

MULTI-CULTURAL FAMILY BASE

PRACTICE LEARNING EVALUATIONS 2010-2011

Evaluation forms were once again distributed to students, tutors and agencies at the end of the placement. Some students spent 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. Network agencies include Harmeny Education Trust, Saheliya, Citadel Youth Centre, Donaldson's School for the Deaf, Scottish Adoption Society.

The return rate from students for 10-11 was not as high as in previous years (33). The 34 received from tutors was a similar number to 09-10. Once again, there are several cases where only one form (i.e. student or tutor) was 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 was received this year. A new feedback form for sessional Practice Teachers has been drafted and will be used in the future.

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.

Section I: Numerical Ratings

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

1. STUDENT RESPONSES (33)

Usefulness of Introductory Visit and Induction

5	36.5%
4	54.5%
3	9.0%
2	0%
1	0%

Helpfulness of library and administrative support

5	54.0%
4	40.0%
3	3.0%
2	3.0%
1	0%

Feedback on MCFB (23) and Network Agencies (10)

	MCFB	Other Agencies
<i>Satisfaction with induction process</i>		
5	32.0%	60.0%

	4	45.5%	30.0%
	3	13.5%	10.0%
	2	9.0%	0%
	1	0%	0%
<i>Welcoming to students</i>			
	5	55.0%	100.0%
	4	35.0%	0%
	3	10.0%	0%
	2	0%	0%
	1	0%	0%
<i>Sufficient and suitable learning opportunities</i>			
	5	71.5%	90.0%
	4	24.0%	10.0%
	3	4.5%	0%
	2	0%	0%
	1	0%	0%
<i>Satisfactory practical arrangements e.g. telephone, desk, computer</i>			
	5	4.5%	40.0%
	4	18.0%	60.0%
	3	23.0%	0%
	2	54.5%	0%
	1	0%	0%

Detailed Evaluation of Learning Opportunities

<i>Appropriate opportunities to demonstrate standards</i>		5	60.5%
		4	36.5%
		3	3.0%
		2	0%
		1	0%
<i>Opportunities to meet the Key Capabilities</i>		5	73.0%
		4	27.0%
		3	0%
		2	0%
		1	0%
<i>Manageable workload</i>		5	65.5%
		4	34.5%
		3	0%
		2	0%
		1	0%
<i>Development of skills in:</i>			
(i) <i>assessment processes</i>		5	60.5%
		4	36.5%
		3	3.0%
		2	0%
		1	0%

<i>(ii) ethnically sensitive practice and difference/diversity</i>	5	67.0%
	4	24.0%
	3	6.0%
	2	3.0%
	1	0%
<i>(iii) direct work with children/young people/families</i>	5	90.5%
	4	9.5%
	3	0%
	2	0%
	1	0%
<i>(iv) group-work processes</i>	5	64.0%
	4	18.0%
	3	18.0%
	2	0%
	1	0%
<i>(v) reflection and critical analysis</i>	5	72.0%
	4	28.0%
	3	0%
	2	0%
	1	0%

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. The ratings have been treated as an overall response – mainly because individual students tended to be consistent in their marking of the practice teaching. Three students rated the 3/4 way meeting at 3, and 2 put workload management in the same band.

5	73.5%
4	23.5%
3	2.5%
2	0.5%
1	0%

2. TUTOR RESPONSES (34)

<i>Effective communication with Student Unit</i>	5	56.0%
	4	32.0%
	3	12.0%
	2	0%
	1	0%

<i>Range and appropriateness of practice opportunities</i>	5	59.0%
	4	38.0%
	3	0%
	2	3.0%
	1	0%
<i>3/4 way meetings</i>	5	70.0%
	4	30.0%
	3	0%
	2	0%
	1	0%
<i>Organisation of learning experience</i>	5	70.0%
	4	24.0%
	3	6.0%
	2	0%
	1	0%

Section II: Comments from Students

Only a small number of students added written comments to the feedback form although it should be noted that one student converted his/her '5' ratings to '6' and another made liberal use of a + sign. Most remarks focused on the contribution of the Practice Teacher and, in keeping with the high ratings shown above, these were very positive for PTs at MCFB and at outside agencies. The recurring epithets were 'supportive'; 'approachable'; 'experienced'; 'understanding'; 'challenging'. 'Honest', 'open' and 'organised' also occurred. The beneficial role of supervisions was underlined. One student wished that the time-consuming task of minute-taking for these had been partly borne by the PT while another commented that this had been a shared activity. In one case a student felt that the Link Supervisor had not been fully aware of or committed to the role

Mention was made of the benefits of the student group; involvement in groupwork; value of networking with other students; helpful discussions with staff; the pleasure at feeling part of a team; having the opportunity to undertake some statutory pieces of work; learning in a warm and supportive environment.

Given the relatively low ratings for IT and desk-provision at MCFB elaboration on these problems might have been expected but there were very few. A dislike of hot-desking and difficulties in finding desk space when student numbers peak during periods of overlap were mentioned. A problem with the functioning of phones and computers was also referred to and more of the latter would be helpful.

Overall, placements were considered enjoyable (a recurring adjective), with the acquisition of various new skills, and an excellent preparation for future practitioners. Fresh insights and increased confidence were cited. Only one student felt that some of the practical work did not stretch his/her learning needs.

Section III: Comments from Tutors

This year 32 tutors included additional comments (ranging from single sentences to several paragraphs) 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, once again, generally very complimentary, with the range and appropriateness of learning opportunities, the level of challenge and the effective organisational aspects being singled out. Specific evaluations include: 'the placement challenged and supported student learning'; 'it was interesting and stimulating'; 'the agency provide unique learning opportunities and a very valuable experience'; 'good range of learning opportunities which can be pitched to suit level of ability; 'links with Local Authority a real asset'; 'the student was suitably stretched'.

The above was often closely allied to the input from the Practice Teacher (together with other staff): with supervisions being seen as a key factor in producing a good learning experience.

Students were said to have gained in confidence and competence, with increased insights and a firm base for reflection. It was noted that this was often endorsed by feedback from the academic assessors.

Suggestions for improvement included: having more than one three-way meeting per placement; reducing the potential for confusion at one agency by having just one Link Worker (rather than two staff members involved); ensuring all relevant staff at an agency are aware of the role of a SW student and of the assessment requirements, prior to the start of the placement. A couple of placements were recommended for future use although in one case with the proviso that it was for 'a skilled and mature student'.

In a few instances there had been problems or causes for concern. In one case key information on a student's performance had not been passed on at the appropriate time and elsewhere an Interim Report from a Practice Teacher had not materialised at the due moment. (Both of these problems have been followed up and discussed with the relevant people.) One student informed his/her tutor that PT had not encouraged the discussion of integration of theory to practice and another felt that messages regarding progress were 'ambiguous' (although this improved after discussion about the problem). Some unavoidable absences of PT and Link Supervisor had an impact on one placement and the PT lacked experience in some areas.

In various instances tutors' comments were based on feedback from students: for example, one felt that staff at a particular agency did not involve her and another was disappointed at the lack of structure and guidance received in an 'ephemeral' induction period. PC/desk shortages at MCFB had been reported to one tutor who felt that this reduced the overall value of the placement.

As ever, various students had to contend with disability, ill health, additional difficulties or circumstances during their placements. One student had significant anxiety in early stages. The interim meeting helped look at strategies for managing this. Where illness and personal problems cause interruptions during the placement suitable pieces of work were identified to ensure appropriate coverage and depth