

Practice Teaching in the Probation Service – A Shared Learning Experience

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Summary: Practice placements as part of Social Work programmes are intrinsic to the student's education and training, as without the practice placement students cannot qualify as social workers. Practice teachers, therefore, play a key role in assisting students as they embark on the practice element of their journey to becoming qualified social workers. Social workers operating within the criminal justice system have been guiding social work students for many years on their voyage. As well as meeting the needs of universities' practice, placements afford Probation Officers an opportunity to support students' growth and learning. This paper defines and examines the multiple roles of the practice teacher and explores how an understanding of students' learning styles as well as their own can assist with those roles. It looks at the challenges that practice teachers and students may face on placement and how supervision can be used to help address those challenges. The paper considers the relating of theory to practice and the significance of reflective practice within students' learning.

Keywords: Social work training, CORU, Probation Service, probation officers, probation, placements, supervision, practice teaching, skills development, training, learning.

Introduction

The quality of our learning is intrinsically linked to our capacity and wiliness to learn together. Valuable learning is a shared learning experience. (Horder and Gossman, 2010; cited in Haslett and Rowlands, 2010).

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