and perhaps “off-site”.	Additional knowledge on facilitation skills with groups. Knowledge on business. EAP practitioner to provide additional knowledge.	EAP practitioner to provide supervision on weekly basis. Supervisor to give guidance on EAP field and evaluate students.
F	Practice education placement is necessary. Uncertain as respondent is private practitioner. Types of problems: family and marital; work related problems; shift work and disciplinary problems. S/w methods: case, group and community work. EAP model: “on/off-site”.	Knowledge on industrial relations and trade unions. Organisational development .specialist in field to provide additional knowledge.	Social worker, HR personnel or industrial psychologist and social worker from uni-versity to provide supervision. Weekly supervision.

**Figure 5.5: Respondents' views on practice education placements, knowledge base and supervision of students (refer to Appendices C–H)**

#### 5.4.11 Preferred study level of students for practice education placements

Jenkins and Sheafor (1982:18) claimed that agencies tend to prefer the articulated approach, when deciding on accommodating students for practice education placement. In this approach the student is expected to have an adequate knowledge base to provide a service to their clients. In order to establish to which extent this assumption was true, all the respondents (both those willing and those unwilling to accommodate students) were asked what year level of student (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year) they preferred for a practice education placement.

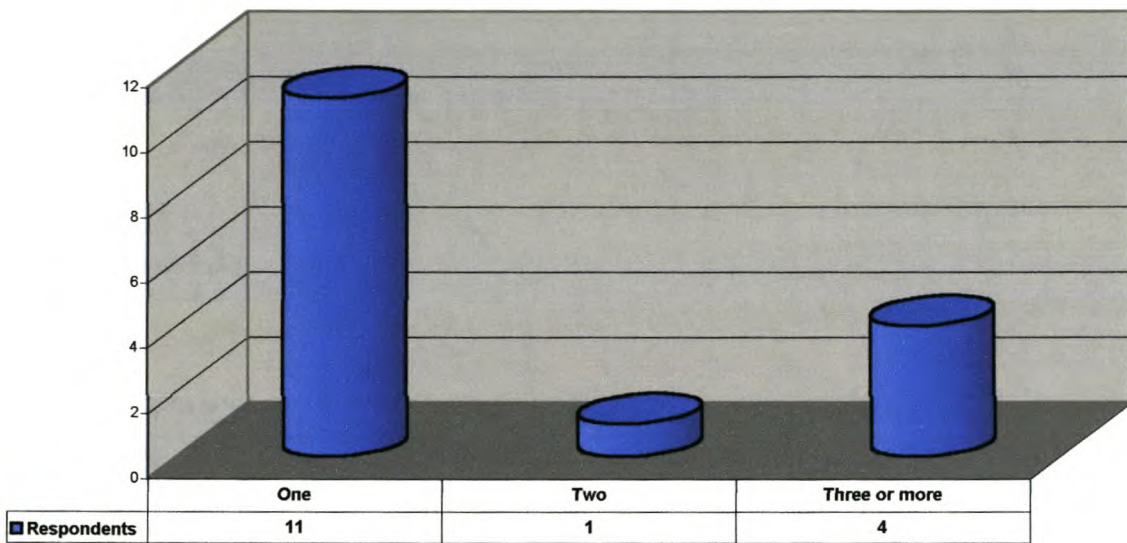


**Figure 5.6: Preferred study level of students**

*Figure 5.6* shows that 12 (75%) respondents preferred fourth year students, whilst four (25%) respondents preferred third year students. Since the dominant choice was fourth year students, who are well equipped with knowledge and skills, this information could be put to good use at an agency, and it can be assumed that, the assumptions of Jenkins and Sheafor (1982) are fairly accurate.

#### 5.4.12. Number of students preferred for practice education placement

The respondents were asked how many students they would accommodate for practice education placement their responses are presented in *Figure 5.7*



**Figure 5.7: Number of students preferred for practice education placement**

The figure above shows that 11 (68.75%) respondents indicated that they would prefer one student. Four (25%) chose three or more students and one (6,25%) respondent preferred two students. Most respondents chose to accommodate one student for practice education placement, which confirms the suggestion of Middleman and Rhodes (1985:9) that supervisors are able to function more effectively in one to one relationships. Imparting knowledge to students is not their only concern but that they are also concerned with their growth in personality.

#### **5.4.13 Types of practice education placements**

Wilson (1981:8) makes a distinction between a block placement and a concurrent placement. In the block placement the student takes no formal courses and reports to the agency for a full week. With the concurrent placement, the student goes to the practice education placement setting for part of the week as well as attending classes on campus (Wilson, 1981:8-9; Pettes, 1979:29-30; Thomlison *et al.*, 1996:7). The

concurrent placement is applicable to the third and fourth year students at the University of the Western Cape.

The researcher wished to establish whether the concurrent practice education placement would be suitable for the corporate sector. The response would also indicate whether the respondents wanted third or fourth year students. The third year student reports to the agency one day per week, whilst the fourth year student reports for four days per week.

**Table 5.6**  
**Duration of practice education placements**

<b>Duration per week</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
One full day per week	4	25.00
Four full days per week	12	75.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Table 5.6* reflects that 12 (75%) chose to have a student for four full days per week whilst four (25%) respondents chose to have a student for one full day per week. The majority of respondents indicated that they would rather have 4<sup>th</sup> year than 3<sup>rd</sup> year students. It can safely be concluded that the concurrent format, as described by Wilson (1981:8), is the favoured practice education placement.

#### **5.4.14 Language preference in the corporate sector**

The researcher found that language plays an important role in the placement of students at the agencies in the Western Cape Metropole, because the dominant languages are English and Afrikaans. Since most of the students speak indigenous languages, it is not always possible to find placement for them because most

agencies expect students to be able to communicate in either English or Afrikaans. The researcher wanted to find out what the language preference was in the corporate sector.

**Table 5.7**  
**Language preference in the corporate sector**

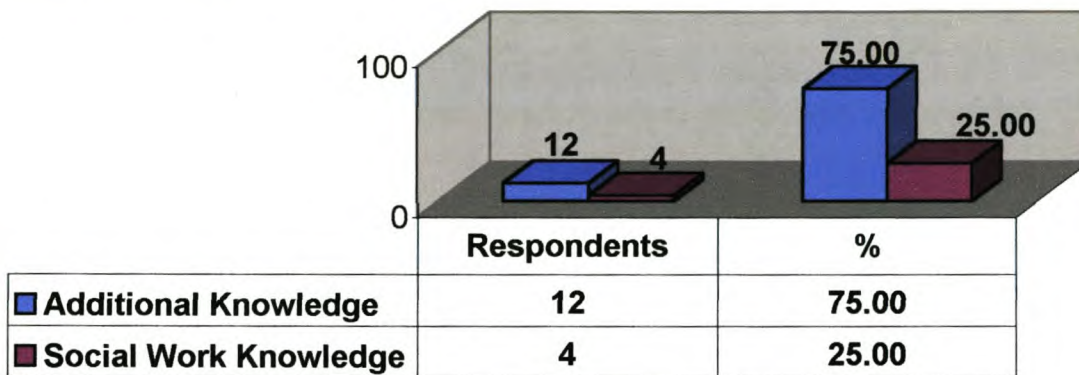
LANGUAGE PREFERENCE	N	%
Afrikaans	2	12.50
English	5	31.25
Afrikaans and English	5	31.25
English and indigenous language	3	18.75
Indigenous language only	1	6.25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.00</b>

From *Table 5.7* it is clear that five (31.25%) respondents required both English and Afrikaans-speaking students. The same percentage required English-speaking students, whilst three (18,75%) respondents required students speaking English and an Indigenous language. Two (12,5%) respondents required Afrikaans-speaking students and one (6,25%) respondent required a student who could speak only an indigenous language. From these findings it can be concluded that English and Afrikaans are the preferred languages in the corporate sector.

#### **5.4.15 Knowledge expected from students**

Googins and Godfrey (1987:193) and Hoffer (1989:213) emphasise the fact that the work environment is different and unknown. They argue that the student acquires knowledge by means of the opportunity to learn by experimenting offered by the

practice education placement. The researcher wanted to find out whether the respondents expected the students to have a specific social work knowledge base or additional knowledge to function in the corporate sector. Their responses are indicated in *Figure 5.8*.



**Figure 5.8: Knowledge expected from students**

From the information given in *Figure 5.8*, it can be concluded that the majority, 12 (75%) of the respondents expected students to have additional knowledge, whilst four (25%) respondents thought that a specific social work knowledge would be sufficient. The findings of the respondents that were interviewed (refer Appendix D) showed that students needed additional knowledge.

Respondent B: “I definitely think so. I think that the knowledge lies within the company and within the knowledge of the EAP.”

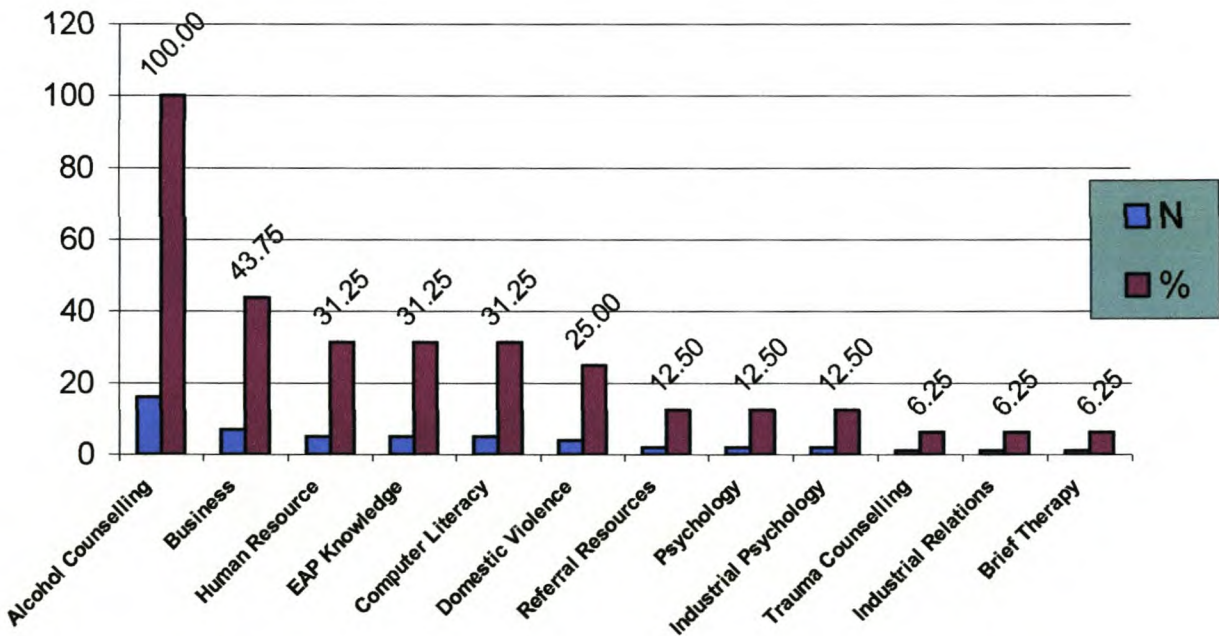
The conclusion is made that additional knowledge is expected from the student as suggested by Googins and Godfrey (1987:193) and Hoffer (1989:213).

#### **5.4.16 Nature of additional knowledge required from students**

The usefulness of social employees having additional knowledge to function effectively in the workplace was underscored by many authors, such as Akabas and

Kurzman (1982), Googins and Godfrey (1987), Hoffer (1989) and Du Plessis (1990). Additional knowledge was required in areas such as labour/management/industrial relations, addictions and their effects, alcoholism and substance abuse, employee assistance programmes, technology, business, human resources and research and business terminology, to mention but a few.

The researcher wanted to find out whether the additional knowledge required by the respondents correlated with that in the literature. The responses are given in *Figure 5.9*.



**Figure 5.9: Nature of additional knowledge**

*Figure 5.9* shows that (16 or 100%) respondents expected students to be capable of doing alcohol counselling with clients. Seven (43.75%) respondents indicated that knowledge in business would be useful. Five (31,25%) respondents expected students to be knowledgeable about employee assistance programmes and human



resources. Four (25%) respondents expected students to know about domestic violence. Two (12,5%) respondents indicated that psychology, industrial psychology and referral resources would be necessary while one (6,5%) respondent emphasised the usefulness of knowledge in industrial relations, brief therapy and trauma counselling. The view of some of the respondents (refer to Appendix E, G and H) in this regard are as follows:

Respondent C: “Brief therapy is important. Trauma counselling is also important and they must have (the) knowledge of the community resources for referral”.

Respondent E: “Students should have facilitation skills, for example with groups. It will help if a student knows how a business operates”.

Respondent F: “Knowledge of industrial relations and trade unions and the politics surrounding that. Knowledge of organisational development. The organisation should be seen as a community”.

From these findings it can be concluded that the additional knowledge listed in the literature as referred to by Hoffer, 1989 and Du Plessis, 1990 correlates with that of the respondents.

#### **5.4.17 Social work methods that can be applied in the corporate sector**

Schwartz (1992), Sheafor *et al.* (1994) and Thomlison *et al.* (1996:11) confirm that the social work profession exists to provide humane and effective social services to individuals, groups, committees and societies, so that people’s social functioning may be enhanced and their quality of life improved. A major part of the social work curriculum is aimed at offering instruction in the different methods, namely

casework, group work, community work and community development (McKendrick, 1980:220).

The respondents were asked which social work methods could be applied by the student in the corporate sector.

**Table 5.8**

**Applicable social work methods in the corporate sector**

<b>Social Work Methods</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Casework	14	87.50
Group work	13	81.25
Community Work	12	75.00
Administration	6	37.50
Research	5	31.25

**N=16**

\* Respondents could indicate more than one method

The findings in *Table 5.8* show that 14 (87,5%) respondents chose case work as a suitable method. 13 (81,25%) respondents chose administration, whilst 12 (75%) respondents thought group work as a method would be suitable. Six (56.25%) of the respondents indicated that community development could be applied in their companies and five (31,25%) respondents stated that research would be a useful method in their company.

All the respondents who were interviewed agreed that students in their companies could apply case and group work. Some respondents indicated that community work and research could also be done (refer to Fig. 5.5 and Appendices .C, D, E and G).

Respondent A: "Maybe a bit of individual methods."

Respondent B: "Mostly casework, group work and actually in the end you apply all the methods because if you do something in the company it is community work."

Respondent C: "Mainly casework."

Respondent E: "Casework, definitely, group work and research."

It can be concluded that the different methods, which form a major part of the social work curriculum as referred to by McKendrick (1980:220), can be applied in the corporate sector.

#### 5.4.18 Services offered to employees and communities

The corporate sector is expected to have an increased responsibility in participation in general welfare issues in South Africa. Business and industry have a function in society relating to social change (Fernstein & Brown, 1982:20). The researcher wanted to find out which services the corporate sector offered to employees and the communities of employees to display their participation in general welfare issues.

**Table 5.9**  
**Services offered to employees and communities**

<b>SERVICES OFFERED</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Preparation for retirement and skills training	16	100.00
Support groups	14	87.50
Counselling for Alcohol/Drug related problems	13	81.25
Counselling for Marital problems	13	81.25
Educational programmes	13	81.25
Preparation for retrenchment	13	81.25
Social responsibility projects in communities and workplace	10	62.50

**N=16**

\* More than one service could be indicated.

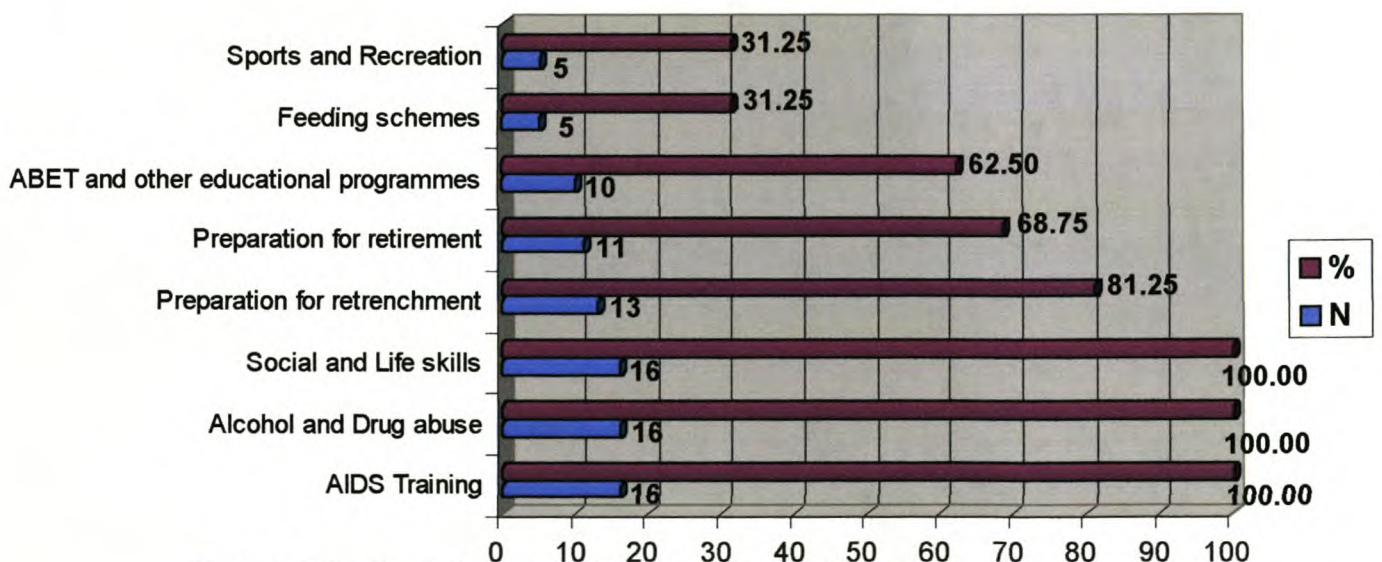
The services offered as presented in Table 5.9 refer to secondary intervention (Marais, 1993:2-16).

The respondents were asked to state which type of services, were offered to their employees or communities. They could indicate more than one service. From Table 5.10, it is evident that all the respondents (16 or 100%) offered preparation for retirement and skills training to their employees. 14 (87,5%) of the respondents indicated that their companies made use of support groups to assist their employees. 13 (81,25%) respondents' companies offered counselling for alcohol and drug related problems. 13 (81.2%) respondents offered counselling for marital problems.

Educational programmes and preparation for retrenchment are offered by 13 (81,25%) of the respondents' companies. Ten (62,5%) respondents indicated that their companies offered social responsibility projects in the communities and to their employees. From the above table it can be concluded that the companies in the Western Cape Metropole, are committed to their social change function in society as referred to by Fernstein and Brown (1982:20).

#### 5.4.19 Social responsibility projects offered by companies at work and in the communities

Social responsibility departments were established in many large companies due to the growing awareness of the interdependence between corporations and larger society. The nature of activities in this area entail establishing and maintaining corporate sponsored programmes, working with local communities on joint partnerships in housing, schools, employment training and economic development (Mor-Barak, 1993:71-72). The respondents indicated, that their companies offer the social responsibility projects, presented in Figure 5.10. This information would give the researcher an indication into which projects the students could be utilised.



**Figure 5.10: Social responsibility projects offered by companies**

\* Respondents could indicate more than one project

All the respondents (16 or 100%) indicated that their companies offered projects pertaining to AIDS education; social and life skills and alcohol and drug abuse. 13 (81,25%) had projects to prepare employees for retrenchment and 11 (68,75%) had projects to prepare employees for retirement. Ten (62,5%) offered ABET and other educational programmes whilst five (31,25%) offered feeding, sports and recreation projects at the workplace and in the communities.

It is evident that the respondents are involved in social responsibility projects in the community as suggested by Mor Barak (1993:71-71). It is concluded that these projects are suitable for student practice education placements.

#### **5.4.20 Models of employee assistance programmes**

There are several models of employee assistance programmes that can be applied according to the needs and characteristics of an organisation. The corporate sector can decide on a combination of models to suit the needs of the company and the employees (Ozawa, 1980; Googins, 1987).

The literature refers to the “on-site” treatment model; the “off-site” model; contract and the consortium model in employee assistance programmes Starker, J.P.B.(1989:19-24). Information obtained from the literature study, indicated that the “on-site” model would be more suitable for practice education placement. The researcher asked the respondents to state where they would prefer to have a student stationed for a practice education placement. This information would tell the researcher which of the above mentioned employee assistance programme models would be most suitable for a practice education placement.

**Table 5.10**  
**Models for employee assistance programmes**

Location	N	%
In the office (on-site model)	12	75.00
At projects in community (off-site model)	2	12.50
Stores/branches/warehouse (Off-site model)	2	12.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.00</b>

N = 16

The majority, 12 (75%) respondents chose to have students based at their offices, thus indicating a preference for the “on-site” treatment model. Two (12,5%) respondents chose to have students at their stores, warehouses or branches. Two (12,5%) chose to have students at projects in the community thus indicating a preference for the “off site” model.

Respondents A, B, C, D, E and F confirmed that the “on-site” and “of-site” model would be applicable for student practice education placements.(refer to Figure 5.5 and Appendices F, G and H).

Respondent D: “We at Engen make use of the “on-site” model.”

Respondent E: “On-sight model yes, “off-site” model perhaps in a very limited way.”

Respondent F: “The trend is towards the consortium model. In South Africa we do “on-site” and “off-site”. Consortium will be difficult for a student. On-site is easier to approach for the student.”

Although the findings show that the “on-site” model is the respondent’s popular choice, they also make use of the “off-site” model, which relate to the use of a combination of models to suit the need of the company and employee as referred to by (Ozawa, 1980; Googins, 1987). It can be concluded that the respondents prefer to

have students located at the office and also at projects, stores and warehouses in the community. The “on- site” and “off-site” models will be suitable for student practice education placement.

#### 5.4.21 Provision of supervision

Rothman (2000:44) claims that the field instructor teaches, guides, evaluates and offers an immediate opportunity for the student to become professionally competent. The respondents had to state whether they would be able to provide supervision to social work students placed in fieldwork with their company. Their response is given in *Table 5.11*.

**Table 5.11**  
**Provision of supervision**

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Yes</b>	6	37.50
<b>No</b>	6	37.50
<b>Uncertain</b>	4	25.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.00</b>

N = 16

Six (37.5%) respondents indicated that they would be able to provide supervision to students whilst six (37.5%) respondents would not be able to provide supervision to students. Four (25%) respondents were uncertain about their ability to supervise students.

Respondents A, B, C, D, E and F indicated that supervision was the responsibility of the employee assistance practitioner (refer to Fig. 5.5 and App. D and F):

Respondent B: “The EAP person.”

Respondent D: “The EAP practitioner and someone from the university. We could work together.”

From this information it is evident that the respondents capable of providing supervision to students are in the minority. It can be concluded that these respondents lack the ability to teach, guide and evaluate a student as mentioned by Rothman (2000:44). The university will have to take the responsibility to equip them for this task.

#### **5.4.22 Assistance with supervision of students, required from the university**

Wilson (1981:10-11) argues that the practice education placement is a joint venture among all concerned and stresses the importance of ongoing communication among all parties involved. She states that schools of social work traditionally provide training for field instructors and in the absence of such training some agencies develop their own courses for field instructors.

The respondents were asked whether they required assistance from the university to supervise students.

**Table 5.12**

#### **Assistance with supervision of students required from the university**

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	11	68.75
No	2	12.50
Uncertain	3	18.75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**N = 16**

Eleven (68.75%) respondents indicated that they required assistance from the university. Three (18.75%) were uncertain and two (12.5%) respondents did not



require assistance. This information shows that most respondents needed assistance to supervise students. Based on the findings in *Table 5.12* it is evident that these companies do not have their own courses for field instructors in place as mentioned by Wilson (1981:10-11). It can be concluded that respondents require assistance from the university to supervise students.

#### 5.4.23 Ability to assist with tutorial sessions/seminars

According to Royse *et al.* (1996:7), weekly seminars are offered by the university to help the student to integrate theory and practice. Students are provided with regular occasions to share their learning and to ask for information or assistance from their supervisors when difficult problems arise in their practice education placement. Seminars or tutorials are used to assist the student, field instructor and the agency, in meeting the educational objectives established for the student's practice education placement.

Respondents were asked whether they would be able to assist students who are placed at their company, with tutorials or seminars, which are aimed at broadening the student's knowledge about the corporate sector.

**Table 5.13**  
**Ability to assist with tutorial sessions/seminars**

	N	%
Yes	9	56.25
No	5	31.25
Uncertain	2	12.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100.00</b>

N = 16

*Table 5.13* shows that nine (56,25%) respondents were able to assist students placed at their company with tutorial/seminars. Five (31,25%) said they were unable whilst two (12,5%) were uncertain about their ability to assist students with tutorials/seminars.

The conclusion can be drawn that more than half of the respondents would be able to assist students by means of tutorials/seminars, which would help them to meet their educational objectives as stated by Royse *et al.* (1996:7).

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

The research findings discussed in this Chapter show that the corporate sector can be utilised for the practice education placement for undergraduate social work students. There is a correlation between the findings presented in this study and the findings of other studies as referred to in Chapters Two, Three and Four of this report. The constraining factors that came to the fore, which could complicate practice education placements in the corporate sector, can be eradicated by establishing channels of communication between the university and the corporate sector. With regular and constructive meetings, guidelines and policy documents can be developed, which should ensure a solid foundation for a meaningful partnership, between the corporate sector and the university.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

A lack of practice education placements for undergraduate social work students can have serious repercussions for the survival of schools of social work and for the profession. It was for this reason that the aim and objective of this study originated because the researcher was of the opinion that utilising the corporate sector as a practice education placement, could offer an alternative option and open more doors for the practice education placement of social work students.

The objectives of the study were identified, namely to explore the domain of social work in the corporate sector, discussed in Chapter Two; the nature of student placement for undergraduate social work students, as discussed in Chapter Three; to establish the requirements and expectations of the corporate sector, as discussed in Chapter Four; to examine to what extent the existing practical programme of the University of the Western Cape can accommodate the needs of the corporate sector and to explain the relationship between the university and the corporate sector, as discussed in Chapter Five. The conclusions and recommendations based on these findings will be discussed in the current Chapter.

#### **6.2 CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the empirical and theoretical findings of the study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

### **6.2.1 The corporate sector as a practice education placement for undergraduate social work students**

The following criteria essential for practice education placements will be evaluated based on the empirical and literature study.

- **Types of practice education placements**

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the corporate sector can offer concurrent and block placements to undergraduate social work students.

- **Duration of practice education placements**

From the survey results it can be concluded that the respondents preferred students to do practice education placements for four days a week over a period of a few months.

- **Model**

From the findings of the field survey and the literature study, it can be concluded that the “on-site” and the “off-site” models of the employee assistance program would be the most suitable models to apply in the corporate sector. The consortium and contract models were found to be the least suitable for student placements in the corporate sector.

- **Types of problems dealt with in the corporate sector**

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that undergraduate social work students will be able to deal with most problems that need to be addressed in the corporate sector

- **Social work methods**

From the survey findings and literature study, it can be concluded that social work students will be able to apply case, group and community work in the corporate sector. Students will have the opportunity to function on the micro, meso and macro level. A need for research in the corporate sector was also indicated.

- **Preferred study level of students for practice education placements**

From the survey results it can be concluded that the respondents would prefer to take fourth year students for practice education placements

- **Additional knowledge required from a student**

From the survey results and the literature study, it can be concluded that additional knowledge will be required from the student who is placed in the corporate sector. Means whereby this additional knowledge can be acquired are available and this requirement should not serve as an obstacle to prevent practice education placements in the corporate sector.

Based on the literature review and empirical study the conclusion is reached that the corporate sector can be utilised as a suitable practice education placement for undergraduate social work students.

### **6.2.2 Suitability of respondents to act as agency supervisors**

The following criteria were used to evaluate the suitability of the respondents to act as supervisors.

- **Years of experience of the respondents**

The literature study indicated that social work practitioners have to have at least two years' work experience to serve as a student supervisor. The findings in this research show that all the respondents had three or more years of work experience. From these findings it can be concluded that all the respondents qualify to act as student supervisors, based on their years of work experience.

- **Qualifications**

Based on the findings of the study, the conclusion is drawn that most of the respondents were qualified social workers and/or employee assistance programme professionals or practitioners. It can therefore be concluded that, based on their qualifications most of the respondents qualify to act as student supervisors.

- **Provision of supervision**

From the survey results it can be concluded that the respondents who are able to provide supervision to the students are in the minority. This is due to the fact that they did not have prior experience in supervising students.

- **Assistance with supervision of students required from the university**

Based on the literature review, it became clear that universities can offer training for field instructors who lack the experience to perform this task. Based on the findings of the survey, it can be concluded that most respondents needed assistance to supervise students. A further conclusion that can be drawn is that the companies by whom the respondents are employed do not have their own course for field instructors in place.

- **Ability to assist with tutorial sessions/seminars**

Based on the literature review it can be concluded that weekly sessions or them integrate theory and practice. From the survey results it can be concluded that more than half of the respondents will be able to assist with tutorial sessions/seminars.

Based on the literature review and the empirical findings of the study, the conclusion is drawn that the respondents will be able to provide supervision for social work undergraduate students.

- **Commitment of respondents to accommodate students for practice education placement**

From the findings it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents were uncertain whether they could accommodate students for practice education placements. This was due to the fact that they were unsure whether their company would agree to accommodate students. The respondents committed to accommodating students were those who had accommodated students previously and were informed about their company's policy in this regard.

### **6.2.3 Corporate sector's requirements for practice education placements**

- **Year level of student**

From the survey results it can be concluded that the corporate sector chose to have fourth year social work students for practice education placements.

- **Period of practice education placement**

From the findings it can be concluded that the corporate sector chose to take students for four full days per week for practice education placements.

## **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations based on the conclusion are as follows:

### **6.3.1 The university/department of social work**

It is recommended that the university:

- takes cognisance of the corporate sector's expectations of students, in terms of their competency level, language and additional knowledge.
- earmarks students who are interested in the corporate sector.
- focuses on establishing a student unit for practice education placement in the corporate sector.
- develops or buys in modules to provide the additional knowledge required by the corporate sector.
- keeps regular contact with the employee assistance programme for practitioners in the corporate sector to keep abreast of the latest developments.
- joins employee assistance professional associations.
- fosters a working relationship with the corporate sector.
- makes use of a supervisor with interest in and knowledge of occupational social work (EAP) who can offer maximum assistance to the student.
- recruits social workers in the corporate sector to serve as student supervisors.



### **6.3.2 The corporate sector**

It is recommended that social workers in the corporate sector:

- write and publish more on occupational social work and employee assistance programs in the Western Cape.
- keep records of previous student placements.
- present employers and senior management with information on the value and benefits of student placements in the company.
- consider student placements as part of their social responsibility program
- become involved in the outreach programmes of the university.

### **6.4 FURTHER RESEARCH**

- i. It is recommended that further research, aimed at a broader spectrum of companies, should be done to establish the willingness of these companies to accommodate social work students in practice education placements. Top management should be targeted.
- ii. A national survey should be done to obtain an up-to-date account of occupational social work in each province in South Africa.
- iii. A comparative study of South Africa and one of the leading countries in occupational social work should be carried out.
- iv. A survey to establish students' concepts of occupational social work should be carried out.
- v. The possibility of involving social work students in offering skills training to the unemployed should be investigated.
- vi. It should be investigated whether the aspects of work and "non-work" have been included in the social work curriculum at South African universities/schools of social work.

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## **APPENDIX A**

Telephone & Fax: 903 4410  
Cellular: 083 206 1335  
E-Mail: IBrown@UWC.ac.za

Mrs I.C.Brown  
4 Cressel Street  
Kuils River  
7580  
4 April 2001

Dear

### **PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH STUDY**

I am enrolled as a MA research student at the University of Stellenbosch and my student leader is Professor Sulina Green.

The title of my research is "Placement of undergraduate Students in the corporate sector, or "non-welfare settings". With this study I intend to establish whether the corporate sector, organisations that have Employee Assistance Programs and "non-welfare" organisations can accommodate undergraduate social work students for practical placements.

Kindly note that the purpose of this research is **not** to **place** a student at your organisation/company, but merely to gain information about the feasibility of such a placement.

On completion, please return this questionnaire by means of Fax, E-Mail or normal post, to reach me on or before 4 May, 2001.

Your willingness to participate in this research is highly appreciated and your response will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Yours sincerely

**(Mrs) I.C.Brown**  
**Student**

**Professor S.Green**  
**Social Work Department**  
**University of Stellenbosch**

**UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH**

**SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT**

**PLACEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR,  
OR NON-WELFARE SETTINGS**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Instructions**

Please tick the appropriate answer and/or specify in detail where requested.

**1. Identifying information**

- 1.1 Name of Company/Organisation.....
- 1.2 Address.....
- 1.3 Name of respondent.....
- 1.4 Telephone No. ....
- 1.5 Fax No.....
- 1.6 E-Mail Address.....
- 1.7 Indicate your position in the company/organisation.....
- 1.8 Male  Female

**2. Qualifications**

2.1 In which of the following disciplines or fields of practice are you qualified?

Employee Assistance Programmes	
Industrial/Occupational Social Work	
Social Work	
Psychology	
Human Resources	
Medical Qualification	
Nursing	
Other (Specify)	

2.2 If you have social work or EAP qualifications, please specify the nature of the qualification

.....

.....

.....

**3. Employment**

3.1. How many years are you employed in the company / organisation?

3 yrs      5 years      Other

**4. Field work of Students**

4.1 Did your company/Organisation ever accommodate students for practical training?

Yes       No       Uncertain

4.2 If yes, were any social work students placed under your supervision?

Yes       No       Uncertain

4.3 If no, were the reasons any of the following?

No request received	
No accommodation available	
No manpower - lack of capacity in terms of knowledge, supervision	
Not an appropriate placement	
Unwillingness of management	
Lack of time	
Work too difficult for a student	
Other reasons (specify)	

4.4 In which year (s) did you act as a supervisor for a student?.....

4.5 Will your company/organisation accommodate a social work student for fieldwork?

Yes       No       Uncertain

4.6 Will your company take a social work student if the university provides a staff member to supervise the student?

Yes  No  Uncertain

**5. Preferences for fieldwork placements**

5.1 Which of the following levels of student would you prefer?

3rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	4th year	<input type="checkbox"/>
----------	--------------------------	----------	--------------------------

5.2 What number of students will you be able to accommodate?

One	<input type="checkbox"/>	Two	<input type="checkbox"/>	Four	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	-----	--------------------------	------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------

5.3 For which duration would you be able to accommodate a student?

One full day per week	<input type="checkbox"/>
Four full days per week	<input type="checkbox"/>
A few weeks once per year	<input type="checkbox"/>
A few weeks more than once per year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.4 Do you have any preferences with regard to the language of students?

AFRIKAANS	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENGLISH	<input type="checkbox"/>
AFRIKAANS & ENGLISH	<input type="checkbox"/>
AFRIKAANS & ETHNIC LANGUAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>
ENGLISH & ETHNIC LANGUAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>
ETHNIC LANGUAGE ONLY	<input type="checkbox"/>
ANY OTHER COMBINATION (S)	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.5 Do you expect the student to have a specific knowledge base or additional qualifications?

Yes  No

5.6 If yes, specify.....  
 .....



**6. Work performance of students**

6.1 Will the student (s) be able to do the following social work methods at your company/ organisation?

CASEWORK	
GROUPWORK	
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK	
ADMINISTRATION	

**7. Nature of social work service to be rendered ?**

7.1 Do you offer any of the following services to your workers or the community?

i) Social responsibility projects in communities	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Specify:.....

.....

ii) Social responsibility projects at the work place	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Specify:.....

.....

iii) Counselling for Alcohol/Drug related problems	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
--	-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

iv) Counselling for marital problems	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------------------	-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

v) Educational programs	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------------------	-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Specify: .....

.....

vi) Support groups	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------	-----	--------------------------	----	--------------------------

Specify:.....

.....

Preparation for retrenchment	Yes		N
Preparation for retirement	Ye		N
Skills training	Ye		N

Specify:.....  
 .....

**8. Placement of students**

8.1 Where will the student be based?

In the office	
In the community	
At a project	
Anywhere else (Specify)	

8.2 Will your company/organisation be able to provide supervision for the student?

Yes  No

8.3 If yes, by whom? i. Position.....

ii. Qualification:.....

8.4 Will assistance in preparation and implementation of supervision from the university, be accepted?

Yes  No  Uncertain

8.5. Will you be able to assist with tutorial sessions to equip students with additional knowledge on the nature, structure and functioning of your company/organisation?

Yes  No  Uncerta

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

**IRIS BROWN**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

What do you think of field placements for social work students?

Will the corporate sector be a suitable field placement?

How should the university go about arranging for the field placement of a student in the corporate sector?

How will the corporate sector benefit from a student placement?

What type of problems do you encounter in the corporate sector?

Will a student be able to deal with it?

Which social work methods can the student apply in the corporate sector?

Apart from the Employee Assistance Programme, where else can a student be used in the corporate sector?

In which EAP model will the student function best? On site; off site; or Consortium model?

Which additional specialised knowledge do you require from the student?

Who would be most suitable to provide this specialised knowledge?

How can the corporate sector assist in providing this additional knowledge?

Who in the corporate sector would be most suitable to supervise the student?

What if the supervisor is not a qualified social worker?

How often should supervision take place?

Where should supervision take place?

In which format should supervision be offered?

How do you see the role and function of the agency supervisor?

What are your expectations of the university in terms of: supervision, visibility and contact in the corporate sector?

## **APPENDIX C**

### **INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT A, AT ROAD ACCIDENT FUND, CAPE TOWN.**

#### **What do you think of field placements for social work students?**

*I think it's a great idea and gives students exposure as well as the company that they're working in. It gives them an opportunity to get new ideas from students as well. So I think, it can work and it's a good idea.*

#### **Will the corporate sector be a suitable field placement?**

*Probably in most of them. There might be a few corporate sectors where it won't really be suitable. It just depends on the environment and where it is and whether the company has the time to actually accommodate them.*

#### **What about your Company?**

*At this stage I don't think it will be able to accommodate them. Firstly, we don't have the manpower and secondly even though I think it's a good idea, I won't have the time to be responsible for them at this stage.*

#### **How should the university go about arranging for the field placement of a student in the corporate sector?**

*I would say that the university would have to write a letter, outlining the concept and what their needs are and whether the company is prepared to accommodate, and I think, yes it would have to go to HR Department.*

-2-

**How will the corporate sector benefit from a student placement?**

*I think maybe on projects or researching areas where the corporate sector doesn't have the time maybe, or even the need for an EAP, they could investigate that. I've never had a student at a corporate sector so I'm not exactly sure, but I think it could be beneficial in terms, both for the student and for the corporate sector where the student could possibly research or focus on areas that the company doesn't have to much time to... especially the downsizing and reducing staff there might be areas where the student could assist with.*

**What type of problems do you encounter in the corporate sector?**

*I think the problem at this stage, people are very wary about opening up about their personal problems although they talk amongst each other, they wouldn't formerly come to me or their manager and say this is the problem, but what I found is there is a bit of alcohol abuse, it's not too many but there is that area. There might be one or two with a drug addiction problem, but there's a lot of financial mismanagement that happens at certain levels within the company. Then obviously there is marital problems, but people don't actually talk about it. Maybe because there is no EAP at the company, they're not exactly sure who they can trust, but a lot of financial mismanagement exists at this company.*

**Will a student be able to deal with it?**

*I'm not too sure. I don't think so.*

-3-

**Which social work methods can the student apply in the corporate sector?**

*Maybe a bit of individual method.*

**Would groupwork work?** *No I don't think so.*

**Community work?** *More developmental. A research type of work I would say.*

**In which EAP model will the student function best? On site; off site; or Consortium model?**

*I think the model that we would look at would probably be contracting it out. I don't think... it depends on the need, but I think it would be an off-site thing I don't think we'll have it on site, I think we'll do it off site and we'll work from that ....*

**Which additional specialised knowledge do you require from the student?**

*I think they would need some knowledge, if they can have some practical knowledge, I mean, I suppose they must get their practical knowledge here, but if they have some, at least the theoretical knowledge of EAP, it would work out. I think it preferable if they have specialised knowledge and I think EAP must form part of their curriculum also.*

**Who would be most suitable to provide this specialised knowledge?**

*At this stage no one here .We don't have a co-ordinator. Ok, I suppose if it's at my branch, at Cape Town branch, it would be myself. No one else would be able to. OK, so you are the HR person but fortunately also a social worker ? Yes*

-4-

**How can the corporate sector assist in providing this additional knowledge?**

*Obviously with supervision and trying to impart the theoretical knowledge and linking the theory with the practice. The EAP? Yes. The specialised knowledge? Yes. Yes*

**Who in the corporate sector would be most suitable to supervise the student?**

*Look I don't know, I suppose most of the H.. I don't know. It depends how that company is structured. And also considering that they do have psychologists maybe as the EAP person, and the nursing.*

*But if they have a psychologist and nurse then maybe it should fall in that category but it just depends on what the nurse's role is and how much she knows, and, you know, so it can also be conflict of interest where the one profession doesn't want to be, you know, the professional jealousy that exists. If the psychologist new something about EAP then maybe, or maybe there should be a manager who is managing the three of them but knows something as well. If the psychologist or the nurse is quite competent, then I suppose, and it depends on the experience of the EAP practitioner as well.*

**What if the supervisor is not a qualified social worker?**

*When you supervise or when you manage, you don't have to know the expertise of each person's field as long as you're able to manage the people involved. So it depends on the approach that the person uses. I think, sometimes you can have a manager who is quite open and will listen to what you are saying and understand what you're saying, then you get a manager who doesn't understand a thing, who doesn't take the time actually to read about what is EAP and doesn't allow himself*

-5-

*or herself to be educated in terms of what is EAP so he doesn't understand the ramifications. And he doesn't listen to what the experts know and he wants to form his own opinion. But, this is a bit difficult to say, because sometimes there are some people who manage people excellently and they, you don't have to know everything that each person does.*

**How often should supervision take place?**

*I think it would have to be a weekly, if the person is coming every week then it has to be weekly obviously. I think you need to maybe check where the students' at the depends what the person, student is doing, what the student is actually involved with. maybe you don't need to give every week maybe its every second week that you need to give more structured supervision. maybe the other week you just need to monitor what the person is doing so it just depends at what level and what the person is involved in.*

**Where should supervision take place?**

*I think a lot of the responsibility should be at university as well. I don't think the entire responsibility should be shared..*

**In which format should supervision be offered?**

*Well, if there are other students, then maybe the team approach could work. Then there are times you need to have a chat one on one, but just depends on circumstances. If its effecting a common theory then I suppose you could have it in a team. If it does 'nt then I suppose on a one to one you could do it.*



**How do you see the role and function of the agency supervisor?**

*I think maybe that person must assume responsibility, there must be responsibility for ensuring that the student, if you at the agency, that the student does the work, that the student has proper, the environment is conducive to the learning of the student. I don't think its fair to take someone on and you can't offer the person growth and you can't ensure that the person is actually learning something and is able to complete whatever they have to complete . So basically I think it's, you have to ensure that you must take res.. if you say yes you must then take responsibility for everything that comes with it as well*

**What are your expectations of the university in terms of: supervision, visibility and contact in the corporate sector?**

**On Supervision:**

*Well I think they need to contact the company and find out how the student is doing, as well, not just send the student and that's it. I think it will be good if, to ensure that the student is getting regular supervision at the university as well, and obviously if there are any problems, that the company would be able to contact the university and that that person is contactable and to be able to share out any problems in case the student is also posing some problems. There's problems with the student as well. His just not adapting or absconding or not, you know, something like that, you need to have contact. You need to be able to be, the person must be accessible as well.*

**On Visibility:**

*I think it would be nice for the person to come and see how the student where the student is and how the student is working and just check up and so on.*

**On Contact:**

*I think initially there should be a physical contact at the place, checking up if its OK and for the first month there should be more contact and then I think it could be on a monthly or a quarterly, depending. Especially if the student's going to be here for a full year.*

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT B AT CENTRE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, CAPE TOWN.

*What do you think of field placements for social work students?*

I think its necessary. I think its good for the students to get experience in the real world so that they can compare what they learn in literature or in book, they can actually compare what actually happens in the real world.

*Will the corporate sector be a suitable field placement?*

It can be yes. In a sense that, developing in a corporate world to either have qualified counsellors like social workers and psychologists in the corporate world to move away from the charity sort of attitude. And it's good experience for students to experience that.

*How should the university go about arranging for the field placement of a student in the corporate sector?*

I think the university should make sure that they know exactly what happens in the corporate field or sector. First of all they should involve themselves with other professionals who are working in the corporate field. They have a huge means that they can do that, so that there is a sharing of views and knowledge, and what the professionals do that are at the moment in the corporate field, how they experience it, how they work it, what they do there and that the lecturers from the university can actually understand the way it works, before they send students.

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*Who would be the most suitable person in the Company to make that initial contact?*

To make that initial contact obviously would be the HR Department and the student will have to report to a person who can be responsible for the student and understand what the student has to do. Unfortunately if there is'nt an EAP within our company it would be difficult because then there is'nt somebody who actually takes responsibility for the specific function. If there is a EAP within the company then obviously the student will report to the person who coordinates that specific function and that would be easier for the university to get a person in if there is a EAP compared to when there is no EAP at the company.

*So you think it would not be a bad idea or there would not be a problem if there is nobody to supervise the students, that the university can provide somebody to supervise the student in the corporate sector.*

What Im actually saying is, that is a problem, because somebody has to give the student work to do. You can't just send the student in and there is'nt somebody within the company responsible for the student and the student performing that specific function. The student cannot work on his own. Daar moet iemand wees om die studente werk te gee, om te koordineer wat die student doen, om te monitor wat die student doen en wat hom leiding gee. As daar nie 'n offisiel EAP in daardie spesifieke maatskapy is nie, dan is dit 'n probleem, want wie gaan die student leiding gee, wie gaan sien dat hy die werk doen. Die student kan nie maar net daar

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rond hang nie. En net van die universiteit af se supervisor afhanklik wees nie. Want dit is ekstern. Dis nie iemand binnekant die maatskapy wat regtig die student die regte leiding kan gee nie. Jy kan nie net 'n student van buite af in bring en hom plaas as daar nie 'n struktuur is waarin hy kan beweeg.

*How will the corporate sector benefit from a student placement?*

I can only answer the question from the viewpoint, yes there is a EAP within the company. I would say yes. I have taken students before, because the students can do extra things which you perhaps can't get to. That student can do a research that you perhaps can't get time to do, especially, as, we are all usually over loaded with work, and students can do the extra things. I think that the coordinator within the company or the company itself, can also learn from the student because they bring in knowledge, new knowledge or recent knowledge which you perhaps haven't done and they bring in new information so there's an integration of knowledge and information, which makes me feel good.

*What type of problems do you encounter in the corporate sector?*

They range from personal issues, family issues, marital issues, child problems, people with child problems, personal things, personal trauma, hijackings, murder, shootings, anything. It's the same things that you get in the community. That you would get at a normal agency.

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*Will a student be able to deal with it?*

I won't say that. It depends on how old the student is in terms of if it's a second year or a third year or a fourth year. My reply to that would be yes, with supervision. And obviously if the student works in your department in your sector you cannot give the student the full responsibility. Obviously the next year or two the student can stand in the position where she works and takes the full responsibility but when the student does practical you are responsible. You have to keep track and you have to guide the student. That is why they do practical and the only way that they learn is to actually do it with the guidance of the professional.

*Which social work methods can the student apply in the corporate sector?*

Mostly casework, groupwork and actually in the end you apply all the methods because if you do something in the company, for the company, it's community work. Your community, are the people who are employed by the company, so that in the end, you use all the methods. And you know, although I do not have the time, but you can do research as well and actually that is when you start adding value, when you work with more people instead of doing just casework with individuals then you actually reach more people and start adding value.

*Apart from the Employee Assistance Programme, where else can a student be used in the corporate sector?*

I don't know. Because where are you going to actually connect the student. With what? With what function? With what responsibility? I don't think that the corporate sector has the ability to make a plan and actually use the student effectively.

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My concern is that the student will end up doing the filing or will end up being an assistant to the trainer, preparing a room for training. If a social work student or a social worker is appointed within a company outside of the EAP and is not doing social work, then it could happen, in certain HR responsibilities, or junior HR. But sending students in there with the prescription of the university, with the blue file that they give the student, explaining what they have to do when they do practical work. To send a student with that blue file into a company where there is no EAP and having that expectations from the student would frustrate the student.

*In which EAP models will the student function best? On site; off site; or Consortium model?*

It depends on the company, the size of the company, the spread of the people. If it is 3000 people in one building, obviously your 'on site' model will apply. If you have a business consisting of 3000 people but they sit in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg or Bloemfontein, then another model would apply. So my answer to the question is there is no unique model. It depends on the business. It could be a combination of the three, or it could be just one but it depends entirely on the business.

*Which additional specialised knowledge do you require from the student?*

I definitely think so. I think that the knowledge lies within the company and within the knowledge of the EAP. That is what I said before and I think I mentioned it in the Questionnaire. My concern is that if the university wants to enter the corporate sector firstly they don't want to send students into the corporate sector. They have to

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first move out and find out what is happening there.

*Who would be most suitable to provide this specialised knowledge?*

As a company? Obviously the person who runs the EAP. Which would be the agency supervisor.

*How can the corporate sector assist in providing this additional knowledge?*

Obviously the coordinator will introduce the student to the field because if you receive the student for practical work, you obviously introduce the student to the field. Likewise, if you send the student to ACVV for training the ACVV will tell you where the communities are what projects they run and what they do, likewise within the corporate sector the person responsible will assist the student to get to know the environment.

*How often should supervision take place?*

Initially because nothing is happening at university, you have to take the student which is a raw student and actually fine tune them the first month of work. Not if this does not happen in one day. Fine tuning is to understand how we can actually apply the knowledge that he got from the university and shape it into the corporate sector.

*Who in the corporate sector would be most suitable to supervise the student?*

The EAP person

*What if the supervisor is not a qualified social worker?*

That is what I have problems with because of the request of the university. Because of the prescriptions of the university. If that person is the admin manager they will not know what to do with the student because they will not have the knowledge and you are actually going to frustrate the student. So in my opinion you can only link a

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student with qualified persons.

*So it could be a social worker or psychologist as well?*

That is right because its the professional link that is there.

*How often should supervision take place?*

Weekly. If it's a fourth year student and that student is two or three days with the company. As well as interim if there is a need for it. The student must know that they can speak to the social worker at the company and I have experienced in the past that there is supervision from the person at the company as well as at university and they must talk to each other. In terms of time about 1 hour.

*Where should supervision take place?*

Preferably at the company where the student is placed and obviously also at the university.

*In which format should supervision be offered?*

A combination of both individual and group. Individual is necessary. You cannot just go on group but individual is necessary, but if there 3 or 4 students in one unit or in one area its nice if they can discuss things

*How do you see the role and function of the agency supervisor?*

I would focus on the real practical issues. I was not there to judge on the theoretical basis of the student. Because I did not train the student theoretically and I have not been training for 20 years so you don't know what they train the students. You only hear and you see when they write the report what they do. But you are there to give

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them the practical issues as well as introduce them to the company and to make them understand the integration. So I focussed on practical issues.

*What are your expectations of the university in terms of: supervision, visibility and contact in the corporate sector?*

**On Supervision:**

The university can guide the coordinator or the practical trainer in shaping the student into a professional. That's why I see it as a working together. They must not work separately, they must work together. And we each have to understand they have a specific agenda, the person at the company has another agenda, but they must understand, that taking in students is an add on. It is something that you often do for the love of the work, it's not part of your primary function. You don't get paid for it either. You do it for the love of the work. You are not an academic you are a practical professional and there is sometimes a difference between the academic mind and the practical person. I am not an academic. I want to do the job and I want to try and show the student that you can be proud of what you are doing and that you can have the right heart and have the knowledge and have the practical experience and that makes them professional.

**On Visibility:**

That is why I referred you in the past that my concern is that my experience in Johannesburg and Pretoria, is that the both universities there are very involved with EAP in general. Overall very involved. They assist with development, they assist with input, they attend the local interest groups, they are involved with the professional development of the EAP by getting involved with the EAP community, the people that work in the field. My experience in Cape Town is there is no involvement from the

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university and I have mentioned this to one university before, that you cannot send out students in this field if you don't get involved. Because you need to talk the language. It is one thing to say that we are giving an MA degree in Occupational Social Work but its another thing if you are in that field and when they teach one thing we who are working in the field do not even know what they teach. So I would say that the university, and there are many universities in the Cape Town area, should actually go and learn what the people in the northern areas do and involve themselves in this field.

## APPENDIX E

### INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT C EMPLOYED AT GABRIEL SA

*What do you think of field placements for social work students?*

In EAP generally I think it's a good idea, at Gabriel specifically it would be a problem, because of the shifts. They work two weeks day and two weeks nights. If there is a case that needs continuous attention then they must be prepared to work at night also, but that is now just for if the interview is scheduled for an hour then maybe from nine to ten or ten to eleven, or whatever because the shift ends the next morning at quarter past seven.

*Will the corporate sector be a suitable field placement?"*

Gabriel itself won't be, within another corporate setting, yes. I think especially a fourth year student who is, I mean by that time more knowledgeable already. There is a lot that she can do. Yes, I think it can work.

*How should the university go about arranging for the field placement of a student in the corporate sector?*

By contacting a Human Resources Manager first.

*How will the corporate sector benefit from a student placement?*

If we think in terms of fourth year students, I think a lot of emphasis would be maybe on group work and community work, because a lot of the people working at Gabriel itself, they come from the surrounding areas, Lavender Hill, Retreat, Steenberg and there's a lot of community upliftment that can be done within those communities which will in the end again help the employer. It can be group work or community development.

*What types of problems do you encounter in the corporate sector?*

Alcoholism is a big problem, drug addiction, marital problems and then you get your normal, just advice, things like that for maintenance, what's the procedure, or application for old-age pension. The one-off interview.

*Will a student be able to deal with it?*

Yes, but with EAP it is short-term, so they must have knowledge of brief therapy, how it works, quick and accurate assessments which is very important in EAP.

*Which social work methods can the student apply in the corporate sector?*

Mainly case work.

*Apart from the Employee Assistance Programme, where else can a student be used in the corporate sector?*

I function within EAP so I don't think there's great need for literacy training. I don't know how the social work students would be able to fit in there, but I think within a lot of corporate places there is a great need for literacy.

*And what about other skills training, like workshops*

Yes, I suppose they can be utilised there as well. In Gabriel, those issues are dealt with, by the occupational nurse, so students can assist there.

*In which EAP model will the student function best? On site, off site, or consortium model?*

On site because I go there.

*Which additional specialised knowledge do you require from the student?*

Well, as I've mentioned before, brief therapy is important. I suppose one can give them literature and just give them a brief explanation as to what brief therapy is all about, because I myself didn't know what brief therapy was all about until I started at PHD. Trauma counselling is also important and they must have knowledge of the community resources for referral.

*Who would be most suitable to provide this specialised knowledge?*

I think the university should include it in their program.

*How can the corporate sector assist in providing this additional knowledge?*

If the student is placed with a social worker, then he/she can impart their knowledge.

*Who in the corporate sector would be most suitable to supervise the student?*

Either the social worker or the occupational nurse, or else a psychologist if you have one.

*What if the supervisor is not a qualified social worker?*

As I said with the occupational nurse, it's still part of the EAP team, so she would be fine.

*How often should supervision take place?*

With a fourth year student, on a weekly basis because she's going to be there four days a week, just so that you can know that everything's still okay. {Once a term should be fine, or if there is a need for the Agency supervisor and the University supervisor to get together to discuss an issue, one should be flexible.}

*Where should supervision take place?*

At the work place.

*In which format should supervision take place?*

An hour's supervision session, once a month. It should be with the EAP team.

*How do you see the role and function of the agency supervisor?*

As far as the issues that you've mentioned before, where they must have knowledge of BT, trauma counselling, I think that is where the agency supervisor will come in, the

university as such. Selection of student cases, I think the supervisor would be in a better position to just screen and then see would it be appropriate. They should also monitor the student and report on the student's progress.

*Visibility: Do you think the supervisor should sit in sometimes?*

Maybe not sitting in, but visiting the organisation is important so that one can see he is still playing an active role.

*What are your expectations of the university in terms of supervision, visibility and contact in the corporate sector?*

Maybe more on an academic level, their role should be focussed, but I also think it would be important for the university supervisor to be knowledgeable about the agency. They should know what the set-up is in the dynamics of where the student is being placed.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT D EMPLOYED AT ENGEN SA**

*What do you think of field placement for social work students?*

I think it is an excellent idea, under normal circumstances these students don't have a chance to be exposed to the working environment. So I think it will really add to their experience and when they eventually get into the working environment they will be far better prepared than what they are when students start to work straight after leaving the university.

*Will the corporate sector be suitable for field placement?*

Yes. Quite surely, because in other departments we take students all the time, so I think the corporate sector is ideal.

*How should the university go about arranging for the field placement of a student in the corporate sector?*

The request should go through the recruitment agency. The first thing would be to set up a meeting with the recruitment department. Once that is done, the nitty gritty of the placement will take place at Engen itself.

*How will the corporate sector benefit from a student placement?*

If you're looking at EAP, it could be support and help for the EAP person. They will probably end up doing dog's body work, but in the end, the dog's body work will give insight in what we do in EAP. I don't think there will be much benefit for the corporate sector, but for the EAP practitioner it would be another hand.

*What type of problems do you encounter?*

A variety. We look at the familiar stuff like marital problems, lots of substance abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, financial issues, parenting, lots of work relationship [problems], stressful work environments. In certain departments people are more stressed than others, inter-personnel relationship problems.

*Will a student be able to deal with it?*

It depends on which year the student is. A fourth year student, yes. And if I have more insight into the type of experience a student had and the theoretical material I will be able to give a better answer. As an EAP practitioner I will screen the student and not give them the very difficult cases and give them the one's I think they will be able to cope with.

*Which social work methods can a student apply?*

I think all methods, except community work.

*Where else can a student fit in?*

EAP is basically in the Human Resource department and I'm sure it does not directly relate to what she does but a student can serve as another hand in the HR department. They can do administrative work and will help a student understand employee benefits better. Most of the supportive structures and benefits for employees are based in HR

*Which EAP model will the student function best?*

On site. We at Engen make use of an on site model.

*Which additional specialised knowledge do you require from the student?*

No I don't think any. I don't expect a student to have special EAP knowledge, but if they do have, yes it would help and a broad business knowledge.

*Who should provide the specialised knowledge?*

At Engen it would be a problem. I will do the EAP side, but I'm thinking of the business side. I could even do the business side because I had to teach myself the business side. Students could sit in at meetings to observe and the meetings are not all that confidential, so students can sit in.

*How can the corporate sector assist in providing the additional knowledge?*

I (EAP Coordinator) will be able to assist the student

*Who will be able to supervise the student?*

The EAP practitioner, and someone from the university. We could work together.

*What if the supervisor is not a social worker?*

It would not matter. I am not a social worker but you may have certain requirements that I'm not aware of so if I can meet with the coordinator at the university to make sure that we all talk the same language.

*How often should the supervision take place?*

Weekly for students at the workplace in my office

*Format of supervision?*

One on one. Directly, verbally at scheduled times a day, hour. Individual supervision definitely.

*Role and function of the agency supervisor?*

To enable the student to get a glance of what happens in the corporate sector. Explore student to large portion of my day, of my typical week of my work environment. I should be able to teach her on the job. To work out a formal program and also observe and evaluate her performance at the end of the time.



*What are your expectations of the university?*

Corporate sector should be visited by the university. Me and the university should meet regularly. The university should be available if I have any problems, I must be able to contact them. Lot of liaison and personal interaction between corporate sector and the university.

## **APPENDIX G**

### **INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT E EMPLOYED AT ESCOM**

*What do you think of field placements for social work?*

I think we need to give students the exposure to help them understand what happens in practice and what are the necessary requirements expected of you in the corporate sector

*Will the corporate sector be a suitable field placement?*

Good progress has been made in EAP and for quite a while the EAP is well established in the corporate sector. I think it is something we have to work on continuously and think through

*How should the university go about arranging for the field placement of a student in the corporate sector?*

Personal contact should be made and relationships should be built up between the university and the corporate sector. Human Resources will be the relevant department to contact together with the EAP practitioner

*How will the corporate sector benefit from a student placement?*

I think the cooperation between the corporate sector and the academics is always necessary. From both sides we can assist and support each other. On the one side the university can stay in touch with the practice to know what is going on. On the other side, people in practice can benefit from the academics to know what happens in theory.

*What type of problems do you encounter in the corporate sector?*

It is very broad. It is all the psycho-social problems, social problems like we know it. Stress is a growing problem. The field is wide. Alcohol and dependence and HIV Aids and need for counselling and the management of the counselling process.

*Will the student be able to deal with it?*

The student needs guidance and assistance from the professional. A student will be able to cope.

*Which social work methods can a student apply in the corporate sector?*

Casework definitely, groupwork, lifestyle programs, research. HIV Aids education programs in the community where social workers and EAP coordinators were involved, and students can assist here.

*Apart from EAP, where else can students be used in the corporate sector?*

Within organisational development and community development the student can assist.

*In which EAP model will the student function best?*

On-site model – yes. Off-site – perhaps. In a very limited way on a far off rural town where Escom functions. Depends on the needs in the town

*Which additional specialised knowledge do you require from the student?*

Students should have facilitation skills for example with groups. It will help if the student knows how a business operates. The difference between industrial social work and traditional social work at government/welfare offices. A broad knowledge of the aforementioned will benefit the student.

*Who would be most suitable to provide this specialised knowledge?*

The in-house EAP practitioner.

*How can the corporate sector assist in providing this additional knowledge?*

Through practical exposure at the agency and by means of an EAP practitioner who by means of one on one contact can give the necessary assistance

*Who in the corporate sector will be most suitable to supervise the student?*

The EAP practitioner who supervises the student

*What if the supervisor is not a qualified social worker?*

If the person has skills with regard to EAP it can work. It is often not a social worker. As long as the person is knowledgeable and competent

*How often should supervision take place ?*

It will depend on the competence of the student. A senior student should have weekly supervision.

*Where should supervision take place?*

At the workplace

*In which format should supervision be offered?*

One to one feedback. Student should be able to handle problems. By observation – one to one feedback. Verbal or written feedback.

*How do you see the role and function of the agency supervisor?*

The supervisor should give guidance. His role should contribute to the development of the student, especially if it falls within the EAP field. The theory and practice should be brought together/connected for the student. The role of mentor by the supervisor during the training phase. Supervisor should evaluate the student's performance.

*What are your expectations from the university in terms of supervision, visibility and contact in the corporate sector?*

The university should provide a guideline in terms of their expectations, what should happen in practice. Regular and personal contact and liaison between supervisors at university and agency, to address students learning needs. If the campus supervisor visits the agency, it would be beneficial to the student, so that they can get a picture of what the environment is like, where the student finds him/herself. The university will be better prepared for the student. Contact could be written, electronically or telephonically.

## APPENDIX H

### INTERVIEW WITH RESPONDENT F CONTRACTUAL WORKER AT KOEBERG POWER STATION AND IN PRIVATE PRACTICE.

*What do you think of field placements for social work students?*

I think it is necessary and very important for students to be exposed to field placements because how else will they gain experience.

*Will the corporate sector be a suitable placement?*

Yes it will be. Students will be given the opportunity to gain first hand experience about the work place.

*How should the university go about arranging for the field placement of a student in the corporate sector?*

Look, as you know I am not in full time employ at any specific company but if I have to take the company where I do contract work it would possibly be the HR person or somebody in EAP.

*How will the corporate sector benefit from a student placement?*

In terms of extra manpower and support the corporate sector will benefit. In my current situation where I am in private practice it will however not be possible.

*What types of problems do you encounter in the corporate sector?*

The usual problems that we get in social work, like family and marital, work related problems pertaining to disciplinary hearings and shift work.

*Will a student be able to deal with it?*

Yes. With the guidance and supervision of the professional a student will be able to handle many cases.

*Which social work methods can a student apply in the corporate sector?*

Casework , groupwork and community work can be applied in the corporate sector .

*Apart from the Employee Assistance Programme, where else can a student be used in the corporate sector?*

Organisational development is an interesting area where much focus is placed on small groups and I suppose students could be used there.

*In which EAP model will the student function best? On-site ; Off-site or consortium model?*

It would be the on and off site models.

*Which additional specialised knowledge do you require from the student?*

It would help if a student could have knowledge on industrial relations and trade unions.

*Who would be most suitable to supervise the student?*

If there is a social worker it would be ideal. Other wise the human resources person or industrial psychologist. The social worker from the university will also have to be actively involved.

*What if the supervisor is not a social worker?*

A capable person who deals with EAP matters will be able to supervise with the assistance of the university supervisor.

*How often should supervision take place?*

Weekly supervision , or according to the individual needs of the student.

*Where should supervision take place?*

The work place should be fine since it is where all parties are.

*In which format should supervision be offered?*

Individual supervision at the agency if there is only one student. If there are more than one student obviously seeing them in a group will be beneficial to all.

*How do you see the role and function of the agency supervisor?*

I would think that the agency supervisor should give guidance and assistance to the student in the organization. He or she should also introduce the student to all other disciplines in the organization ,and evaluate the student.

*What are your expectations of the university in terms of: supervision, visibility and contact?*

Regular contact is essential,with a visit as often as possible in the beginning of the placement. Telephonic contact can be made.

**APPENDIX I**

**UNIVERSITY OF THE**  
**WESTERN CAPE**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

**GUIDE FOR PRACTICE EDUCATION**

**COURSE 401**

**2001**

(Pages 1 – 7)



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The nature of the fourth year practical work is demanding and will require a high degree of commitment and perseverance and a keen sense of responsibility from participants. However, the meaningful opportunities for both personal and professional growth which will be provided in the programme, should be highly challenging and rewarding. Furthermore the programme will enable you to make valuable contributions on many levels, not only in the communities where you practice and the social service agencies where you function as student social workers, but also in the supervision sessions with your supervisors. The sense of achievement and fulfillment which will hopefully be experienced, can only enhance your motivation and stimulate successful progress.

This guide provides you with the objectives, requirements and details of the practical programme. Please read it carefully and keep it safely as you will often refer to it during the course of the year.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF PRACTICAL TRAINING

The long term objective of the practice education programme in the fourth year, is to continue preparing and to round off students for competent practice as entry level social workers.

The following objectives for case work, groupwork and community work will be focussed on:-

### **Casework**

The student should acquire and demonstrate:

- the ability to function within the structure of the agency i.r.o. casework.
  - knowledge of and use of intervention strategies such as short and long term casework, crisis intervention and family counseling
  - the ability to develop social work skills for effective practice with various client systems
  - the ability to develop skills in oral and written communication i.r.o. casework
  - acquire a knowledge of and differential use of intervention strategies such as short and long – term casework, crisis intervention, and family counselling
  - the ability to develop social work skills for effective practice with various client systems.
- The ability to develop own professional functioning through the effective use of supervision.

### **Groupwork**

The student should acquire and demonstrate:

- the ability to function within the structure of the agency i.r.o. groupwork
  - the ability to form a group
  - knowledge of and use of appropriate theoretical knowledge and its relevance to a group
  - knowledge of and use of interventive skills in the groupwork process.
  - the ability to develop skills in oral and written communication i.r.o. groupwork.
- The ability to develop own professional functioning through the effective use of supervision.

### **Community Work**

The student should acquire and demonstrate:-

- the ability to function within the structure of the agency i.r.o. community work.
  - the ability to approach the community work project systematically:- to assess needs, formulate goals, select and appropriate interventive strategy, implement plans, evaluate the results and make recommendations
  - knowledge of and use of Social Work skills for effective practice in community work
  - the ability to develop skills in oral and written communication i.r.o. community work.
- The ability to develop own professional functioning through the effective use of supervision.

### **3. OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAMME FOR PRACTICAL TRAINING, 2001**

In order to reach the objectives set out above, the practical training programme includes the following components:

- A four day (thirty two hours) per week placement ongoing, from 18 April – 13 September 2001 at a social service agency during which a community work project and either casework or groupwork will be undertaken (see 4.1)
- A community study (see 4.2)
- A community work planning report (see 4.3)
- Two individual evaluations of practical work, one per semester (see 4.4)
- Continuous weekly recording for the duration of the placement at agencies during the second and third terms (see 4.5)
- Continuous weekly supervision for the duration of the placement at the agencies (see 4.6)
- A research project as per the requirements of SW 405

### **4. PROGRAMME DETAILS**

The departmental staff member responsible for all programme components discussed below is the coordinator, Mrs G Koopman. Students may feel free to consult staff about any problems or queries.

It is important that students continually refer to relevant theory in the execution of the practical programme. Responsibility should also be accepted for the invaluable, independent reading which will be necessitated by various practice situations.

#### **4.1 Four days (32 hours) per week placement at a social service agency**

From Wednesday 18 April until Thursday 13 September 2001 students work as student social workers at the agencies where they have been accepted (see calendar and Annexure 1). They spend either four days per week (Monday to Thursday) or 32 hours per week flexitime there, according to the needs of the agency and as agreed with them.

The exact nature of the work allocated to students will depend to a large extent on the nature of the various social service agencies which have accepted students for placements. It is appreciated that agencies usually provide the richest possible learning experience to students to as much as is feasible of the daily work of social workers in the particular setting. However, in the final year it is required that the following aspects should definitely be included in students practical experience and assistance to help them accomplish this will be vital:

#### **Community Work**

A community work project which should be viewed as a priority from the beginning of the placement, may be either a project initiated by the student in consultation and co-operation with the agency and community, or a continuing community work project to which the student brings new inputs. Projects are introduced to university supervisors by means of a written project planning report (see 4.3)

#### **Groupwork/ Casework**

Either groupwork or casework (or both) in response to the needs of the agency/community and in accordance with the interests of the student. If groupwork has been decided upon, it is preferable that the process should start timeously during the placement in order to ensure a minimum of 8 weekly sessions. If casework is chosen, a manageable caseload to carry in addition to the community work project would probably be  $\pm$  5 long-term and 5 short-term cases, which have been carefully selected. If both casework and groupwork are undertaken the caseload could be a maximum of 5 cases (either short-term or long-term)

Agency supervisors should please make immediate contact with the co-ordinator or university supervisors if difficulty is encountered with providing the above practical experience.

#### **4.2 Community study**

This component is essential to help students obtain a clear conception of the community which will form the context of their work and to further refine their assessment, awareness and understanding of community needs in order to facilitate appropriate and innovative helping strategies. The study can be regarded as constituting the foundation of the community work project. (See Annexure 3)

Students should commence fact-finding for this component as soon as possible. This may also be done prior to students starting at their placements.

#### **4.3 Community Work Project Planning**

The written community work project planning report aims to help students plan thoughtfully and clearly, and enables supervisors to assess the proposed /continuing project and to comment and make suggestions at an early stage.(See Annexure 4)

This outline of the proposed project should preferably be submitted after initial fact-finding and needs assessment have been completed, but before a community client-system is constituted and a contract with them is formulated. The importance to students of starting their community projects timeously, cannot be over stressed. Community project proposals are to be sanctioned / ratified by the S.W.Dept.

A copy of the community work project proposal/appraisal must be submitted to the agency supervisor for discussion.

#### **4.4 Evaluation**

Students' performance in the practical work will be continually evaluated throughout the year by university staff members and supervisors at the agencies in terms of reports submitted and work done at the agencies. By means of student's self-evaluation in weekly reports (specifically in their evaluation of their role and their learning needs) and in supervision students' are made active participants in their own evaluation. Furthermore, at the end of the year students are required to submit an evaluation of the practical programme and their own participation and performance.

The following methods of evaluation are used :

##### **Continuous evaluation:**

Continuous evaluation will be effected through weekly submission of reports as per CALENDER FOR PRACTICE EDUCATION.(See Annexure 15).

Reports, diaries and practical work assignments have to be submitted to university supervisors at weekly supervision sessions.

No marks will be given for weekly reports, however students professional growth and development will be monitored by the manner in which they use and respond to written and oral feedback given by supervisors .

##### **Midyear and final evaluation of practical work:**

The ability to speak in public and communicate effectively with an audience is a valuable skill which social workers in training have to master. This component of the practical programme extends such experience which students have had during their first three years of training. Hopefully it further enhances their confidence and effectiveness in speaking before an audience.

Towards the end of the first semester's practicum (**22/6/2001 & 29/6/2001**) all students will have the opportunity for a concise 30 minute presentation on both their community work projects and their casework/group work for their supervisors (Agency and University supervisors). These evaluations will take place at the university.

At the end of the year's practical programme on (**October 2001**) students do a 40 minute final presentation for their supervisors and an external examiner. Agency supervisors are seriously requested to make every effort to be present at their student's presentations.

Thorough preparation will enhance confidence and the quality of the presentation. Attention should be paid to clear verbal and non-verbal communication, audibility and nuanced voice production, phrasing (suitable use of pauses), and varied tempo of speech. Express energy and enthusiasm, but sound calm rather than rushed. Involve the audience where suitable.

In the introduction strive to establish rapport with the audience, excite their interest, and preview what is to be included in the presentation. State main points in concise, assertive sentences and organise information well. Supportive information should be sufficient to get ideas across. In the conclusion main points and purpose are summarised and a final strong and positive statement may prove effective and memorable. Stay within agreed time limits.

Use presentations aids to enhance the impact and clarity of communication. These should emphasise main points or clarify information and be visible /audible to all in the room. The course coordinator should be informed timeously if audiovisual aids are required for the presentations.

At the end of the year both supervisor's final marks are based on their evaluation of all the student's work throughout the year. An external examiner, who has studied the student's written work, moderates the mark.

#### **4.5 Recording**

As in preceding years recording will be an important continuous component of the practical programme during the final year. Obviously it is important for students to master this social work skill in order to effectively function as social workers in future. In training however, the report is also indispensable as a medium of learning. Supervisors rely mainly on the report to evaluate student's work and to offer supervision. Because of different objectives, the reports which agencies may require from students, may differ markedly from those required by the university. Please consider the fulfillment of these requirements as an extension of experience and expertise.

Students should please carefully note and observe where applicable both the general requirements and broad guidelines in respect of the submission of reports and the specific guidelines for the various kinds of reports and practical assignments.

#### **4.6 Supervision**

As students have already experienced in their first three years of study, one of the most essential and valuable learning components of the social work practicum is weekly supervision of students by experienced supervisors. The opportunity is created for a meaningful educational and supportive relationship to develop between supervisors and students. It is important that students view this relationship as a partnership, take responsibility for their own learning and realise that they will gain to the extent that they contribute. Although accepting constructive criticism without becoming defensive, may be difficult, striving to improve the ability to use supervision maturely will enhance personal and professional growth significantly.

The following roles are to be undertaken by the university and agency supervisors in the partnership of supervising the student:

##### **(i) Responsibility of the university supervisor:**

- enter into an Educational Contract with the student and the agency supervisor which identifies the student's learning objectives, practice and supervisory expectations and evaluation criteria
- liase between the agency and the Dept. of Social Work
- provide weekly supervision sessions at the university
- to address student's learning needs and provide on going feedback (both written and oral) throughout the placement
- assist students with preparation for both the mid-year and final evaluations

##### **(ii) Responsibility of the agency supervisor:**

- introduce students to the agency and its programmes through an orientation of its functioning
- familiarise students to the clientele, the community and its resources where the

- student will be working
- provide weekly supervision sessions to assist students in directing their learning experiences
  - assist students with specialised knowledge and skills relevant to the setting
  - maintain contact with the Dept. of Social Work through the university supervisor and the field practice co-ordinator.

**(iii) Responsibility of the student:**

- submit reports punctually as reports form the basis of supervision (especially with the university supervisor)
- punctually attend, be well prepared for and take active part in supervision
- consult the course co-ordinator should any difficulties arise

**4.7 Transport allowance and claims**

Procedures for transport allowance will be communicated to students before the commencement of the practical programme.

**ANNEXURE 1**  
**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS' CONDUCT AT SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES**

Students are required to:

- complete at least 32 hours of practical work per week at the agency as indicated in the calendar
- report to work punctually and complete work that has been assigned to them
- contact the agency and university if unable to report for work and present a medical certificate. Students may be required to compensate during the university vacation for absence which was due to illness. Absence without good reason may result in termination of the placement.
- participate fully and to the best of their ability in all activities planned for them.
- take active co-responsibility for and creatively involve themselves in ensuring that the required practical work components are initiated and continued
- prepare for, attend and participate in supervision and follow the guidance given by supervisors
- refrain from criticism of the social service agency, staff or policies until fully understanding the situation
- observe social work principles in all relationships (with clients, agency staff and other students) and conscientiously practice use of social work skills and social work roles on many levels
- actively pursue to the best of their ability all the objectives set out in the guide for practical training
- ensure that reports are submitted punctually as the Social Work Department is ultimately accountable for students interacting with communities. This would not be possible without students regularly communicating in writing by way of weekly reports.

## **APPENDIX J**

### **GLOSSARY (From Standards for Employee Assistance Programmes in South Africa)**

(Not to be seen as definitions but rather as descriptions).

- **Chemical Dependency** – psychological and / or physical dependency on alcohol and/ or other drugs;
- **Client** - Individual/Group/Family member utilising the Employee Assistance Programme due to personal and/ or work related problems;
- **Consultation** – Process of interaction with another professional in order to verify or confirm specific information;
- **Counselling** – Therapeutic intervention by a trained professional, i.e. Social Worker, Psychologist or Psychiatrist;
- **Critical Incident** – Incident causing a crisis to individual or family;
- **Customer** – A Corporate client i.e. a company, organisation having a formal agreement with a service provider;
- **EAP** – Employee Assistance Programme
- **EAPA** – Employee Assistance Professionals Association;
- **EAPA-SA Board** – Duly elected Board of the South African chapter of EAPA;
- **EAP Professional** – A professionally trained person, performing EAP specific related tasks, i.e. therapy, counselling, marketing, evaluating;
- **EAP Practitioner** – A person – not necessarily a professionally trained person – performing EAP specific related tasks, i.e. referral, liaison, training;



- **Employee** – A person legally employed by an employer, whether part-time, full-time or temporarily;
- **Employer** – Anybody having legal status and providing employment to people and providing payment for services delivered;
- **External Agency** – An agency providing psychosocial services to an employer and his employees and their dependants;
- **External Resource** – Any acknowledged resource in the community, providing services;
- **Invention** – Therapeutic and professional guidance to any employee in order to overcome his/her problem;
- **Manager** – A person in position of supervisory power with added status and authority;
- **Marketing** – Promotion of a specific service to potential customers and employees of existing clients;
- **Regional Interest Group** – A number of EAP professionals, grouped together in a geographical area with the view to grow professionally and to promote the EAP;
- **Service Provider** – An agency providing professional services to clients and customers according to a formal contract;
- **Supervisor** – A person in a position of authority and who oversees the performance of subordinate staff;
- **Therapy** – Assessment and treatment of a troubled employee;
- **Training** – Educating and teaching employees through means of didactic lecturing, modelling, interaction and role-plays;

- **Trauma** – Reaction of an employee to a very serious incident, causing psychological and very often physical injury;
- **Treatment** – Intervention with a troubled employee by exploring his/her feelings and guiding him/her through a process of recovery;
- **Troubled Employee** – An employee suffering any personal or work related problem, resulting in a lack of optimal economics and social functioning;
- **User** – Any person/company making use of services and facilities according to a contract;
- **Well-being** – A positive state of physical and emotional wellness;
- **Wellness** – An employee in good shape, resulting in a high level of productivity;
- **Worker Representative** – A person with a specific task to act as a spokesperson for the labour movement.