

# *Rewards Realizations and Reservations*

## *Concurrent Workplace Practicum*

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*Special Link Symposium*

*August 20-23, 2008.*

*Winnipeg, Manitoba.*



***The real voyage of discovery  
lies not in seeking new  
landscapes, but in having  
new eyes.***

*Marcel Proust*

# OUTLINE

- ❑ Historical practice
- ❑ Gathering data
- ❑ Student Experience
- ❑ Supervisor Experience
- ❑ Instructor Experience
- ❑ Reservations
- ❑ Implications
- ❑ Summary

# HISTORICAL PRACTICE

- ❑ Second year practicum's offered in a block format
- ❑ Infringement on personal time
- ❑ In 1999 Camosun offered the fourth practicum con-currently
- ❑ Student learning enhanced when theory offered concurrently with practicum

# HISTORICAL PRACTICE

- ❑ Pilot Project in 2003 students completed worksite practicum
- ❑ 2006 Camosun offered a worksite practicum
- ❑ 2007 , 50% of the students accepted a worksite practicum
- ❑ 2008 , 99% of students accepted worksite practicum

# GATHERING DATA

- Provincial survey -20

## Questions

- 1) Practicum time frame
- 2) Concurrent theory/practicum
- 3) Location of practicum

## Data Response

- ❑ 9 out of 20 responses- 45%

## Practicum Format

- ❑ 5 -offered in a block section
- ❑ 2 -flexible within block section
- ❑ 2 -offered part time practicum completion

## College Instructors Survey Response Con-current Theory & Practicum

- ❑ No-66% responded
- ❑ Yes-22% responded
- ❑ Flexible- 11% responded



# College Instructors Survey Response

## Worksite practicum

- ❑ No- 44% responded
- ❑ Yes- 22% responded
- ❑ Flexible- 33% responded

## Research

- ❑ Evidence supports a shift needed to increase recruitment and retention
- ❑ 60% of students between age 25-34
- ❑ 63% were working while attending school
- ❑ 40% of those were employed in a related early childhood education & care job

## Research con't

- ❑ 33% of students stated “they wanted more placements in settings inclusive of children with special needs in order to gain practical experience.”
- ❑ 33% indicated they wanted more education in “working with children with special needs, including language delays and behaviour challenges and adaptive equipment.”

*Labour Market Trend The Future Child Care Workforce: Perspectives in Early Childhood Education Students. Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, 2003 P.*

## Student Survey

### ❑ Questions

1. What have been the advantages of being a practicum student and employee in worksite practicum?
2. Please describe any problems or concerns you have experienced as a student and an employee during practicum placement?
3. What would make worksite practicum better?  
Any other comments?

# Student Workplace Response

## Positives

### Financial perspective

- ❑ Maintain their current wage
- ❑ Potential for pay raise resulting from increased education

## Relationships

### Children

- ❑ Already established
- ❑ Engage in a more authentic observation
- ❑ Realize child's cues
- ❑ Observes long term outcomes of child's progress

# Student Workplace Relationships

## Parents

- ❑ Rapport building process available
- ❑ Relationships with parent already established
- ❑ Ease of approaching parent
- ❑ Time to become aware of family strengths, family diversity and areas of resources
- ❑ Assignment had positive impact on a family

“The development of valued and trusting relationships between educator and parent can be a complicated process and can involve issues around family beliefs and value ....and can challenge beliefs or values or build new insights into family systems.”

*Berhard et al; 1998; Harry, 1992; Lasky, 2000.*



## Student Workplace Relationships

### Staff/Centre

- ❑ Time to establish self as a team member
- ❑ Gain a sense of competence and “knowing”
- ❑ Opportunity to continue with child goals
- ❑ Cognizant of centre policies
- ❑ Build on “centre of practice”

# Student Workplace Relationships

## Staff/Centre

- ❑ Implement scale of inclusion and adapt environment as outcome
- ❑ Invite center colleagues in theory building
- ❑ Collaborative and collegial enterprise
- ❑ See own strength of center

## Student Workplace

### Professionalism

- ❑ Student sees value of their work
- ❑ Congruent philosophy of inclusion between student and center
- ❑ Opportunity to observe child daily ( in depth awareness of routines)
- ❑ Engage in reflective practice

## Student Workplace

### Benefits of workplace practicum

- ❑ Maximizes the currency of relationships
- ❑ Encourages retention and commitment
- ❑ Invites dialogue within the center's community of practice

## Student Survey of Con- Current Theory/Practicum

- ❑ Opportunity to crystallize new knowledge
- ❑ Immediate implementation, adaptation and outcomes
- ❑ Deeper level of dialogue with classmates
- ❑ Sharing of experiences

## Student Workplace Limitations

### Roles

- ❑ Staff shortage impeded goal implementation
- ❑ Blurring of "roles"
- ❑ Awkwardness of "new " sponsor/supervisor role
- ❑ Role definition shift (parental lens)
- ❑ Minimal commitment –location too familiar

# Student Workplace Practicum

## Limitations

### Knowledge

- ❑ Reluctance to embrace new awareness's
- ❑ Power shift
- ❑ Imbalance of mentor knowledge vs students knowledge

# Student Workplace Practicum

## Limitations

### Time

- ❑ Heavy workload
- ❑ Compressed time to observe and implement learning
- ❑ Minimal time to discuss learning-staff meetings



# Student Workplace Practicum

## Limitations

### Philosophy

- ❑ Incongruent center and student philosophy
- ❑ Potential ethical concerns

## Student Con- Current Experience Limitations

- ❑ Difficult to balance work & school
- ❑ Compressed expectations
- ❑ Reduced time to synthesize new knowledge

# Supervisor Survey Responses

## Positives

### Roles

- ❑ Absence of new staff
- ❑ Cohesion of staff remains stabilized

### Relationships

- ❑ Embedded with child, colleagues & parent

## Supervisor Experience

### Positives

- ❑ Routines remain constant
- ❑ Beneficial for all children
- ❑ Student comes with fresh lens

## Student Workplace

### Limitations of concurrent theory & practicum

- ❑ Supervisor Perspective
- ❑ Ease of familiarity minimizes student commitment
- ❑ “Awkwardness” to objectify student feedback

## Ethical Reservations

### 1) *Educator/student issues*

- Attitudes
- Values

### 2) *Professional issues*

- Relationship impact
- Hinders true learning
- Power imbalance

### 3) *Practice Issues*

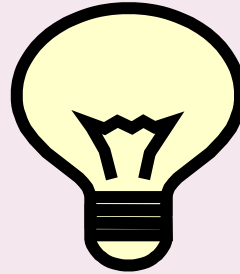
- Who to approach with unethical practice

*Adapted from P Wesley & V Buysse, "Ethics and Evidence in Consultation." 2006*

# INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE

- ❑ Students “seemed to blossom.”
- ❑ Students were very dedicated and supportive of each other.
- ❑ Instructors need to engage in reflective practice.
- ❑ The discourse supported deconstructing and constructing knowledge

## Ideas for change



- ❑ Preliminary discussion between all parties
- ❑ Continue to refine roles and responsibilities
- ❑ Continue with set of guidelines
- ❑ Change group but remain in center



# REWARDS

- ✓ Addresses current crisis of retention of early childhood educators in BC
- ✓ Provides opportunity to scaffold new learning
- ✓ Engages in the immediacy of learning
- ✓ Student devotes energy to course & practicum
- ✓ Invitation to centres of practice
- ✓ Supports our foundation of quality care

# OVERALL LEARNING

## Student quotes

“it’s about inclusion, not special needs”

“what inclusion really means, it’s about including and supporting all children”

“realizing each child learns at their own pace...and is capable, even though it may take longer”

# STUDENT EXPERIENCE

"When starting this course I thought we would get this tool box of things to do when we have a child enrolled who has diverse abilities. Instead, I feel I am even better prepared because I have been give a process to walk through to determine what is best for this child and what strategies I can put in place to support this little being. With experience will come more possible strategies, but I think the idea that it is actually more of a process than I originally thought is the most significant learning."