

MULTI-CULTURAL FAMILY BASE

PRACTICE LEARNING EVALUATIONS 2009-2010

Evaluation forms are distributed to students, tutors and agencies at the end of the placement. Some students spend the entire placement at MCFB; others may divide their time between this organisation and an agency in the MCFB Network whilst a third group of students are based wholly in another organisation.

The return rate for 09-10 was fairly high (students 43; tutors 35) although there are several cases where only one form (i.e. student or tutor) is received. On some student forms not all questions or sections were answered. Agencies where a student has been placed have rarely taken the opportunity to provide feedback and none received this year. All ratings, comments and suggestions are carefully considered and, over the years, have helped us in our aim of continual improvement in the training we offer. It should be noted that these forms are not the sole source of feedback as verbal communication also occurs. Additionally, some letters have been received from tutors.

During the course of the year 2009-2010 the student feedback form was revised. The major changes were that the questions relating to the Student Group were removed and a new section headed Learning Opportunities was included. (Students are able to feedback on the Student Group during the course of their placement.) As a result of these changes the percentages for the Learning Opportunities section are based on about half of the completed questionnaires. The section relating to Practice Teaching underwent some revision in its terminology but remains otherwise unchanged.

Section I: Numerical Ratings

(5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = no strong feelings; 2 = disagree; 1 = strongly disagree)

1. STUDENT RESPONSES (43)

Feedback on Student Unit

Usefulness of Introductory Visit and Induction

| Scale | % Responses |
|-------|-------------|
| 5 | 35.5% |
| 4 | 50.0% |
| 3 | 8.0% |
| 2 | 2.5% |
| 1 | 4.0% |

Helpfulness of library and administrative support

| | |
|---|-------|
| 5 | 33.0% |
| 4 | 25.0% |
| 3 | 28.0% |
| 2 | 11.0% |
| 1 | 3.0% |

Feedback on MCFB (27) and Network Agencies (11)

| | <u>MCFB</u> | <u>Other Agencies</u> |
|--|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Satisfaction with induction process</i> | | |
| 5 | 52.0% | 27.5% |
| 4 | 37.0% | 45.5% |
| 3 | 7.5% | 18.0% |
| 2 | 3.5% | 9.0% |
| 1 | 0% | 0% |
| <i>Welcoming to students</i> | | |
| 5 | 54.0% | 36.5% |
| 4 | 38.0% | 54.5% |
| 3 | 4.0% | 9.0% |
| 2 | 4.0% | 0% |
| 1 | 0% | 0% |
| <i>Sufficient and suitable learning opportunities</i> | | |
| 5 | 54.0% | 54.5% |
| 4 | 42.0% | 36.5% |
| 3 | 0% | 9.0% |
| 2 | 4.0% | 0% |
| 1 | 0% | 0% |
| <i>Practical arrangements e.g. telephone, desk, computer were satisfactory</i> | | |
| 5 | 11.5% | 36.5% |
| 4 | 23.0% | 54.5% |
| 3 | 39.0% | 9.0% |
| 2 | 27.0% | 0% |
| 1 | 0% | 0% |

Learning Opportunities

Feedback on quality/relevance of practice experience, workload, development of skills in: assessment; ethnically sensitive practice; working with difference & diversity; groupwork processes; direct work with children and families; reflection and analysis.

| | |
|---|-------|
| 5 | 69.0% |
| 4 | 21.5% |
| 3 | 4.5% |
| 2 | 3.5% |
| 1 | 0.5% |

The ratings have been treated as an overall response – mainly because individual students tended to be consistent in their marking. The areas which were given lowest ratings (3 or below) were: working with difference & diversity; groupwork; assessment skills. In at least one case this was because the placement was too short to allow everything to be covered.

Practice Teaching

Feedback on the Practice Teacher's supportiveness, challenges offered to student, ability to assist in linking theory to practice and work to Standards, helpfulness in

developing anti-discriminatory practice, development of understanding of SW role and SW skills as well as personal/professional growth, aid in managing workload. Feedback also on 3/4 ways meeting with tutor and conduct of assessment process.

| | |
|---|-------|
| 5 | 74.0% |
| 4 | 17.5% |
| 3 | 6.5% |
| 2 | 1.5% |
| 1 | 0.5% |

As above for Learning Opportunities, the ratings have been treated as an overall response – mainly because individual students tended to be consistent in their marking. The area which was given the lowest ratings (3 or below) was the 3/4 way meeting.

2. TUTOR RESPONSES (35)

Overall feedback on the quality of communication and negotiation with the Student Unit; the suitability and quantity of learning opportunities; the 3/4 way meetings; the general organisation of the practice learning experience.

| | |
|---|-------|
| 5 | 78.0% |
| 4 | 21.0% |
| 3 | 1.0% |
| 2 | 0% |
| 1 | 0% |

Section II: Comments from Students

There is ample space on the form for students to provide commentary and suggestions. Only a minority take advantage of this opportunity. Most of the comments are positive and many focus on the Practice Teachers, frequently described as: ‘supportive and helpful’; ‘approachable’; ‘responsive’. In particular, the contribution of the PT in meeting specific learning needs, providing pointers for things to pursue, developing skills and assisting in workload and deadline management was noted. The ‘work timeline’ developed by one PT was much appreciated. The opportunity provided to explore their own views and reflect on thought processes was also valued. Staff at MCFB in general were defined in the same terms as the PTs and also described as ‘welcoming’, ‘friendly’, ‘understanding’ and ‘honest’. One student noted that he/she felt ‘valued’. Students also appreciated getting positive/continuous feedback on their work.

In a few instances, students felt that their relationship with the PT would have been improved had the latter communicated better with the Link Supervisor (especially in

relation to who dealt with which area) and if the PT had been better prepared and ready to participate when assessments were due. One student considered that there was some hostility towards students, evidenced in notices relating to kitchen procedures.

The overview on the placements was that they provided an enjoyable and valuable learning experience, leading to a good knowledge base and transferable skills. The variety of the 'useful and productive' learning opportunities was cited. Direct work and case managing provided a good experience. Although tricky, getting the balance between 'learning' and 'work' was generally possible. One respondent would recommend any student to have a placement at MCFB. Having other students around, in formal and informal settings, was seen as a definite benefit, giving the chance to share knowledge and experiences. A downside of the periods when there were large numbers of students based in the MCFB office was the difficulty of access to the computers and the level of noise in the student room. This meant it was at times difficult to concentrate or to deal with private/sensitive phone calls to service-users: access to a separate room would be helpful in these instances.

The 'duty desk' was mentioned by a couple of students. It was felt that this could be quite demanding on time when student numbers in the unit were low. One student considered it a good aid to improving communication skills whilst the other was less convinced of its value and thought it offered 'little in the way of learning experience'.

Section III: Comments from Tutors

This year 24 tutors included additional comments (frequently lengthy and always very helpful) on their forms and, in addition, separate letters were received from some institutions.

Assessment of the placements provided by MCFB (either at the organisation or in the MCFB Network) was generally highly complimentary. MCFB offers a student-centred environment and is 'good at supporting student learning in the workplace'. It provided: 'a very positive experience'; 'excellent, robust placement'; 'really good learning opportunities'; 'first class practice experience'; 'highly effective placement'; 'very full and rewarding placement'; 'structured range of learning opportunities'; 'range of work was diverse in terms of variety and in relation to depth/intensity'; 'well supported and informative placement'.

The above was often closely linked to the input from the Practice Teacher (together with other staff): 'the PT provided a helpful balance of nurture, support, challenge and critical thinking'; 'the experience and skilful approach of PT supported student in relation to demanding learning opportunities'; 'PT had tuned into the student's learning needs and sought to build learning opportunities around these'; 'PT introduced helpful models and challenged/encouraged student's thinking'; 'very impressed with the practice teaching on offer'; 'PT had evidently planned for student's induction: appropriate pieces of work identified'; 'balanced support and challenge to student to enable progression'; 'PT was experienced and motivating'.

The general benefits for students were summed up as 'growth of confidence', 'increased knowledge base and level of understanding', 'development of reflective and critical skills', 'enhanced ability to link theory to practice'.

Various students had to contend with ill health, additional difficulties or circumstances during their placements. The considerate, sensitive and supportive way in which these problems were managed was appreciated. Additionally, some students had suffered a loss of confidence during an earlier placement and had now been enabled to regain their self-assurance. In one case, the PT clearly understood the issues a particular student carried from a previous placement and was able to help him address and deal with his outstanding feelings.

Some organisational problems were highlighted: a case of irregular supervision (later rectified); the desirability of closer liaison with the PT as the placement progressed; appropriate opportunities initially slow to access in one instance but subsequently rectified; some early misunderstandings about the setting in relation to the SW role, particularly in CP. issues (later clarified). In one case a student felt a bit 'lost' in early stages (possibly due to lack of SW experience/age): it was suggested that a longer induction period might help in such instances. It was felt by one tutor that travel to the 3/4 way meetings should be a shared responsibility and should not always fall to the tutor.

One tutor remarked that 'at placement meetings the focus of supervision, nature of feedback given and student's level of responsibility were not always clear' - nonetheless the student's progression was noticeable. One student was reluctant to engage with the learning opportunities offered and the tutor expressed the view that one of the reasons may have been that the particular opportunities 'did not readily translate into recognisable SW activities' and that the work in that Network agency was 'probably better as a Practice 2 rather than Practice 1 experience'. The question was raised by one tutor as to whether a student, starting work with a family or individual who had had a 'long series of students', felt under pressure to try and 'do something different' – although it was noted that this was probably inevitable in a busy teaching-unit and not intended as a criticism.